VOLUME XXI, NO. 46
NOVEMBER 13, 1968

THE LOSS OF THE FUTURE

[This is Part One of an article by Wendell Berry, now teaching English at Stanford University. The article first appeared in the quarterly, *Religious Humanism* (Box 278, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387), with copyright by the author. Reprinted here by permission, it will be included in a book of essays by Mr. Berry, to be published next spring by Harcourt, Brace and World. A book of Mr. Berry's poems, *Openings*, is currently available (also by Harcourt).]

I

WE are a remnant people in a remnant country. We have used up the possibilities inherent in the youth of our nation: the new start in a new place with new vision and new hope. We have gone far toward using up our top-soils and our forests and many of our other natural resources. We have come, or we are coming fast, to the end of what we were given. The good possibilities that may lie ahead are only those that we will make ourselves, by a wiser and more generous and more exacting use of what we have left.

But we are still an exceedingly destructive people, and our destructions are still carried out, as they have been from the beginning, on the assumption that the earth is inexhaustible, and that we, the predestined children of abundance, are infallible. We live in a fallen world by the dangerous presumption that we are unfallen. Only a nation that is conscious of its own guilt can change and renew itself. We are guilty of grave offenses against our fellow men and against the earth, but we have not admitted that we are.

We must be tried now by the knowledge that what is at stake in our behavior is the world. The world is now our dependent. It is at our mercy. We have reached a point at which we must either consciously desire and choose and determine the future of the earth, or submit to such an involvement in our destructiveness that the earth, and ourselves with it, must certainly be destroyed. We have come to this at a time when it is hard, if not impossible, to foresee a future that is not terrifying.

It is deeply disturbing, yet I think it is true, that as a nation we no longer have a future that we can imagine and desire. The best we are able to hope for now seems to be to avoid chaos and obliteration by a sequence of last-ditch compromises. We have lost the hopeful and disciplining sense that we are preparing a place to live in, and for our children to live in. Instead of an articulate vision of a decent world, we have the bureaucracy and the rhetoric of the Great Society, an attempt through organization and wealth to delay or avoid the obligation of new insight, a change of ways, a change of heart. We do not believe in problems that do not have "practical" solutions. We have become the worshippers and evangelists of a technology and wealth and power which surpass the comprehension of most of us, and for which the wisest of us have failed to conceive an aim. And we have become, as a consequence, more dangerous to ourselves and to the world than we are yet able to know.

The great increase of our powers is itself maybe the most immediate cause of our loss of vision. It must be a sort of natural law that any increase in man's strength must involve a lengthening of his shadow; as we grow in power we are pursued by an ever-growing darkness. Our science has given us poisons which we cannot be trusted not to use against our land, or against our kind. Our mechanical know-how has given us machines that have, as a necessary concomitant of the power to build, the power to destroy—and we have used them to destroy. Our power over the atom has made us the prospective authors of Doomsday, though it has not made us capable of guessing the full implications and requirements of such power. Even medical science, in addition to

its benefits, must produce the horrors of overpopulation, and the hardly less troubling increase in the number of people who live beyond the pleasure of living. The anxiety is compounded by the doubt that man has ever possessed anything that he has not at some time made the motive or the means of his evil—or that he has not sooner or later put to the worst possible use.

Power has darkened us. The greater it grows the harder it is for us to see beyond it, or to see the alternatives to it. It exercises as compelling an influence on us, who possess and use it, as it does on those we use it upon and against. In spite of all our official talk, now, about our high motives in Viet Nam, most of us suspect that the only dependable explanation of our presence there is that we are strong enough to be there; for some that means also to be a justification. The rule, acknowledged or not, seems to be that if we have great power we must use it. We would use a steam shovel to pick up a dime. We have experts who can prove there is no other way to do it. A question that must trouble the rest of the world a good deal more than it troubles us is: Can we learn to use our power to avoid the doom of it? Has anybody—ever?

Along with the growth of our power, our history has acted to dull our sense of the future. Our history is not only the fund of inspiring events that in our obsessive self-congratulation we have made it out to be—it is also the record of a tragic and shameful wasting of the land and of human possibility. We have a past that has fed greedily and indiscriminately on our future. And the evidence is all around that the habits of the past are still present.

We come to the problem of the future, then, not with the endowments of a new nation and with all time before us, but handicapped by a history and a habit of waste, our power only doubtfully in control, and time turning against us.

Consideration of the future—which has become for us, now, so largely a question of self-control—leads necessarily to the consideration of ideals. Futurity and idealism are so closely involved with each other that, in my own mind, they function nearly as synonyms. The future is the time and the space and the ground of the ideal. The ideal, unless one believes in literal prophecy, is the only guide to the future. Men and nations who have no idealism—no order of hopefulness—have no future, or none they can bear to think about.

Our loss of any appealing vision of the future seems to me inseparable, both in terms of cause and effect, from our loss of idealism. Our public attitude has become political and cynical. Our political life is no longer effectively disciplined by any articulate political ideal. Though we talk compulsively—or our politicians do—of our high destiny and aims, the truth is that we no longer expect much in that line, or hope for much. We do not hope for much because our estimate of human worth and human possibility has dwindled. We do not expect much because we expect our leaders to be corrupt as a matter of course. We expect them, as we say, to be "realistic."

But one of the most damaging results of the loss of idealism is the loss of reality. Neither the ideal nor the real is perceivable alone. The ideal is apparent and meaningful only in relation to the real, the real only in relation to the ideal. Each is the measure and corrective of the other. Where there is no accurate sense of the real world, idealism evaporates in the rhetoric of self-righteousness and self-justification. Where there is no disciplined idealism the sense of the real is invaded by sentimentality or morbidity and by fraudulent discriminations. And that, it seems too probable, is a fairly just description of the present state of our national life. The voice of it, of course, is that of the television set: a middle ground, a no-place, between the ideal and the real, where mental and moral discriminations are not only ignored but are less and less possible. War is funny. Sex is surreptitious, omnipresent, consummated only in advertisements. Stupidity is only amusing, as are such personal afflictions as

speech impediments. Violence is entertaining, and manly. Patriotism is either maudlin or belligerent.

I cannot avoid the speculation that one of the reasons for our loss of idealism is that we have been for a long time in such constant migration from country to city and from city to city and from neighborhood to neighborhood. It seems to me that much of idealism has its source in the relation between a man and the place he thinks of as his home. The patriotism, say, that grows out of the concern for a particular place in which one expects to live one's life is a more exacting emotion than that which grows out of concern for a nation. The charity that grows out of regard for neighbors with whom one expects to live one's life is both a discipline and a reward; the charity that, knowing no neighbors, contributes to funds and foundations is, from the personal standpoint, only an excuse. It is patriotism in the abstract—nationalism—that is most apt to be fanatic or brutal or arrogant.

It is when charity is possible only through institutions that it becomes indifferent, neither ennobling to the giver nor meaningful to the receiver. Institutional neighborliness can function as the very opposite of neighborliness, without imparing the moral credit or the self-satisfaction of the supporters of the institution. There is good reason, for instance, to suspect that the foreign mission programs of certain Christian denominations have served as substitutes for decent behavior at home, or as excuses for indecent behavior at home: in return for saving the souls of Negroes in Africa, one may with a free conscience exploit and demean the lives of Negroes in one's own community.

The breakup of our small communities and neighborhoods has produced a society of ghettos. I do not mean just the much-noticed ghettos of minority races and the urban poor. There are also ghettos of the rich, the intellectuals, the scientists, the professors, the politicians, and so on and on. These ghettos are not necessarily made up of groups living in the same place, but the people in them have the same assumptions, the same sort of knowledge, the same mentality, often much the same experience. They communicate mostly, or exclusively, with each other. Their exclusiveness and insularity foster the same homogeneity of attitude and the same self-protective psychology as any other ghetto. It is possible in the larger cities to live in a liberal intellectual ghetto, in which basic assumptions are rarely challenged or argued. It is possible to live in a university ghetto in which scholars and theoreticians converse only with other scholars and theoreticians in the same "field." Washington, one gathers, has a ghetto of politicians and a ghetto of bureaucrats—or several of each.

Those who by natural endowment and by training might have become the spokesmen and representatives of the ideal in our life have instead become specialists—experts in aspects. Those equipped by wealth or by power to bear great responsibilities have gathered into communities of themselves, insulated specifically against the claims of responsibility. What we have as a result are not communities but fragment-communities, the fragments communicating by means that can only be institutional.

But ideals grow out of and are corrected by the sense of the whole community and the individual's relation to it. There is no partial idealism. Specialists, answerable only to the requirements of their specialty, are remote from the possibility of idealism—hence, so far as the life and health of the community are concerned, they are without controls, particles in an expanding disorder. They are obviously and even notoriously prone to self-interest and to the perversion or misuse of their abilities. And they are indefatigable self-justifiers.

Anyone totally committed to a single pursuit almost inevitably becomes the propagandist of his own effort. As a nation of specialists, we have become a nation obsessed with self-justification. When we do not have it, we make it. We are by now plenty familiar with the make-work of

manufacturers who need products, scholars who need projects, politicians who need issues, generals who need armies. We speak the language of a people bent on justifying everything we do or want to do, whether it is justifiable or not.

This preoccupation, with its consequent language of self-praise, is epidemic. It is chronic at the highest levels of the government. Much of the blame for the erosion of our idealism must be laid to the government, because the language of ideals has been so grossly misused by the propagandists. The liars of policy and public relations are addicted to a rhetoric of high principle. Our political ideals fill their mouths as unctuously, and with as little involvement of conscience or intelligence, as so many pieces of fat meat.

In the discussions over our war in Viet Nam Senator Fulbright has asked whether we might be guilty of "arrogance of power." Even if one is disposed to believe in our innocence, it must be acknowledged that the question is of the sort that a moral people ought to be willing to bear against itself and to make the occasion of a strenuous self-appraisal. Instead, the president and others in the government have replied with repetitions of what they have always said, hardly varying the rhythm, and with insinuations against the character of Senator Fulbright—providing perhaps the clearest evidence so far that we have indeed become arrogantly powerful. We deal with what is surely the most relevant question that can be raised in a powerful country by ignoring it. We ignore it by using against it the language of our idealism, made so dogmatic and sanctimonious and automatic as to be proof against criticism, doubt, argument, even evidence—all that a live idealism must not only accept but invite. Our ears have been so dulled by such talk that we no longer notice how readily its voices slide from principle to self-righteousness and self-congratulation, and from that to personal slur. If one *subscribes* to high principles with enough fanfare, one need not act on them. So long as government speaks with a fervent idealism it is free to prolong its inertia and to indulge in expedient corruptions.

This eagerness to assure institutional survival at any cost is apparent also in the churches, and most of the clergy speak an inflated high-toned language that is analogous in character and in function to the government's rhetoric. It is the language of a group mentality so perfectly certain of its rightness in everything that the answers are all implicit in the questions, and the questions in the answers—a language seeking the comfort of belief without alternative.

As a consequence of this fragmentation and vaporization of the ideal, reality becomes a sort of secular inferno in which nothing good is imaginable. This is the realism of many of our writers, but there is no reason to believe that it is only literary; it is a prevalent state of mind. When we look to the future we see no such visions as Jefferson saw; we see the cloud of Hiroshima standing over the world. We know, though we make it a desperate secret from ourselves, that in refusing the restraints of principle that might have withheld that power, we created not only an epochal catastrophe, but the probability that it will happen again.

In a society of ghettos many of the vital labors of our duty to each other cease to be personal. They are necessarily taken over by institutions; the distances between the giver and the receiver, the asker and the answerer, are so great that they are simply no longer negotiable by individuals. A man living in the country or a small town might aid one or two needy neighbors himself; the most obvious thing for him to do would not be to phone some bureau or agency of the government. But what could he do if he were to try to exercise the same charitable impulse in an urban slum, or in Appalachia? The moral dilemma is suggested by a walk on the Bowery, equipped with common decency and a pocketful of change. What is the Samaritan expected to do when he meets, instead of one in need, hundreds? Even if

he had the money he would not have the time. Now, in America, I think he is likely to feel that he is expected to do nothing. He is able to reflect that there are organizations to take care of that sort of thing.

My point is not that these agencies do their work badly, but that having contributed to one of them, or even having heard of one, the citizen is freed of a concern that is one of the necessary disciplines of citizenship. And the institutionalization of charity has its counterparts in all aspects of our life, from the government down.

This usurpation of private duties by the institutions has fostered in the public mind the damaging belief that morality can be divided neatly into two halves: public and private. It appears easy now to assume that institutions will uphold and enliven the principles of democracy and Christianity, say, while individuals may without serious consequence pursue the aims of self-interest by the methods and the standards of self-interest. It is hardly necessary to say that men are commonly found who give passionate oratorical support—and, through the institutions, financial support—to the ideals of liberty and brotherhood, at the same time that in their private lives they behave and speak in ways antithetical to those ideas.

It thus becomes possible to imagine the development among us of a society that would be perfectly hypocritical: a democratic government without democratic citizens, a Christian church among whose members there would be no Christians. In such a society it would be natural rather than disturbing for the exercise of patriotism to be taken over by investigating committees and the F.B.I. and the Pentagon, private conscience replaced by the Internal Revenue Service, governmental charity programs used to enrich the rich, churches used as social clubs and conscience sops for the dominant classes, ideals made the gimmicks of salesmanship, decent behavior adopted as the sham of campaigns.

The notion of a difference between private and public morality is, of course, utterly fraudulent—a way of begging every difficult question. Only men—separate, specific, one by one—can be moral. What is called the morality of a society is no more than a consequence of the morality of individuals.

There is, by the same token, no such thing as a purely private morality, for the morals of private citizens are public *in effect*, and are increasingly so.

WENDELL BERRY

Palo Alto, Calif.

(*To be concluded*)

REVIEW
A SOCIOLOGY OF VALUE

A BOOK that is intended as a text for college students, but could easily serve the general reader by providing symmetrical background on many current issues, is Frank Lindenfeld's *Radical Perspectives on Social Problems* (paperbound, $4.50), just published by Macmillan. As editor of this collection of "readings in critical sociology," Dr. Lindenfeld explains:

> The readings are designed for generalists, not specialists in the hope that these will be useful to students and citizens in their attempts to understand, cope with, and change the world around them. . . . Much of the work of sociologists has tended to be "ideological" in the sense that its underlying assumptions have reflected support of existing institutions. This anthology is intended to be a utopian antidote, an interpretation of the social world dedicated to the possibility and the desirability of radical change. My aim is to help cultivate the utopian sensibility: the ability to look at social patterns and to see them not only as they are and as they have been, but also as they might be, if . . .

The book has twelve sections, presented in three parts. The first part is concerned with the relation between social science and human values. The contributors are not men who believe in a "value-free" science. They regard science as a means of determining and realizing value, and some of them argue that social scientists who try to ignore moral questions actually smuggle into their work their own value-assumptions, but without letting the reader know what they have done—and, often, without knowing themselves that they have done it.

The second part is made up of papers which examine the major problems of advanced industrial societies. These problems include the vulgarizing phenomena of "mass" societies, issues of power, the habits and tendencies of the Warfare State, the oppressions of poverty, racial discrimination, the failure of education, the destructive influences of urban life, sexual confusions, the role of the family, various kinds of crime, inequities of law, the justifications of civil disobedience, and attitudes toward work and leisure. The third section deals with theories and agencies of social change.

The primary value of this book lies in its vindication of the scientific spirit as a means of demonstrating the complexity of the problems that are up for popular discussion, today. At the same time, the contributors show how these problems may be examined with both imagination and discipline. It becomes evident that many of these problems are not "new," but old issues intensified or in new forms. The essays are also models of *orderly* discussion, showing that intelligent restraint is no barrier to inventive inquiry. The book illustrates the high value of education when its fruits are put to work without any "academic" evasions of social responsibility. It should have the effect of restoring respect for learning.

The first section establishes the importance of the moral attitudes of the social scientist himself. Men who practice science must put aside their partisanships and any personal biasses they become aware of, but not their hopes or their *vision.* For their work to be of value, they must use their vision deliberately, and know and explain that they are doing this. The first essays in this book, then, dispel the illusion of an independent, value-free "objectivity" in the deliveries of social science. It becomes plain that sociologists are men like other men, whose use to the rest of us grows out of the fact that they have given close and continued attention to the field of social relationships. They are our helpers because they are exemplars of serious study, but they are not "authorities." The contributors to the first section—John R. Seeley, C. Wright Mills, Abraham Maslow, and John Horton—are all men of this character, illustrating at the outset the scope and intentions of the book. Maslow's paper, "Psychological Data and Human Values," is plainly a foundation for a "human-striving" sort of sociology. After his analysis of the "data" under consideration, Dr. Maslow says:

> By taking these data into account, we can solve many value problems that philosophers have struggled with ineffectually for centuries. For one thing, it looks as if *there were* a single ultimate value for mankind, a far goal toward which all men strive. This is called variously by different authors self-actualization, self-realization, integration, psychological health, individuation, autonomy, creativity, productivity, but they all agree that this amounts to realizing the potentialities of the person, that is to say, becoming fully human, everything that the person can become.

While not all the papers are so forthright in their humanistic basis, most of the contributors are actively engaged in the redefinition of social science as the disciplined quest for human good. The "science" is in the discipline, not in the abandonment of ideas of value. Because of this new approach, social science itself is in the throes of transition, and several of the contributors concern themselves with problems of reorientation. For example, John Horton's paper, "Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems," becomes an exercise in self-consciousness for the serious reader. Mr. Horton shows that all social theories recognize implicitly either an "order" standard of the good society, or one based on conflict in behalf of change. Study of this paper drives the reader to inspect his own habitual judgments concerning the "good" and "bad" in social events. Mr. Horton shows how preconceptions work in this process:

> As a generalization, groups or individuals committed to the maintenance of the status quo employ order models of society and equate deviation with non-conformity to institutionalized norms. Dissident groups, striving to institutionalize new claims, favor a conflict analysis of society and an alienation theory of their own discontents. For example, this social basis of preference for one model is clear in even the most superficial analysis of stands taken on civil rights demonstrations by civil rights activists and members of the Southern establishment. For Governor Wallace of Alabama, the 1965 Selma-Montgomery march was a negative expression of anomy; for Martin Luther King it was a positive and legitimate response to alienation. King argues that the Southern system is maladaptive to certain human demands, Wallace that the demands of the demonstrators are dysfunctional to the South. However, if one considers their perspectives in relationship to the more powerful Northern establishment, King and not Wallace is the order theorist.
>
> In sociology, order analysis of society is most often expressed by the professional establishment and its organs of publication. Alienation analysis is associated with the "humanitarian" and "political" mavericks outside of, opposed to, or in some way marginal to the established profession of sociology.

From a study of this paper, the reader realizes he and all other men have need to decide what sort of change and how much of it can go on without fatal destruction of order, and to recognize the deep emotional ground of both the uncertainties and the longings in various opinions on this question. He finds that a candid open-mindedness may be the chief prerequisite—and the one most commonly lacking—for reaching working solutions.

A noticeable quality in papers of this sort is the free play of the imagination. Because these sociologists and other writers are thinking like human beings, and not as narrow specialists, their developments sometimes "take off," as in this passage by Ian McHarg, in a contribution titled "Man and Environment":

> Creation of a physical environment by organisms as individuals and as communities is not exclusively a human skill. The chambered nautilus, the beehive, and the coral formation are all efforts by organisms to take inert materials and dispose them to create a physical environment. In these examples the environments created are complementary to the organisms. They are constructed with great economy of means; they are expressive; they have, in human eyes, great beauty, and they have survived periods of evolutionary time vastly longer than the human span. Can we hope that man will be able to change the physical environment to create a new ecology in which he is the primary agent, but which will be self-perpetuating and not a retrogressive process? We hope that man will be able at least to equal the chambered nautilus, the bee, and the coral—that he will be able to build a physical environment indispensable to life, constructed with economy of means, having lucid expression and containing great

> beauty. When man learns this single lesson he will be enabled to create by natural process an environment appropriate for survival—the minimum requirement of a humane environment. When this view is believed, the artist will make it vivid and manifest. Medieval faith, interpreted by artists, made the Gothic cathedral ring with holiness. Here again we confront the paradox of man in nature and man transcendent. The vernacular architecture and urbanism of earlier societies and primitive cultures today, the Italian hill town, medieval village, the Dogon community, express the first view, a human correspondence to the nautilus, the bee, the coral. Yet this excludes the Parthenon, Hagia Sofia, Beauvais, statements which speak of the uniqueness of man and his aspirations. Neither of these postures is complete, the vernacular speaks too little of the consciousness of man, yet the shrillness of transcendence asks for the muting of other, older voices.

Among the contributors to the second section are Jules Henry, Edgar Friedenberg, Margaret Mead, David Riesman, Kropotkin, Marx, and Herbert Marcuse. The last section, concerned with social change, offers material by C. Wright Mills, Staughton Lynd, Errico Malatesta, Dwight Macdonald, A. S. Neill, and Percival and Paul Goodman (an extract from *Communitas*). Most of these discussions are seminal. The extract from Macdonald, for example, is from the most important section of his book, *The Root Is Man*, containing the essence of his criticism of Marxism and the foundation of his Humanist stance in politics. Neill's statements about education are an indispensable light on any attempt to reform education, and the work of the Goodmans should be in the hands of all those who try to think about community planning.

In general, it may be said that this book is an extremely valuable link between the past and the future in social thought. It picks up elements from what might be called the classical expression of the revolutionary past—showing the reader why men such as Marx, Kropotkin, and Malatesta have exercised so much influence on radical thought—and adds the refining self-consciousness of present-day scholars, men such as John Seeley and Barrington Moore. The essay by Stokely Carmichael (in the second section) should be required reading for anyone desiring to hold opinions on Black Power. We shall hope to return to this book in future issues.

COMMENTARY
THE EXACTING EMOTION

IN this week's lead article, Wendell Berry says that the patriotism "that grows out of the concern for a particular place in which one expects to live one's life is a more exacting emotion than that which grows out of concern for a nation." There is a vast corrective of modern ways in this simple sentence, and illustrious precedent for its idea. Gandhi wrote on this principle in *Hind Swaraj*, extending its meaning:

> Swadeshi is the spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. . . . My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth. But it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. . . . For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and thereby through of humanity.

In *Meditations on Quixote*, first printed in Spain in 1914, Ortega laid down what became the rule of both his life and his thought:

> The intuition of higher values fertilizes our contact with lesser ones, and love for what is near and small makes the sublime real and effective within our hearts. For the person for whom small things do not exist, the great is not great.
>
> We must try to find for our circumstance, such as it is, and precisely in its very limitation and peculiarity, its appropriate place in the immense perspective of the world. We must not stop in perpetual ecstasy before hieratic values, but conquer the right place among them for our individual life. In short, the reabsorption of circumstance is the concrete destiny of man.
>
> My natural exit toward the universe is through the mountain passes of the Guadarrama or the plain of Ontigola. This sector of circumstantial reality forms the other half of my person; only through it can I integrate myself and be fully myself. . . . I am myself plus my circumstance, and if I do not save it, I cannot save myself.

So Ortega began, in his first book, his search for "the iridescent gemlike Spain that could have been," using Quixote as a Spanish paradigm of heroism, and came eventually to speak to the heroic quality in men throughout the world.

Cries of longing for "the truth" are indeed a careless gesture, exhibiting self-indulgent melancholy. Truth sufficient to our needs exists and is as much known as we permit it to be. One has only to read Mr. Berry carefully to find this the case.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
EXPERIMENT IN SCOTLAND

EDUCATIONAL reformers are helpless without a supporting constituency. They have to deal not only with the needs of the young, but also with parents and the social forces in the community. Invariably, the serious obstacles to good education lie in the misconceptions of adults. And when the educational establishment has adapted to these misconceptions, in order to get along comfortably in the community, the price of this compromise is paid by the children and by teachers who resist its effects on the young.

Material in *Anarchy 82* (December, 1967) illustrates all phases of this process and brings home the obligation of people who see how it works to support imaginative, courageous teachers—men and women who give their lives to working against the grain of ignorance and prejudice in the adult population. (Single copies of *Anarchy* are 30 cents and may be ordered from Freedom Press, 17a Maxwell Road, London, SW6, England; subscription for twelve issues is $3.50.) This material relates to Braehead School, a state-operated secondary school on the northern shore of the Firth of Forth, in Scotland, and to R. F. Mackenzie, who was its headmaster for ten years. This school doubtless no longer exists (in the form here described), since *Anarchy* published these accounts of Mr. Mackenzie's achievements at a time when the local authorities had decided to absorb the Braehead School into the conventional "comprehensive" system. This action brought the following result (as described by Peter Reston):

> Comprehensive education means the disintegration of Bob Mackenzie's individual work; well, perhaps that's inescapable and open to debate. But comprehensive education, too, seems to leave him without a school to toil for, without horizons to explore. And that is a damning indictment which must give every educationist pause.

Another writer, Peter Miller, says:

> Braehead faces closure, and absorption into a larger comprehensive system. It is hard to foresee whether its ideas and ideals would survive this change, but my impression is that they would not. There does not seem to have been any connection or communication with other schools of similar type and few of the staff even seem aware that there exists a body of opinion sympathetic to them. The school seems to have achieved only a limited amount, and few people would regret its disappearance, but something valuable is in danger of being lost; libertarian ideas put, sometimes unconsciously, often inadequately, into practice; an endeavor to teach children about the world around them, instead of about what is in the examination syllabus, the ideal of persuasion rather than blind compulsion.

What did Robert Mackenzie do at Braehead? Something should be said, first, about where he did it. Most of the wage-earners in the area work in coal mines. In a discussion of this "end of an educational experiment"—the closing of "one of the most remarkable State schools in Britain"—Paul Foot remarks that Mackenzie was confined by "the system" and that he lacked the freedom possible for A. S. Neill, who was obliged to limit his efforts to "the children of middle-class liberal parents who could afford his fees."

> By contrast [Paul Foot writes], the children of Braehead come from tough, rough backgrounds where every penny must be counted. The Headmaster has no right to pick and choose pupils and parents. He has to take them as they come, unsoftened (or unspoilt) by the veneer of good manners and liberal generosity. Nor is there any of the tolerance of permissive ideas which can be found in the south. Buckhaven lies near the heart of John Knox country—where one of the most puritanical disciplinarian movements took root and prospered.

Mackenzie started with the school in 1957—hired, Mr. Foot suspects, by the Staffing Committee because its members saw only "a tall craggy Scot with a gentle voice and a sudden, mischievous smile," and with "an impeccable teaching record." Perhaps he had "a few ideas about education which he could use to help justify the school to angry parents." Obviously, they had no idea of what he would do. Mr. Foot tells how Mackenzie went to work in this community with so many limiting conditions:

There was no immediate revolution when Mackenzie took over Braehead. He is the last man to bulldoze his colleagues with his terms and views. An older member of the staff admitted his astonishment at discovering in one of Mackenzie's books that "the Headmaster really thought all that." Normal curricula, normal routines, normal techniques dominated the early years at Braehead. Mackenzie's ideas were effected more by omission than by intervention. When asked whether the school should have a uniform, Mackenzie, who hates uniforms shrugged his shoulders and said the children could decide. There were no uniforms. He managed to persuade the staff to abandon "the belt" (a scottish euphemism for corporal punishment) for girls. But when he suggested that, for a trial period, the teachers should stop belting boys, the entire staff signed a protest petition and sent it to the Director of Education. The proposal was dropped.

The two main departures from ordinary junior secondary routine were in the teaching of art and the extra-curricular activities. The deputy headmaster at Braehead is Hamish Rodger, a wiry Highlander, who saw the founding of the school as a perfect opportunity to teach art in the liveliest and most unconventional way. Thus art lessons at Braehead are apparently chaotic affairs, with pupils ranged across the barren art-room, drawing and painting as they choose with the maximum of individual instruction.

The results have been staggering. The corridors and classrooms at the school are hung with paintings which would compliment a good provincial art gallery. The Braehead paintings have been shown at exhibitions at Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow colleges of education, and a selection was shown at the start of an art conference at the Glasgow College of Art. The exhibition in November 1965 had unpatronising, if surprised, rave notices from every major critic in Scotland.

Another innovation:

In late 1960, a young mountaineer called Hamish Brown called in at the school and asked if he could fill in three spare months teaching English. Before long, he organized expeditions into the Highland mountains and moors of Invernessshire and Argyllshire. Representations to the Forestry Commission produced a small hut near Loch Rannoch, where the pupils travel in groups of ten between March and October every year to spend a few days in wild freedom.

> "Every time you take a new bunch to Rannoch," says Hamish Brown, "you get the same thrill. As they get out of the bus (a minibus bought after money had been begged and borrowed and with the help of a local authority grant), they explode. It's like a cork coming out of a bottle. They just run and run for miles."
>
> Demand for these trips is high, and Hamish reckons nearly half the school's 460 boys and girls go out on some form of expedition each year. He has also worked out that the examination results of those who go on expeditions is higher than for those who do not, higher even than the average junior secondary results in all Scotland.

But what about *education;* There isn't space to cover the wonderful things that happened under teachers attracted to Braehead by Mackenzie's books (*A Question of Living, Escape from the Classroom,* and *The Sins of the Children,* all three published by Collins and available from the Freedom Press bookshop), but a Braehead English teacher showed Mr. Foot "thirty note-books crammed with pupils' poetry, all written in a few periods each week in one year." And a French teacher, also drawn to the school by reading Mackenzie, said that the children were learning "to *think* in French" after only a few months, and he was working out summer trips to France for some of them. The English teacher, Robin Harper, said of the children:

> "They come from primary school utterly convinced they are incapable of anything in class. We have to try to persuade them that they *can* do things, and in most cases it works."
>
> Harper [Mr. Foot adds] teaches the guitar to groups of boys and girls after school hours, four nights a week. About 100 children in the school have been to his classes.

Well, we have no room for the grimy and discouraging details of how parents and administrators combined to put an end to Mackenzie's Braehead. All that his critics could see was that the children weren't going through the proper motions, and this upset them. The *Anarchy* material should be read in full for evidence of the enormous importance of giving teachers like Mackenzie a constituency.

FRONTIERS

Opposition to War

FROM the continuous flow of material opposed to war that comes to the MANAS office, we select three items for notice. First is Norman Cousins' Oct. 12 editorial in the *Saturday Review*, devoted to U Thant's efforts, as Secretary General of the United Nations, "to break the deadlock of the Vietnam peace negotiations in Paris." The Secretary General is now under criticism by the U.S. State Department for "meddling," Mr. Cousins reports, because he made a public appeal for an end to the bombing of North Vietnam. Having kept careful track of U Thant's attempts to act as intermediary between the United States and Hanoi, Mr. Cousins is able to show that the Secretary General has been almost continuously frustrated by the ambiguity and contradictions of American policy. The editor of *Saturday Review* describes this course of events since 1964, recalling and reciting facts which should be known to every citizen of the United States. Mr. Cousins concludes his defense of U Thant:

> Meanwhile, the death toll mounts in Vietnam, both for Vietnamese and Americans. If it is difficult for any reasonably informed person to believe that all these people have to die, how much more difficult it must be for a man whose job requires him to serve the cause of world peace, and who lives each day with the knowledge of all the missed opportunities to end the war. The surprise is not that U Thant has publicly called upon the United States to stop the bombing in order to break the Paris deadlock, but that he should have been so patient and restrained.

The second item for attention is the Oct. 8 issue of Tristram Coffin's newsletter, *Washington Watch*, which circulates among the members and supporters of Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace (addresses: 901 N. Howard Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201; 800 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90015). From week to week Mr. Coffin reports and interprets the news concerning the war in Vietnam. For fact-supported analysis of current events, his newsletter is hard to beat. In this issue he summarizes press stories concerning appeals to the President by the American envoys in Paris for a halt in the bombing, "to get the negotiations going." The reaction from Washington, Mr. Coffin says, was "a rash of newspaper stories stating the military case against a halt in the bombing." The Oct. 8 *Washington Watch* begins with the disclosure of a covert escalation of the war:

> Behind its wall of official secrecy, the Pentagon is planning to put more GI's into combat in Vietnam. This was revealed when a source on Capitol Hill "leaked" the import of a letter from Defense Secretary Clifford to Chairman Russel of the Senate Armed Services Committee.
>
> This, taken with three other developments, indicates President Johnson wants to make one more big try to knock Hanoi out of the war before he leaves office.
>
> Under the Pentagon plan, perhaps as many as 90,000 additional Americans will be in combat. The proposal violates the Administration claim that it wants to "de-Americanize" the war and turn it over, increasingly, to the South Vietnamese. Instead, the Pentagon would hire Vietnamese for rear-echelon tasks now being performed by men in uniform, and free them for combat.

Other parts of this newsletter deal with strengthening American opinion against continued bombing, the demoralizing effects of the war on American soldiers, and the problems the army is having with disaffected soldiers and others who spread anti-war propaganda among the troops. A flyer in Vietnam is quoted: "I stand here defending the dictators of a poverty-stricken people and my government tells me that I'm defending the free world. When the Chicago police use bludgeon censorship against newsmen, who dares call your world free?"

Mr. Coflin reports that the Supreme Court, thanks to Justice Douglas, will consider the Constitutional issues of the Vietnam War. Congress has the power to provide for the common defense, and in October, 1966, it gave the President authority to call up reserve units at his discretion. The issue: Can Congress turn over

to the President by statute a power given it by the Constitution?

The third item is the text of a working paper prepared last August by the Council of the War Resisters International, at its meeting in Vienna, now being distributed by the War Resisters League (American WRI affiliate, 5 Beekman Street, New York, N.Y. 10038). The paper is offered as the basis for discussion of non-violence in revolution and wars of liberation. Following are some of the ideas presented:

> A violent revolution creates a violent structure in which, having killed one's enemies, it is all too easy to kill one's friends for holding "wrong positions." Having once taken up weapons, it is difficult to lay them down. If violence may have—as Fanon suggests—a liberating effect on the oppressed, it also has a brutalizing effect. If it is argued that a nonviolent revolution is too slow a method, and that violence more swiftly brings justice and freedom, we point to Vietnam where a violent struggle has raged without pause for 22 years and where more than one million people have been killed and the revolution is not yet won.
>
> It would be easy, confronted with the brutality and inhumanity of American actions in Vietnam and the American support of oppressive regimes elsewhere in the world, so to lose ourselves in anger that we forget some of the lessons of history. Those who used the method of war in dealing with Germany, Italy, and Japan should not forget that 50 million human beings perished in the struggle, and that the American people, who entered that war with considerable idealism, and who were shocked by the cruelty of the Germans and Japanese, ended the war by dropping two atomic bombs—and had become so insensitive by that time that they do not to this day feel any sense of national guilt.
>
> We should keep in mind, too, the heroic experiment in revolution of the Russian people, which began with the moral support of virtually all progressive movements of the world, and which eventually produced a State which killed millions of its own citizens in purges and forced labor camps oppressed the nations of Eastern Europe, and to this day is still imprisoning writers who seek the exercise of the most elementary freedoms. . . .
>
> Man is not free when he is subjected to violence—therefore the struggle against violence must be seen in the context of a revolutionary effort to liberate humanity. We know that violence takes many forms, and that in addition to the direct violence of guns and bombs, there is the silent violence of disease, hunger, and the dehumanization of men and women caught up in exploitative systems.
>
> With a reticence that comes from our knowledge that we do not have answers to many of the problems of revolution, we must say that men should not organize for violence against one another, whether in revolution, in civil war, or in wars between nations. If it is argued that our position is utopian and that men can turn to non-violence only after the revolution, we reply that unless we hold firmly to non-violence now, the day will never come when all of us learn to live without violence. The roots of the future are here and now, in our lives and actions. . . .
>
> We do not romanticize non-violence and know better than anyone else its setbacks. But we ask our friends who feel they have no choice but to use violent means for liberation not to overlook the problems they face. The violence of revolution destroys the innocent just as surely as does the violence of the oppressor.

There will be more such papers prepared by the members of the War Resisters League, with discussion invited. Inquiries may be addressed to David McReynolds, in charge of field work, at the Beekman Street office.