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WHICH THINGS ARE TRUE?

THE confusion and lack of certainty in the human situation of the present may perhaps be better understood if we turn back to examine less complicated times. If we go back far enough, we come to the age of explicitly transmitted meanings. In those days, a man could without much difficulty obtain an account of who he was, what his tasks were, and where he was going. There were recognized teachers of such matters. Life was seen to be a process of overcoming the distractions and delusions produced by physical existence. It was a project for individuals, and the diversities of experience afforded a schedule of "lessons" by means of which each one rose to plateaus of understanding appropriate to his own degree. The social system in which these developments took place was a kind of "second nature." It was simply there, adding the superstructure of an institutional grid to the basic foundation of the physical world. You climbed, you coped, you practiced the virtues, you sought the hidden reality behind appearances, and by the alchemy of devotion joined with persistence in the will to know, you reached the heights.

This general view—given in merest outline—has never died out from the world, and is today being looked at again with interest, although it has suffered extensive displacement by other conceptions of the human situation. If we jump from antiquity to the eighteenth century, we find the minds of men pregnant with a revolutionary idea: The social order is not an immutable arrangement provided by Nature or the Deity; men can use their intelligence to make and remake society. First proposed by Vico, and elaborated into a whole series of political philosophies by others during the course of the century, this conception of society, to which were added the intellectual and moral fruits of the Renaissance and the Reformation, introduced a radically different account of the human situation. There was now overt competition between the claims of the spiritual life and those of the earthly enterprise. Numerous efforts were made to work out harmonious interrelations between the two schemes of progress, but this was plainly impossible on any available cultural or historical basis. Individuals with their own personal sort of religion might make a workable synthesis and apply its solutions in their lives, but the institutional religion of the Western world had become far too rigid in its methods and communications to have anything in common with the methods of scientific inquiry and the rising spirit of self-determination in political affairs. The result of this incompatibility was the establishment of rival concepts of meaning and more or less conflicting definitions of the human predicament. This cultural situation had differing effects upon individuals, some of whom learned to pursue their ends without resolving the contradictions in the thought of the time, while other, less complicated people simply shut out of their minds what they could not reconcile with what they chose to believe.

There have been various consequences of this unstable equilibrium in the intellectual life of the West. The longing for a single doctrine of self-consistent certainty produced theory after theory, and since men of positive vigor were naturally attracted by the promise of free scientific investigation, most of the claims to systematic explanation were based upon the rising authority of science and were anti-religious either directly or by implication. Obviously, the most dramatic of these resolutions of the conflict between religion and science was the procrustean program of "scientific socialism," or communism.

The terrible events of the twentieth century have already had the twofold effect of making

thoughtful men distrust the magnified power of modern political systems, at the same time hardening uncritical popular allegiance to the status quo, out of anxiety and fear. And from the cracks and crannies of our endlessly politicalized and technologized society are emerging an increasing number of questioning individuals who wonder if there may not be some basic flaw in all the currently accepted views of the human situation. These may be called the "new beginning" people, and they have in common little more than their doubts, and their willingness to reconsider everything that they thought they knew or were sure of, in the past. It is among these "new beginning" people that one finds the occasional forays into the meaning of antique religion, ancient mysticisms, and metaphysical cosmology.

It seems likely that *all* the societies of the modern world, if they could only feel secure and be left alone for a while, would be glad to draw back from their proclaimed certainties and ridiculous declarations of absolute righteousness, and figure things out for themselves. These people, or their leaders, are not complete fools. They have seen enough of history to know that the popular verities of one century become the forgotten shibboleths of the next. Already, as Alexander Werth points out (in the May 4 *Nation),* the Russians are being embarrassed by the attacks of the Chinese ideologists, since "they [the Russians] must recognize some truth in the Chinese complaint that Russia is an increasingly 'conservative' and 'have' country, with no very strong sense of 'world mission'." The doctrine of the full dinner pail as a *total* philosophy—for Communism claims to be a total philosophy—has obvious inadequacies, once the dinner pail is reasonably packed. The bravely vindicated "materialism" of the hungry man on the march turns into a disorganizing centrifugal force when it is carried forward into an age of affluence. And the Russians are becoming affluent. They can hardly keep from speculating about the validity of a philosophy which loses its inspiration as soon as people begin to eat regularly. And given some years of peace and comparative security, such questions could not be suppressed.

But we do not have any "comparative security," these days. Serious socio-political thought, which soon leads to challenging the very foundations—the military establishments—of modern nation-states, must now take place in an atmosphere of deep anxiety, and it is pursued, therefore, by only the very few. Is this situation an accident of history, or is it just one more instance of the archetypal crisis in the classical human situation, to be compared with the ultimate philosophical decisions that had to be made by Arjuna, the type of aspiring man, on *a battlefield?*

This is the sort of question that haunts many men, today. It is one of the forms of wondering whether or not massive socio-political problems can be properly redefined in terms of the confrontation of single individuals with the moral disorder, crisis, and desperate need for decision in their own lives.

Until recently, any suggestion of this sort has been extremely unpopular. It has been called moralistic escapism, reactionary rejection of social responsibility, and visionary "idealism." The *real* world, it is said, is the world of brute political forces which must be controlled by corresponding forces of righteousness. Only during the past ten or fifteen years has it been openly asked if *"forces* of righteousness" may not turn out to be a contradiction in terms. This, of course, is an ancient metaphysical idea, drawn by Gandhi from traditional Indian religion (the doctrine of *Ahimsa,* or harmlessness), and by Christians from the moral law proclaimed by Jesus. It is a suggestion concerning not merely righteousness in particular conflict situations, but all human relationships. Some kind of "spiritual science" is implied by this proposal, and, for the first time in centuries of Western history, there are the beginnings of a hearing for such ideas.

A fundamental difference sets off the present "period of transition" from past epochs of

revolution. In the past, the break-up of systems of social organization—which means loss of faith in the prevailing myth, the alienation of large numbers of people from a declining orthodoxy which cannot serve their hopes and urgent needs—has been a preparation for the "good news" of another great faith. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, men turned from the Book of God to the Book of Nature to discover what to do next. But in the present, while the break-up is upon us, the only "news" of the hour is that there is no heart-spurring and energy-gathering doctrine available to sweep us on to greater heights. We stand, as it were, upon a lonely planet, lost in homeless space, each one a private atom in his void of broken dreams, asking if there is anything left in which a man can believe. By the gloomy half-light of multiple disenchantments, the historian sees man in his character of a wearer-out of faiths, while his capacity to make new ones, so often celebrated in other ages, now appears as a talent for self-delusion. This analysis served well enough during the period when the world was still held together by the beliefs of less critical, less vulnerable men, for then the disillusioned intellectual could take refuge on the sidelines, staying out of battles in which he could not believe, and making a virtue out of his disengagement and "objectivity." He found a niche in the security created by the stable faiths of simpler souls. But now the pernicious anemia of unbelief has spread its infection into the concrete structures of social organization, pressing all manner of men into a state of uncertainty. The elementary need to find believable reasons for what you do is becoming universal.

There is a sense in which this development may be seen as a part of the entire historical process of the age. Collectivization is not only an economic doctrine. At root it is a concept of meaning. Ethically, it is a claim of the brotherhood of man. Socio-politically, it is the doctrine of equality and even-handed justice. Technologically, it is the creation of a uniform environment and the imposition of the same external conditions and regularities upon the lives of all human beings. Psychologically, it is the funding of the elements of psychological experience in a single vast reservoir of stimuli and conditionings, through the monotone produced by low-grade mass communications. In such circumstances, when terrible doubts come, they are suffered by all men.

Another view of the situation may be obtained by comparing a great utopian romance of the nineteenth century with the anti-utopias of the present—Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*—with Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four.* Just to think of making this comparison brings the sudden conclusion that the structures of these various social systems have little importance: what counts is *the sort of human beings* who live in the structures. And yet the structures—the social patterns, the factors of conditioning—are said by our science to be what make the man! Roderick Seidenberg's *Post-Historic Man* is probably the best analysis of this contradiction, which he puts into the form of an absolute dilemma.

Now what we have in the present, as means of coping with our situation, is a central body of tired dogma, behind which lie the concealed apprehensions of the men in power, and dozens of small heterodoxies which draw on both the past and (hopefully) the future. We have nostalgic revivals of yesterday's faiths in both politics and religion, and tiny bands of Perfectionists who attempt to mature the logic of basic moral reform with urgent evidence of the failure of everything else. We have, in short, a spectrum of choices in which *every* proposition about the thing to do next is inherently vulnerable to destructive criticism. It is for this reason that we are unable to conduct a Dialogue about national affairs. Our psychological security cannot allow it. How, for example, could you get going an intelligible election debate in which one of Owen Wister's cowboy Gentlemen of the Range campaigns for

President against, say, Aldous Huxley's Grey Eminence?

The problem is to get acceptance of an account of the meaning of life which has some resemblance to the facts of experience, and then see what we can make of it in terms of a program for action. Now this means a fundamental revolution in thinking. It means a transfer of the idea of what is important, "real," or decisive, from the physical world to the moral world. It means deciding that the starting-point in both science and philosophy is the values immediately given in the consciousness of human beings—at the level, that is, of life where actual human striving begins. (The stock-yard theory of human welfare—plenty to eat, good medicine and sanitation, material security—has been proved ridiculously inadequate by both the Capitalists and the Communists.) And this means a return to the individual man as the only possible model of the good society. The logic of this proposition is already explicit, although, as yet, set down by very few. Following is an extraordinarily clear statement of the case, made by Alfred Reynolds in the title essay of his book, *Pilate's Question:*

> Society strives to sustain itself and to survive. As the majority of its members are as yet irresponsible and indifferent, this survival cannot be secured by responsible cooperation and free communication. The coercive apparatus will inevitably come into existence to ensure survival, and it will establish its own forms of enforced cooperation and communication. The inability and unreadiness of the many to act with respect and consideration for one another, leads to a rejection of equally shared responsibility. Hence the acceptance of leadership of those who are prepared to take decisions is the pattern of our society. The avoidance of responsibility by the many brings about the power of the few, who are required to take decisions for which they are invested with a range of privileges. In modern society, power is primarily concentrated in political organizations (parties), and within these organizations the final right of decision is vested in the leadership. . . .
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> The members of the existing power concentrations, however, are never secure in their tenancy of power. They have to be aware of aspirants from below and of rivals from outside. The masses are mere background for the bitter and never-ending struggle for power. The contestants often appeal to the many for their assistance, not because they hold them in high regard, but because they realize that the mass and its desire to be governed lie at the very root of their power. This unceasing battle for dominance is the content of all politics whatever the word may have meant in its etymological origin. Politics is the struggle for domination through power. Power is born out of the irresponsibility and anxiety of the many. Its root is anti-human, its practice, too, reveals many antihuman tendencies. As the struggle is unrelenting and unscrupulous, only he who is capable of recognizing its trends and of acting unhesitatingly in accordance with the demands of the situation, can maintain himself in power. Expediency is the key to the success of those who retain and extend their power. If anyone were to try to act in political life upon ethical principles, or did not recognize which courses of action were, in fact, expedient, he would soon fall by the wayside, and his more unscrupulous or shrewd rival would triumph. This explains why it is so widely held that "power corrupts." It does not "corrupt," but it allows no choice. When the mighty do "good" things for their subjects, it is because expediency does not always require them to act contrary to their premises, promises and principles. But having no choice based upon personal truth, they must act in accordance with the determining factors of the situation, or lose power. In this important sense the mighty are no more free than the subjects upon whom they ultimately depend.

The constant struggle for power, against forces below and outside, results in a series of frictions between the various power concentrations. These clashes cause social unrest, revolutions, and, on an international scale, economic crises and war. In critical situations, the ruling minority summons the aid of the ruled who are then often decimated and exposed to untold suffering to uphold the hegemony of their masters.

How can this situation be met? Some suggest that an overthrow of the organs of power (the State, capitalist enterprise, the Church in some countries) would solve the problem. This is a great mistake. As we have shown, the origin of power lies in the inability and unreadiness of the majority to take responsibility in the social sense. If this is not overcome, the majority must again delegate their responsibility to an elite. That is why the rebels of today are always the tyrants of tomorrow. The growth of a sense of responsibility beginning with ourselves, and continuing by word and example

among our neighbors—would be the only way to end the chain of tragic conflict and great unhappiness caused by the domination by man. . . .

The State requires man to be dependent, uniform, irresponsible (except in the sense of responsibility allocated from above) and capable only of organized and enforced communication. Briefly, the status quo, the established order, is safest when man is on a low level of personal development and when that level can be controlled by authority.

It is this trend in society which brings forth the conformist: the person anxious to show his *not* being different, self-asserting, rebellious. The conformist accepts rather than seeks, obeys rather than questions. In fact, he becomes hostile to the seeker, the questioner, the thinker. In a society of uniforms the civilian is suspect.

The "order" and the State regard conformity as the safeguard against so-called subversive influences: that is, influences which wish to make the human personality assert itself, demand its share of responsibility, and its right to express a truth which is personal. The conformist helps the hierarchical peak to deny man his birthright, which is *being himself*. Instead, man is made into a law-abiding citizen, a good soldier, an efficient worker, a "regular fellow." The dissenter becomes a crank, a freak, a rebel or a fool.

We are frequently confronted with the objection: "Surely—we cannot do without government!" This fallacious argument is founded on the confusion between government based upon power, and administration faced with practical tasks. We are fully aware that no human community could possibly exist without the coordination of its productive activities and the distribution of the necessities of life. This, and many other tasks entailing control over *things*, will remain with men under all forms of social organization. We believe that men and women in responsible cooperation would not require to be organized in a hierarchical order where instructions are given from above and compliance expected from below. They would be able to share tasks and responsibilities among themselves, and to establish an administration of things in the place of government over people. As a matter of fact, it is only a recent trend in history that governments have assumed responsibility for administrative functions.

This work by Mr. Reynolds seems to us to be proper social science for our time. "Research" to verify what he says is hardly necessary, since its truth is transparent. His conclusion, incidentally, of the need to limit government to responsibility of administration of things, is approximately that arrived at by Lyman Bryson in *The Next America* (Harper, 1959), one of the few volumes of authentic dialogue concerning public affairs that have appeared in recent years.

The obvious question, of course, is: How are we going to get anything like *that* going, in the modern world? And the obvious answer is: If the analysis is correct, we are not going to get anything else going that is worth having, so why not begin?

A longer answer is required. Establishing the sort of society described briefly at the end of the passage quoted from Mr. Reynolds will depend upon the maturity of the individuals involved. But maturation is some kind of *organic* process, which takes time, and how can we possibly hasten its coming?

Mechanistic politics or clever manipulations will not help us here. But what we can do is stop inhibiting the maturation of individuals, and this, also, is a task for individuals. At once we see the enormous importance of the psychology of health being investigated by A. H. Maslow and some others. We need *knowledge* about the attitudes of mind which encourage the development of maturity in others and ourselves. Changing circumstances will have a part in this, but we must be careful never to let our efforts to establish institutional reforms take the place of changes in the living environment of attitudes.

There is one more crucial consideration: *There can be no blueprint*, for what we are talking about is growth-situations, not ideal goals. There is no administrative timetable for the evolutionary process. People *mutate;* they cannot be nudged from step to step in this sort of development. *Leaps* are often involved, and there are long periods of apparently no motion at all. We do not know very much about the metabolism of these changes, and the tinkerers, the mechanists

who would like to push buttons in the human psyche, must be given blocks to play with, instead of people.

But there will be those who want something concrete to do, right now. They are right, of course. In any moment of history, there ought to be something "tangible" to do. In other words, the logic of the maturation process, when considered as a social as well as an individual enterprise, should point naturally to practical steps for increasingly mature people to take. They would be the steps least likely to strengthen the arbitrary authority of existing power-formations, and most likely create fields of action rich in opportunities for the exercise of maturity. They would be applications of the best social thinking of the hour, and would have behind them the strength of human aspiration. They would be things which, until now, we have avoided doing only to our common shame.

In the present, one might propose working for intelligent accommodation to the requirements of what has been called the Triple Revolution. Irving F. Laucks, one of the sponsors of this analysis, answers the question, "What do you mean, three revolutions?", with the following:

> (1) Due to automation and cybernation, there are no longer enough jobs to go round. The degrading influence of unemployment, relief, doles, made-work, feather bedding, and labor on non-productive or destructive "over-kill" jobs already affects more than one-third of our people.
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> (2) We dare no longer continue piling up weapons in order to provide jobs and profits. Already we have more than enough to demolish the world and every one of its inhabitants. The more we have, the sooner the ultimate explosion.
>
> (3) We must do something about the races and minorities no longer content to be held in subjection, both domestic and worldwide.
>
> Do these inter-related revolutions threaten the U.S.?
>
> Yes—on every one of the three counts.
>
> What can be done to prevent these revolutions from becoming violent?
>
> Mainly we must change worn-out attitudes and ways of doing things in time to meet the new conditions that science and technology have forced upon us.
>
> The first custom we must change concerns jobs and eating. Automation and self-directing machines are replacing jobs. We must somehow find ways to enable the surplus unemployed to eat and live decently.
>
> Since the '30's we have relied heavily on preparation for war to keep the economic machine going. In the meantime technology has made international conflict so terrible that its use is now proclaimed unthinkable.
>
> Either sufficient jobs must be provided in beneficial and necessary projects or the surplus population must be otherwise assured of an honorable living at the expense of machines. For half a century our preoccupation with war preparations has left enough social needs unfulfilled to furnish jobs for all.
>
> The once subject races and minorities must be assured that all peoples have equal rights to the resources of the earth, and that all will be enabled by education to contribute and acquire their full share in the progress of culture and knowledge.
>
> These three revolutions do not need to be accompanied by violence and bloodshed. Education and planning will succeed in making the necessary changes in man's habits and economic organization.

The intimate relationship of attitudes to these forms of action is quite clear. They are educational undertakings as well as concepts of political change or reform. Working intelligently for such objectives could not help but contribute to a more scientific understanding of the nature of society and of the elements of human character on which the good society will now and forever depend. (A more complete statement on the Triple Revolution may be obtained by writing to the Ad Hoc Committee,1120 ConnecticutAve., NW, Washington 36, D.C.)

REVIEW
"THE U.S. AND REVOLUTION"

THE "Occasional Paper" published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions under this title contains material that would serve as a good basis for an adult education seminar. It makes a philosophical approach to political science and also a philosophical approach to sociology. The contributors are Kenneth Boulding, William O. Douglas, Harry V. Jaffa, Clinton Rossiter, William V. Shannon, and Harvey Wheeler. A brief introduction is supplied by Robert M. Hutchins, president of the Center:

> The United States was born out of a revolution. Our convention has been to glory in this fact; and more often than not we have also gloried in, or at least morally supported, revolution in other places. But do we still want to live with the idea of revolution, or the prospect of it? We do not want it for ourselves because we feel we do not need it. Do we still believe in it for others when others want it?
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> In view of what is happening today in Asia, in Africa, in Cuba, it seems clear that there is going to be revolution in the world, and for a long time to come, whether we like it or not. What should our attitude toward it be, in the light of our revolutionary tradition, our opposition to revolution within our borders, our relations in the world? The Center asked several people what they thought the answers to these questions might be. Their responses make up this Occasional Paper.

Background for other developments is supplied by Harry Jaffa (author of a study of the Lincoln-Douglas debates), titled "Crisis of the House Divided." He writes:

> The United States was the first nation to center upon the stage of independent existence by linking its own welfare with that of all other nations in the announcement that what it sought for itself was the birthright of all other peoples as well. The good news spread, with ever-increasing velocity, to other lands and other people. Indeed, virtually all peoples everywhere have, in some way or manner, now demanded that birthright.
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> Although we always have welcomed and always shall welcome revolution inspired by our own example, the French Revolution long ago taught us that appeals to the rights of man can be the pretext by which demagogues attempt to justify the most brutal inhumanity. Wars of "liberation" may in fact be wars of conquest, and the assaults against feeble old tyrannies be the prelude to the establishment of vigorous new ones.
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> As Lincoln interpreted the Civil War, both sides had sinned against a common faith. Both had to make a common atonement to achieve a common redemption. The denials of either side were like Peter's denial of his Lord. They were somehow necessary for the passion that both were to undergo to become witnesses of a single truth, a truth which, like the house built upon it, had in a sense become divided against itself. Let us hope that the sacrifice that the American people then made may prove redemptive, not only for themselves alone.
>
> Adlai Stevenson has written that communism is the corruption of a dream of justice. To some extent, that corruption is due to the utopian over-expectation that peace, justice, and self-government would result simply from the dissemination of the American and French revolutionary principles. If the expulsion of monarchical devils did not bring paradise, some other devils, e.g., capitalism and imperialism, must lurk within. But political self-government requires as its foundation moral habits that are difficult enough to acquire even when all the devils alien to man's nature have been expelled. As Lincoln implied in his last and greatest address, men who are limited in their knowledge cannot judge other men as God might judge them.

Now let us turn to Justice Douglas, who writes:

> The three revolutions that the peoples of the world demand are (1) revolution against colonialism; (2) revolution against political feudalism; (3) revolution against economic feudalism. These three revolutions are coming very fast. To date they are mostly sponsored by Communists. The Communists have in fact created the impression that the ideas behind these revolutions are Communist in origin. This is wholly false, for the only contribution to revolutionary thought contributed by the Communists is dialectical materialism, whereby a minority doubles or trebles its power by reason of its unity and the vigor and fervor of its advocacy. The ideas behind these three revolutions are not Russian or Chinese. They are in part products of the Judaeo-Christian civilization. Some are reflected in the Koran. Some stem from the richness of the Hindu and Buddhist

> philosophies. Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison—these are some of the main sources of the democratic philosophy. Today Abraham Lincoln is a more powerful symbol of the equality of man than ever before. The Dedaration of Independence is still a force that lifts the hearts of men the world over. These ideas of independence, "consent of the governed," freedom, and justice are products of non-Communist societies. We indeed have first claim to them. Yet the monopoly over them which the Communists claim makes Khrushchev believe that communism is the wave of the future. It need not be. It will not be, if we give these revolutions our vigorous sponsorship.

The most important revolution of all, as every educator should know, occurs within the individual when he seeks a radically different orientation. "Individuality" has never resulted from legislation—not even carefully manipulated legislation meant to guarantee individual rights, which usually ends by reflecting the uncomfortable compromises of the citizenry. Contemporary man indeed faces "economic feudalism" on many portions of the globe, but contemporary man everywhere faces an even more stultifying feudalism of the mind—in the form of dilemmas created by "we-they" categories, which displace the confrontation of "you and I."

Ours is rapidly becoming a computer civilization, and the computer and the robot can never initiate broader perspectives, but are limited to patterns of thinking that have already been developed into techniques by the human brain. When we embrace the doctrine of political animism, we forget the individual in the group—and this is precisely what the computer *must* do. A paragraph by Joseph Wood Krutch (*Saturday Review*, Jan. 18) indicates that, so far as our thinking goes, we must seek redress not only against economic and political malfunctioning but also against the tendency of men who admire machines so much that they bind themselves to the machine's limitations. Mr. Krutch writes:

> The most inclusive of all the questions commonly asked today is not "Does God exist?" but "Is man a machine?" The answer given by some scientists and often accepted by the general public is "Yes." No other form of atheism is quite so absolute or holds so many implications for the future of our species. It banishes from the universe not only God but humanity itself. Before we accept it, we should examine the evidence very carefully.

COMMENTARY
LAW AS TEACHER

WE frequently speak of the importance of paradox in these pages, yet there is one paradox too often neglected in MANAS articles—the non-political content implied by all political systems. Because of the increasingly coercive character of the modern state, tract-for-the-times criticism tends to hide the projective vision of those who attempt to think in terms of the political principles of an ideal social order. It is in this sense that law is a teacher.

Of course law is not a teacher, but only an indoctrinator, once the idea of an underlying Natural Law is set aside. But despite the denials of skeptics, and regardless of the abuses which mar the work of conscientious legislators, there is a persistent conviction in most human beings that justice is a principle inherent in the grain of things, and not a convention devised by human sagacity, however excellent.

The other day a man who had spent half a lifetime teaching school remarked that in his experience, the one thing that a teacher must be in dealing with the young is *fair*. You can be strict, he said, so long as you are fair; or you can be easy-going, and still get results as a teacher if you are determined to be fair.

Now "fairness," or the will to do justice, is an abstraction. It comes out better for the intuitive man than one who tends to rely on rules. In fact, a good case can be made against any rule, once it is formulated. The problem of the legislator is to make laws which are least susceptible to misapplication under altering circumstances and unanticipated relationships. It is natural enough that after a long period of living under oppressive laws men will find ways of arguing that the idea of Natural Law or Immanent Justice is only a pious fraud intended to give the laws supernatural ground, and they propose, as a substitute, some kind of pragmatic rule for the determination of justice. But as we now know, even the best-intended pragmatic rules can be twisted into serving anti-human ends, and when this happens, some deep instinct in human beings rises in revolt. And there, in this revolt, you have the Natural Law once again declaring itself. It has not become any easier to understand, or to imitate in the form of social compacts, but its denial remains even more difficult. One might argue that men struggle far more ardently to *get* justice than they strive to *do* justice, and our problems multiply for this reason; what we cannot ignore, whatever our difficulties, is the reality of justice as an ideal.

The argument against the state is an argument which asserts the ultimate futility of *compelling* justice. This argument is made in recognition of the fact that a compelled act is a less than human act. Justice is flawed whenever power is used to reduce the humanity of human beings. It departs altogether, along with law as teacher, whenever power exceeds reason as its tool.

But the law, as a principle of order, is far more than a threat of compulsion. It is a way of publicizing what thoughtful men have declared to be suitable and fruitful modes of behavior for people whose lives are interrelated in many practical ways. It is a vital stimulus to reflection on the facts and implications of these relationships. Discovery that a law is bad is not a discovery against the law as an ideal. It is simply evidence that the relationships have been improperly understood, poorly defined, and mistakenly ordered. Conceptions about wisdom and the desire for the good of others can be embodied in the law, without any reference to compulsion. A wholly voluntaristic society need not be without recognized principles of order or organization. And even if men find it necessary to safeguard their social ideals with certain restraints, there still remains the primary structure which gives definition to the order, and only subordinately to its preservation.

The great question seems to be: Whose thinking about law deserves our respect—the thinking of educators who confess they are looking for the truth and want others to join the search; or the thinking—is it really thinking?—of those who are confident that they have found the truth, or enough of it to entitle them to define it for all the rest?

We are dealing, here, with a comparison of the tendencies and temper of human beings, not of a good system of law with a bad one. Law, in short, can be a teacher, but only if it is made and administered by men who want it to teach. And since the laws under which we live have a mixed origin, and quite imperfect administration, they have a mixed effect, so far as teaching is concerned.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

EDUCATION AND METAPHYSICS—II

ANY discussion of metaphysics in relation to education—if one takes "transcendental" thought seriously—comes to involve the entire spectrum of serious thought. Last week, for instance, we established a relationship between the open-ended educational dialogues of which Robert Hutchins speaks, and a study of those "first principles" which can be individually apprehended, and then used to form an ideative consensus. A study of first principles, in turn, leads to evaluation of accepted modes of behavior—including local laws and national policies. While the politician may find incredible the idea of a necessary connection between metaphysics and politics, a Supreme Court justice may be expected to look behind the law to some ultimate principle of right or justice, which the law was originally intended to articulate. The third chapter of *Humanistic Education and Western Civilization* is titled "The Society of the Dialogue." On the subject of what amounts to the relationship between metaphysics and government, William O. Douglas writes:

> Whether *the law* or a popular mood restricts talk and debate, when traffic in ideas is slowed, a nation is changed. New and different ideas may then even seem dangerous; inventive genius is thwarted and some of the dynamism of the Society of the Dialogue is lost.
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> If the Dialogue is to flourish, the First Amendment must be accepted in full vigor, as distinguished from a rule fashioned from day to day to fit the mood of the dominant group. Ideas make men free; the real un-American is he who suppresses them. Yet whatever the Constitution says, whatever the judges rule are not important if our communities do not honor free expression. If that is to come to pass, we must accept moderation in debate and discussion, the role of an opposition, the right to dissent. If the Society of the Dialogue is to flourish, our people must reflect a spirit of respect for the First Amendment, a tolerance even of ideas that they despise and of their advocates. If that kind of regime is to be established, we must accept a moral responsibility to make the First Amendment work for all groups, not just for one faith, one race, or one ideology. That means a vision broad enough to permit discourse on a universal plane; only then will we be able to communicate with a multi-ideological world. Community attitudes as well as *the law* must be shaped so that they become instruments which encourage, not the suppression, but the release of talents and energies in the Dialogue.

In "The Universities of Western Civilization," Elisabeth Borgese discusses transition in religious attitudes:

> Re-evaluation, in the perspective of universalism, is, indeed already in the making.
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> A typical example is the evolution of the Christian religion in the context of the Ecumenical movement. The universalizing force of this movement, acting not only on those who are Christian today but even on those who may become Christian tomorrow, tends to shear off all that is sectarian, accidental and divisive, and to emphasize a return to the origin, the nucleus: the *individual* that precedes any schisms: the essence capable of universalization.
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> Current attempts—from Teilhard de Chardin and Danielou to Weizsacker—to find a common denominator for faith and knowledge, on which to reconcile religion, science, and technology, are, in a way, another symptom of the movement back to origins: back, that is, to a state of mind preceding any specialization: a state of mind of the essential, in function of its universalization.
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> Politics is the most conservative of all arts and sciences. Bergier and Panwels say, in the *Dawn of Magic,* that there has not been an original thinker since Lenin. And, I would add, as a political *thinker* he was not very original either. Neither the revolution in the arts and sciences nor the evolution of new forms of collectives nor the universalization of Western culture—which are three of the main characteristics of our age—has penetrated official political thinking or the practice of government: which, obviously, accounts for the fact that official political thinking is becoming more and more schizophrenic, and the practice of government is impractical. There have been times—in the seventeenth or eighteenth century—when political theory was in the vanguard. Those were the times in which political revolutions were maturing. Ours is not a time of political revolutions. Politics, today, is a

> contingent science, a secondary art: an accompaniment.
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> Yet the trend is unmistakable. The universalization of democracy makes inevitable a return to origins, to essence.

Milton Mayer's contribution, "To Know and To Do," emphasizes the difficulties of the contemporary educator: we do not understand that metaphysics is a natural activity of both mind and soul, and while we pay lip-service to the greatness of ancient Greece, we have lost touch with the sources of some of this inspiration. Mr. Mayer writes:

> We are not visionary these days, no more so (if no less) than our fathers who stoned the prophets. And our children (unless they are black) reject neither the image we present nor our preoccupation with images. There is a reality—the reality of where we are and how we get there, of what we can and cannot do; and of what, if anything, can be done about it. The belief of the more recent fathers that education and research would disclose that reality has been sterile, and its sterility illuminates our situation.
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> We are vestigial Greeks. We adhere to knowledge, but we have cut ourselves off from the mysticism that threaded Greek rationalism. We dying Greeks undertake to prove we-care-not-what by reason alone; and we succeed; and our success in the end undoes us. The thrall of Emerson's Things holds us in *its* meaningless mystique.
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> It is doubtful that educators can contribute much to the resolution of the moral crisis, whose resolution is the key to every other. They are inside the institution whose utility is in question and whose faith the question threatens. Nor is our consideration of the curriculum central. For the reform that is called for is not a reform of education, but a reform that *calls for* a reform of education. It is not a reform at all, but a revolution. It is the revolution of man, and it wants something more than our bootstraps and our marvelous machines. . . .

There are, we should say, two kinds of revolutionaries. The first begins his work with strong feelings of outrage, a compulsion to rebel against the constricting circumstances of a bad man-made environment. While we often honor this rebel, his dramatic presence sometimes obscures the existence of other men who represent a second type of revolutionary—those who are so busy trying to create "the world as it might be" in their immediate environment that they have little time or energy for attacking the world of stultifying systems as it presently exists. Such men, of course, if they are to be courageous pioneers, will have trouble enough from their environment, but they seem less to "fight back" than to fight forward. They must, we think, be possessed of some sort of evolutionary vision; they must be transcendentalists, and non-dialectical metaphysicians. They are the enduring element and support of the great "Humanist tradition."

FRONTIERS

News of a Sort

AN Italian priest, Father Balducci, is now serving eight months in an Italian jail for declaring in print that "in case of total war Roman Catholics would not only have the right to desert, it would be their duty to do so." According to the April *Fellowship in Action* (news supplement of the Christian pacifist *Fellowship),* the priest was also criticized for "attributing unlimited autonomy to the conscience of the individual." Father Balducci is editor of the Roman Catholic review, *Testimonianze,* and the first Italian citizen to be sentenced by a civil tribunal for defending the rights of conscientious objectors in the press. . . . One wonders what will happen to the editors and contributors of the new Italian journal, *Azione Nonviolenta,* the first issue of which appeared recently in Perugia (reviewed in *Peace News* for April 10). It contains an article by Peter Cadogan, who is an active member of the Committee of 100. Pietro Pinna, secretary of Consulta della Pace, and the first conscientious objector in Italy, writes about nonviolent action in that country.

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Also reported in *Fellowship in Action* is the picketing of South African Government offices (in Johannesburg) by a group of white women, "many of them middle-aged, conservative housewives from wealthy, influential families." The women hold silent vigil, wearing black sashes to show their shame and to mourn for the victims of South Africa's oppressive racial laws. They stand with bowed heads, displaying placards which give the reasons for their protest. Mrs. Jean Sinclair, a mother of five, who is directing the project, explained: "They'd like to label us Communists, but with members throughout the whole of South Africa, many from influential families, they cannot succeed."

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A European correspondent writes to *Peace News* for April 17 to tell the story of Dr. Robert Hans Guenther Havemann, a fifty-four-year-old professor of physical chemistry in Humboldt University, East Berlin, who is waging a single-handed struggle for freedom of thought in the German Democratic Republic and within the (Communist) Socialist Unity Party. A Politburo spokesman claims the professor wants to "throw dialectic materialism overboard." Known to Nobel prizewinners as a distinguished scientist, and to East Germans as a "Communist of long standing," Dr. Havemann presents something of a problem to the party managers. While he has been suspended from his duties at the university, he rejected the opportunity offered him to leave East Germany, apparently regarding the campaign for freedom there as more important than his personal liberty. His ideas are no secret to German students. About 1500 of them attended his lectures every Friday, from October, 1963 to February, 1964, some coming from as far away at Leipzig and Halle to hear him speak at Humboldt on "The Natural Scientific Aspects of Philosophical Problems." Havemann maintains that it is his duty to his party to demand "greater freedom of information for the citizens of the German Democratic Republic." "Reactionary regimes," he says, "have always tried to keep the people in ignorance." He wants a socialist world "in which each can act according to his own initiative and aspiration, without being restricted by orders, regulations, and 'principles'," and he calls for intellectual frontiers open to the West. "A world can never be changed," he argues, "if the revolutionaries cut themselves off from the rest of the world." The *Peace News* correspondent says: "Havemann has friendly contacts with many scientists of no party allegiance in the German Democratic Republic's universities. . . . He has many friends who share his convictions among the new guard of . . . technocrats in industry."

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Again from *Peace News* (March 20), we learn that on March 3 two thousand Spanish students staged a sit-down strike in Madrid because the police prevented Prof. Enrique Tierno Galvan,

known to have socialist sympathies, from addressing students at Madrid University on "Political Compromise." They simply stayed in the hall where they had come to hear him, and remained for hours. A few days later, in Lisbon, five hundred Portuguese students defied the authorities by holding a Student Day on March 4, despite an official ban. A New York *Times* report said that heavy forces of armed police were needed to disperse the students.

Gleaning from a gleaner, we take from John Ball's column in the April 10 *Peace News* the substance of a report he found in the New Zealand *Christian Pacifist*, concerning a schoolboy revolt in 1909, "when a surprise measure of conscription was introduced." In that year, a Defence Act was passed which required every boy from twelve to twenty-one to "enlist." The boys thereupon formed a "Passive Resisters' Union," published their own monthly paper, and defied the law. By June, 1913, there were more than 3,000 convictions and a number of boys were imprisoned in a military fortress. When attempts were made to impose military duties on them, they went on a hunger strike. John Ball summarizes:

> Better conditions and the abandonment of military duties were conceded to the imprisoned boys by the Cabinet after delegates to the 1913 Labour Congress marched to Parliament to protest. The conscription age was also raised from 12 to 14, but it takes more than a hunger strike to defeat a government, and the conscription law stayed.