VOLUME XXXII, NO. 48
NOVEMBER 28, 1979

RANGES OF SELFHOOD

THERE is a quality in human life which is always with us, as the basis for both deliberated and spontaneous action, yet which hides or dissolves into the background when subjected to analysis. It is the longing for unity. Our lives are persistent attempts to organize ranges of unity. This is what "having purpose" means. We try to relate the things out there—our circumstances—to the meanings in our lives. Eating and sleeping maintain organic unity. The unions formed by love fulfill the desire for psychic unity. Workers in the various sciences look for basic principles—as few as possible—to account for all that happens in the herds studied. The most familiar example is Einstein's quest for a unified field theory—for a way of physical thinking which would give both gravitation and electromagnetic phenomena a common ground. Organizations are means of imposing some unifying pattern on social diversity. When you have unity of purpose and means, you can do things which would otherwise be impossible.

Health is a name of physiological unity in everyday life. Disease is an offense against the unity of the body, worry a disturbance of the coherence of our feelings. Pain is always a cry of outrage against some violated unity. Doctors try to instruct us in how to restore the harmony of the body, and psychotherapists and philosophers say what they can about reconciling ourselves to emotional contradictions—how to worry less. Everything that we do may be defined as part of the struggle to achieve greater unity. Men seek money and power to obtain wider unity of control. Armies and police forces exist for the purpose of securing order, which is a name for unity in diversity. A crew, a team, a task force is an instrument of unification. Unity, in the human sense, does not mean the abolition of differences, but a harmony of opposing forces. So unity, for us, requires knowledge of diversity. We have to know how things work in order to make them work in harmony toward some chosen end. The world is a great and complex system of collaborating unities, made up of sub-systems of harmony in delicate relation and subtle balance with each other. Today's science is increasingly a study of these relationships—called Ecology—as distinguished from past science, which was mostly a study of things and forces in comparative isolation. Science, we could say, is becoming the knowledge of the graded unities which make a whole, instead of the abstraction of certain principles of action against a vast background of irrelevance.

This is comparatively easy to understand. Scientific unities have at least intellectual objectivity. Subjective unity is more difficult. How do we think of our unity as individuals? The radius of the sense of self seems to go from zero to infinity, and back again. "I," said Ortega, "am myself and my circumstances." The self seems defined by the focus of awareness at a given moment. You wake up in the morning, feeling good or otherwise, and then what is to be done during the day displaces the passive awareness felt on awakening. The self was a body, now it is a purpose. Instruments of action come into play, are used, then put aside when other things are to be done. With lightning speed we move from identity to identity as our occupation, our thought, our planning, changes. We have dozens of schemes of unity which we use *ad hoc*. They are more or less well organized, in thought as themes of purpose, in physical action as manual skills and muscular endowment, in mental work as order in reasoning and the uses of memory and imagination. Then, apparently "above" these levels of capacity for action, there are schemes of motivation and orientation—much more difficult

to identify since they are not revealed but only implied by patterns of action on the other (lower) levels. Some humans think only of their individual unity—the welfare of their bodies and personal feelings. For others the good of family plays a ruling part. And so on. For centuries nations seemed a vehicle for serving the common good, but now they are recognized as a wornout system of unity. They can't even help themselves. Men who would have become great patriots a century or two ago are now concerned with strengthening the fragile unities of community, with restoring the forests of the world, with teaching an agriculture that does not waste and sterilize the land, and with forms of healing that lead to self-care and self-discipline. These undertakings have to do with the regions of the earth and the laws of nature.

But—coming back to the individual—the way we think of our various ranges of unity, about the fields of our action and the corresponding psychical or moral instruments, remains obscure. Most of the time we don't think at all about which field we are in, but just do what is necessary. What sort of difference is there between the self who drives a car to get to work or to go on vacation and the self who thinks about a fatal accident he and his family barely escaped? Is there any self at all, apart from the various fields of action? If we say, with the southern Buddhists, that there isn't, then we are obliged to ask who or what it is that moves from field to field—that acts as a father, a surveyor, and an American, who lives in Minnesota but may move to Oregon—and that has given unity to the enormously complex system of fields that make up the life of a human being?

Shall we say that there is no real connecting thread running through all these identities, and that the continuous sense of self we feel, while going from one activity to another, is just a big illusion? That we are just a lot of highly developed equipment, as the behaviorists assert? Common sense rejects this conclusion. "1" did all these things; we say to ourselves, and there seems substantial truth in the claim; but then we make some awful mistake, trying to steer one of our systems in conflict with another, or against some larger and more important unity, and then we lose our job or home or our role in society. Illusion is certainly involved. We misconceived some range of unity and found ourselves miscast. Which of our various selves should have priority? Can the unity of one harmonize all the others?

The Greeks must have thought about this, since they gave their water deity, Proteus, the capacity to change his shape at will. He knew the future, but no one could make him tell what was destined to come, because when asked he would simply disappear into another shape. It took a Hercules to hold him still, no matter what form he assumed, and to extract from him what he wanted to know.

Quite conceivably, the Buddhists understood this difficulty and decided that not enough people had herculean potentialities, so they insisted that there is *no* self behind the changing forms of human life. David Hume would have made a very good Theravadin Buddhist. He said the same thing:

> There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our Self, that we feel its existence and its continuity in existence; . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other: of heat or cold, or light or shade, love or hatred pain or pleasure. . . . If anyone, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself I must confess I can reason no longer with him. . . . But I venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle of perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and which are in a perpetual flux and movement.

Tough-minded John Dewey reached a similar conclusion. In *Human Nature and Conduct* he wrote:

> There is no one ready-made self behind activities. There are complex, unstable, opposing

> attitudes, habits, impulses which gradually come to terms with one another, and assume a certain consistency of configuration, even though only by means of a distribution of inconsistencies which keeps them in water-tight compartments, giving them separate turns or tricks in action.

What, one wonders, did Dewey mean by "ready-made self"? Is the self a "given," something we have or are at the start, which remains unaffected by all the varying roles it plays, or is it capable of "development"? Was Dewey's idea of such development only a "certain consistency of configuration" which keeps the contradictions of human nature under loose control?

Both Hume and Dewey seem right as empiricists. They gave accurate behavioral descriptions of what happens when we try to inspect the nature of the self. It comes and goes. It takes on various dimensions. The sense of self vanishes in moments of excitement or crisis, when we are totally involved in some decisive action. But who or what, in David Hume, composed that paragraph of skeptical negation? How did the spectacle of all those perceptions, succeeding each other with inconceivable rapidity, become objective to him, if there was no subject standing apart and observing them? Did Hume really mean to reason *himself* out of existence, or was he simply saying that he just couldn't *find* himself—that he couldn't get hold of the Proteus within?

A few paragraphs ago we spoke of the enlarging rings of relationships which make the fields of human action. Each one represents a widening radius of the idea or feeling of self. Some kind of leap or sudden vision is often involved to extend the radius, as when, say, Siddhartha saw a dying man and asked his charioteer what it meant. The mission of the Buddha began from that moment. But the teachings of the Buddha remained a kind of hearsay for those who listened to him, until they had their own vision and found their own radius and resolve. Relying on hearsay leads to ritual in religion, as a psychic substitute for original perception. It is meant, they say, to prepare for vision, but it may actually shut out, since sometimes ritual has only a beguiling, pacifying effect.

The hearsay of religion and philosophy is tradition concerned with extending the radius, the inclusiveness, of the Self. It is a form of instruction. Its resonances vary, and we find that what is acceptable in one age may be rejected in another. A lot depends on the focus of the mind in a particular age. Epictetus, for example, proposed a magnificent leap to all-inclusiveness:

> You are a distinct portion of the essence of God, and contain a part of him in yourself. Why then are you ignorant of your noble birth? Why do you not consider whence you came? Why do you not remember when you are eating, who you are who eat, and whom you feed? When you are in the company of women, when you are conversing, when you are exercising, when you are disputing, do you not know that it is the Divine you feed, the Divine you exercise? You carry a God about with you, poor wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you suppose I mean some god without you of gold or silver? It is within yourself that you carry him; and you do not observe that you profane him by impure thoughts and unclean actions. If the mere external presence of God were present, you would not dare to act as you do, and when God is himself within you, and hears and sees all, are not you ashamed to think and act thus—insensible of your own nature, and at enmity with God?

But Epictetus also understood the relativities of human achievement and the dependence of our opinions on our feelings about things. Taking Socrates as his ideal—a man who lived by what he thought—Epictetus said:

> Let whatever appears to be the best, be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, glory or disgrace, be set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the Olympiad comes on, nor can it be put off, and that by one failure and defeat honor may be lost—or won. Thus Socrates became perfect, improving himself by everything following reason alone. And though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought, however, to live as one seeking to be a Socrates.

This seems an easier leap for us, since "God" is not brought into it. It isn't that we are all

dogmatic atheists and materialists, but that for a thousand years or so people have discoursed too freely about God, as though they knew what they were talking about. So the "God" language is at a discount, these days. It does not march, but only waves the flag. Far more acceptable is the principle expounded by Epictetus—to make a law out of your own best thinking. Modern moralists adopt this view, if only to avoid the pretense of spectator morality, which is no more than talking or writing about it. In an essay on "Power and Purity," John Schaar seems to echo Epictetus:

> One of the most important differences between great actors—think, say, of Gandhi, or Lenin, or Lincoln, or Malcolm X—and most of the rest of us is that they hold their views and ideas in a way that we do not. They *are* their views. We *have* views. And most of us, when we think clearly, can acknowledge that we took, or received, most of what we call "our" views from others. We did not create them. Rather we got them from others, we may have worked very hard for them, and now we call them ours. Great actors of course also take some of their views from others. Some they forge themselves. But once the idea or vision is forged or assimilated, it is held in a certain way. The actor does not have or possess the idea; rather, he is possessed by it. He lives his views. His life is his views, in a way and to a degree unusual among most of the rest of us. Most of the rest of us are many things besides our views or ideas. To an unusual degree great actors are their ideas. More of their lives are contained in, or centered on, their views. In that fascinating way, great actors have a mode or experience of selfhood and identity that is different from ours.

This is what John Dewey might or should have added to the passage quoted earlier from *Human Nature and Conduct.* There is no "ready-made" self, but there is a self which succeeds in overcoming the inconsistencies which "most of the rest of us" keep in water-tight compartments. This would help to explain why, when we reflect, we have such a vague and indistinct idea of self. We need the example of a Socrates, of one whose life is consistent with what he thinks, to recognize the larger unity of a self forged by human decision.

There is a certain cost to achieving such unity of self. Leaps are involved, and also a relinquishment of the vanities which grow up around more superficial unities. There seems to be a portion of our nature which guards against the threat implicit in any sort of heroic effort. As Schaar says:

> Great actors so frequently hold views that appear so simple as to seem silly to us who know the complexities of the world. Consider, as examples, Joan of Arc, or Gandhi, or Martin Luther King. We know the world is too tired and complex to respond to their simple calls. They seem childlike, and our approbation of them often smacks of the approbation we give a "good" child when he behaves nicely, in a manner beyond his years. Most foolish of all, great actors often seem willing to suffer, even to die, for their foolish views.

Our own intellectual—rhetorical—unities, having what we imagine to be a plausible consistency, close out appreciation of the mythic simplicities of great men.

> We, of course, think ourselves beyond myth: we are cool, intelligent. We know the difference between myth and reality. We know the facts. It is hard for us to understand how a man such as Malcolm X, say, can passionately believe a myth that we know to be patently false. We are unable to see that the actor's myth can capture essential truths about his condition and the condition of those among whom he acts. . . .
>
> And so, through condescension, we cut even the great down to ordinary size. We do not appreciate that great actors earn their knowledge the hard way by asking questions and living the answers—while we earn ours the easy way by borrowing from others, and by waiting until the case is closed, the action finished, before pronouncing on it. It is easy to be wise after the fact. We do not appreciate the need for "simple" views when emergency demands response. We do not acknowledge that we too have myths. Sometimes, when we look back over our lives, we can see that we acted on a myth, but we cannot see that we are doing that now, for if we could, then our views would no longer be mythic. We can only see others' myths, not our own. And, finally, we cannot see that an element of the mythic mentality is probably necessary for action, because we can never know—in the meaning we ordinarily give that term—enough to secure a successful outcome. (*American Review*, No. 19.)

What is this "element of the mythic mentality" Schaar speaks of? Well, it gives unity and simplicity—we gather ourselves together and *act*. A bunch of balls bouncing around on a table do not act, they are merely reacting. For action a player is needed, one who takes charge and imposes his unifying purpose on the motions of the balls. A "configuration of conflicting attitudes" cannot act. A singular purpose is needed, and this the grown-up human being supplies. We get spontaneous unities of purpose from the environment. Something dangerous happens, and without waiting to consult our various radii of self, we act in self-defense. But the unity which sees beyond coping with circumstances—which acts in terms of vision and transcendence—this is a unity of self which is, so to speak, "evolved." All our "equipment"—our skills and capacities—have been turned to a single purpose, by reason of a sight which is not dependent upon circumstances.

What then is the unity of a human being, of the larger self? It is the capacity to map one's being on the map of the entire world—that is, to *know* the world. This is the nature of man. Knowing the world, he is able to act in its behalf. A self is what the self acts in behalf of. To think of oneself in terms of something in the world is to become what is thought of—that is, to add that something to our equipment for being in the world. (And perhaps out of it, too.) To think of a house is, eventually, to have one. To think of a flying machine is, eventually, to sail around in the sky. All acts of creation begin in this way, as thoughts in the mind, extending the self.

What is "knowing the world"? In *The Tacit Dimension* (Anchor, 1966), Michael Polanyi suggests that the scientific idea of knowing leaves out the reality of the knower—the subject or self who gives unity to experience. Early in this little book he says:

> My search has led me to a novel idea of human knowledge from which a harmonious view of thought and existence, rooted in the universe, seems to emerge.
>
> I shall reconsider human knowledge by starting from the fact that *we can know more than we can tell*. This fact seems obvious enough; but it is not easy to say exactly what it means. Take an example. We know a person's face, and can recognize it among a thousand, indeed among a million. Yet we usually cannot tell how we recognize a face we know. So most of this knowledge cannot be put into words.

Polanyi's point is that this intuitive recognition, this tacit knowing, is the core of all knowledge. By careful analysis of detail, by measurement and precise description, we try to improve on intuitive knowledge, sometimes forgetting how our knowledge began. Then our multiplying technical knowledge, which Polanyi calls "unbridled lucidity," blurs and may even destroy the insight of our original perception. We knew and we didn't know, yet that kind of tacit perception started us on the path of discovery. The enrichments of knowledge by science become thickets of confusion when we lose sight of the tacit dimension.

This situation, which in the *Meno* becomes the basis of Plato's theory of knowledge, resembles the way in which we think of the unities determined by the self. We know that we are, and that we know, but what we are and how much we know remain problematic. The ranges of experience in the world are the potential radii of the self. We leap to a larger circle of the self with the mind, but then must adopt this range by occupying it with confirming action. In this way its unities become part of the self.

REVIEW
THE MORALITY OF NATIONS

A BOOK like *Years of Infamy* by Michi Weglyn (Morrow, 1976) calls to mind the questions raised by Reinhold Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Mrs. Weglyn tells how, after the attack by Japanese planes on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, "110,000 Japanese Americans residing along the West Coast of America were driven from home and society and banished to desert wastes." Her book is above all a study of the state of feeling which prevailed in wartime America, showing that fear, anger, and suspicion were still close to the surface in people who regarded themselves as the inheritors of principles embodied in the great documents marking the founding of the United States. It shows that when the "national interest" seems at stake, the habitual decencies which American citizens practice in their individual lives are set aside as irrelevant. War itself is a suspension of humanity, and civil affairs suffer the same mutilation that overtakes the youth involved in the conflict. The strident claims of military necessity make the voice of conscience almost inaudible, and even those who can still hear it usually remain silent. This is one way of regarding the sudden internment of the Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor. To look at what happened through the eyes of the people who endured this bitter change—something hardly possible without a book of this sort—may do more to increase our understanding. It points to the need, so seldom recognized, of knowing what is in the hearts of people who are made to suffer extreme injustice. Some of the complexities of feeling are revealed by Michi Weglyn's account of her own experience:

> As a teen-age participant in this mass exodus I, like others, went along into confinement, trusting that our revered President in his great wisdom and discernment had found that the measure was in the best interest of our country. With profound remorse, I believed, as did numerous Japanese Americans, that somehow the stain of dishonor we collectively felt for the treachery of Pearl Harbor must be eradicated, however great the sacrifice, however little we were responsible for it. In our immaturity and naivete, many of us who were American citizens—two-thirds of the total—believed that this, under the circumstances, was the only way to prove our loyalty to a country which we loved with the same depth of feeling that children in Japan were then being brought up to love their proud island nation.
>
> In an inexplicable spirit of atonement and with great sadness, we went with our parents to concentration camps.
>
> Twenty-five years later, curiosity led me into exhuming documents of this extraordinary chapter in our history which had seen the shattering of so many hearths, lives, careers—of so many hopes and dreams. Among once impounded papers, I came face to face with facts, some that left me greatly pained. A quarter of a century later, at a time when angry charges of government duplicity and "credibility gaps" were being hurled at heads of state, the gaps of the evacuation era appeared more like chasms.
>
> Persuaded that the enormity of a bygone injustice had been only partially perceived, I have taken upon myself the task of piecing together what might be called the "forgotten"—or ignored—parts of the tapestry of those years. This I have done not to awaken disquieting memories or arouse negative feelings, but because of a clear responsibility I feel for those whose honor was so wrongly impugned, many of whom died without vindication.
>
> More significantly, I hope that this uniquely American story will serve as a reminder to all those who cherish their liberties of the very fragility of their rights against the exploding passions of their more numerous fellow citizens, and as a warning that they who say that it can never happen again are probably wrong.

Evident in this Preface are two perspectives—the moral and the historical. The moral outlook comes first, as it should, while the historical assessment lends some patience to the feeling of outrage, as it must, if control is ever to be gained over behavior in times of stress.

There are those who argue that only "survival" counts in human life. This claim has shallow plausibility, but it wholly ignores the fact that the human beings we most admire—that we tell our children about and hold up as ideals—

have been men and women who lived by their principles no matter what the pressure of events. History seems largely a record of the opposite course—of the crimes of the powerful against defenseless groups. Virtually no nation is innocent of these crimes, making one wonder if a national power should be thought of as *capable* of acting on principles of morality and humanity. This is a way of asking if it is possible to humanize the State. History suggests that it is not. In his review of Henri Alleg's *The Question*, Jean-Paul Sartre reflected that during World War II the Germans had a torture center in Paris where they interrogated Frenchmen. The cries of pain could be heard in the street. The French were horrified, saying that never would men "be made to cry out in our name." But in 1958, in Algeria, the French were daily torturing Algerians, making Sartre declare:

> . . . the French have uncovered a terrible fact. If nothing protects a nation against itself, neither its past, its integrity, nor its laws—if fifteen years are enough to change victims into executioners—it means the occasion alone will decide. According to the circumstances, anyone, anytime, will become either the victim or the executioner.

Michi Weglyn's book shows how easily Americans were led to betray themselves through circumstances. A report on Japanese Americans made to the President in the months just before Pearl Harbor made it clear that there was "a remarkable, even extraordinary degree of loyalty among this generally suspect ethnic group." It is ironic that the heads of the State, War, and Navy departments had opportunity to study this analysis, known as the Munson Report, but then turned into the most determined advocates of evacuation. The report, Michi Weglyn says, became "one of the war's best kept secrets," adding, "Not until after the cessation of hostilities, when the report of the secret survey was introduced in evidence in the Pearl Harbor hearings of 1946, did facts shattering all justification for the wartime suppression of the Japanese minority come to light."

The grimy story of the uprooting and transport of this minority to internment camps around the country is told in detail. A basic contributing cause was the racist temper of many Californians. Mrs. Weglyn says:

> In 1941, the number of Japanese Americans living in the continental United States totalled 127,000. Over 112,000 of them lived in the three Pacific Coast states of Oregon, Washington, and California. Of this group, nearly 80 per cent of the total (93,000) resided in the state of California alone.
>
> In the hyperactive minds of longtime residents of California, where antipathy toward Asians was the most intense, the very nature of the Pearl Harbor attack provided ample—and prophetic—proof of inherent Japanese treachery. As the Imperial Army chalked up success after success on the far-flung Pacific front, and as rumors of prowling enemy submarines proliferated wildly, the West Coast atmosphere became charged with a panicky fear of impending invasion and a profound suspicion that Japanese Americans in their midst were organized for coordinated subversive activity. For the myriad anti-Oriental forces and influential agriculturalists who had long cast their covetous eyes over the coastal webwork of rich Japanese-owned land, a superb opportunity had thus become theirs for the long-sought expulsion of an unwanted minority.

That the Japanese who came to this country were able to acquire only marginal land, which they then vastly improved, using their centuries-old heritage as skilled gardeners and farmers, was ignored by the claim that "the Japs have taken over the best land." To the handful of civil libertarians who said that these citizens were being deprived of their rights, it was replied that there was no time for the difficult task of identifying the "loyal" individuals and that "protective custody" would shelter them from angry mob action by the Caucasian majority.

The whole story of the evacuation takes more than three hundred pages. The loss of liberty and of property was difficult for these people to bear, but the psychological wrongs were more oppressive. The climax of this offense came in the attempt by the Government to determine which Japanese Americans could be classified as "loyal."

In 1943 President Roosevelt wrote to Governor Lehman of New York that there would be no evacuation of German and Italian aliens living in the United States, comparable to the treatment of the Japanese. Mrs. Weglyn comments:

> The supreme irony of the evacuation-internment interlude was that while German and Italian aliens, blessed with more impressive political leverage than the army of tots and teenagers that the Nisei [American-born Japanese] represented, were being lavished with the reassuring solace of the President, those firmly sequestered behind barbed wire were being provoked to greater despair and alienation.
>
> In early 1943, the vigorous sorting out of the disloyals from the loyals became the new obsession. . . . Ignoring the hurts, the wounds, the injuries inflicted in pitiless succession, Washington had suddenly decided that now was the time to give all detainees in the camps (excluding children under seventeen) an opportunity to concretely register their fundamental loyalty as a group by having each swear his or her unqualified allegiance to the United States. . . . The colossal folly of recording each inmate's attitude toward America in a concentration camp, *after all the damage had been done*, was to be compounded by the War Relocation Authority's decision to conduct the mass registration in conjunction with an Army recruitment drive in the centers.

Both the older and the younger inmates of the camps were naturally outraged by this requirement. "The adult Nisei, who had filled out one questionnaire after another since the evacuation for their non-English speaking parents, relatives, and for their own families, were highly incensed at being, once again, 'third-degreed'—in being coerced to submit to a loyalty oath like a foreigner seeking naturalization. Had not everyone already proved an extraordinary fidelity by complying without protest to the outrageous orders to evacuate?"

At Manzanar (in California) even the Caucasian staff protested against the loyalty test of the Nisei, one saying that "the answer wrung from them under the strains and perplexities with which they were faced is no more than an evidence of witchcraft."

The shame, apologies, and retractions which came later on the part of American administrators and other citizens are all in Michi Weglyn's book. She tells this long and painful story with energy and fervor, but with little if any bitterness.

COMMENTARY
HONOR ROLL

THE story told by Michi Weglyn (see Review) about the internment during World War II of Japanese American citizens (and older emigrants from Japan, many of whom were not naturalized citizens only because of an outrageous law), gives full credit to those few individuals and groups that resolutely opposed this far-reaching injustice. Norman Thomas, justly called the conscience of the nation, declared: "What is perhaps as ominous as the evacuation of the Japanese is the general acceptance of this procedure by those who are proud to call themselves liberals." The Director of the San Francisco branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, Ernest Besig, challenged the constitutionality of the evacuation and continued throughout the war to defend the rights of the internees. Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, wrote to the President early in 1943:

> Native-born Japanese who first accepted with philosophical understanding the decision of their Government to round up and take far inland all of the Japanese along the Pacific Coast regardless of their degree of loyalty, have pretty generally been disappointed with the treatment that they have been accorded. Even the minimum plans that had been formulated and announced with respect to them have been disregarded in large measure, or, at least, have not been carried out. The result has been the gradual turning of well-meaning and loyal Japanese into angry prisoners.

Milton Eisenhower, who resigned as head of the War Relocation Authority because he could no longer stomach what was happening in the camps, wrote a long letter to the President describing the harsh injustices imposed on Japanese Americans, implying that they resulted from racial discrimination and political and economic considerations, and that evacuation was not a military necessity.

But by far the most energetic and effective defense of the rights of Japanese Americans was carried on by Wayne Collins, the San Francisco attorney to whom Michi Weglyn's book is dedicated. For a quarter of a century Collins contended in the courts in behalf of the persecuted "renunciants"—American-born youth who, under extreme pressure and by misinformation, had been led to renounce their citizenship. As a result of his efforts these renunciations were declared unconstitutional and void early in 1949. Finally, in 1968, after many of those forcibly removed to Japan had at last been restored to their home in America, Collins was able to say: "The episode which constituted an infamous chapter in our history has come to a close."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
BUILDING COMMUNITY

BACK in 1971 Jack Miller and some friends started what has become a very good communitarian magazine—*North Country Anvil,* published four times a year at Millville, Minn. Subscription is $5.00. The paper is filled with material on changes going on in the right direction, and is sometimes quoted in MANAS. In the Summer 1979 issue, Jack Miller reminisces about his seven years of printing and publishing:

> I have gone through the pain of having to discard unreal ideas. I have felt isolated and alone. I have gone through despair. But I have developed new strengths. I have learned to print and to work with machinery. I have studied and tested ideas and learned more of what I am about. And I have found good work, good friends and the love of family and community in the midst of an extraordinarily beautiful place. I have rediscovered my home.

The fruit of this background is reflected in the editor's present outlook:

> Much of my thinking over the last seven years has become more focused. I began, for example, with a hazy sense of socialism as some kind of structural thing. I now see more clearly, however, that the essence of *social* action (and hence of socialism) is not political; it is personal. That is, socialism is people working together. It is not mere collective ownership. Thus, old-fashioned neighborliness—helping each other—is a form of socialism, while some collective undertakings, such as the TVA or welfare programs, can function as the precise opposite of socialism, making it more difficult for people to work together as neighbors and friends, by forcing separation and individualism upon them. If an undertaking is controlled by outsiders (by specialists, bureaucrats, functionaries, professionals and the like), it isn't socialism; it is a function of that awful tyranny that exists in all systems, under various disguises: capitalism and socialism, democracy and authoritarianism, in institutions that are local as well as transnational, secular as well as religious. This tyranny, wherever it appears, destroys the personal and communal relationships and functions. It lays waste the most ancient and precious of human aspirations—the desire to be part of a functioning group to which we have personal responsibility, and which affirms our personhood. This can take place within and among groups which have a relatively large amount of control over the conditions of their lives.

An educational project that has an idiosyncratic fit with Jack Miller's criterion—"people working together"—was described at some length by Jerry Howard in *Horticulture* for May. The project began when Bill McElwain, a Harvard man who had taught French, run a laundromat, and become a discouraged farmer, moved to the prosperous town of Weston, Massachusetts, and saw a lot of fertile suburban land going to waste, on the way to and from his work in Boston (rehabilitating houses in the South End).

> He saw suburban teenagers with few alternatives to football, tennis, drama or boredom; and he saw poor city people paying more for food in Roxbury than he was in Weston (Bill surveyed the cost of twenty-five identical items in both areas and counted a 13 per cent difference).
>
> In April, 1970, Bill began with borrowed hand tools and donations of seed and fertilizer. With a handful of dedicated helpers, he cultivated almost an acre; the produce was trucked into Roxbury and distributed free to a children's food program and a housing project. There, residents collected donations that found their way back to the farm.
>
> Within a year, Bill was hired as project director of the new [Weston] Youth Commission. In 1972, he convinced the town to buy the farm land. He ignited a small but dedicated cadre of supporters, including enough people in the volunteer government to insure the continued support of the town. More kids got involved with the farm, and with the proceeds from the vegetables (now sold in Boston for a nominal $1 a crate) he paid workers a minimal wage. The town put more money and equipment into the project, and by 1975, the farm was growing as much as 100 tons of produce a year. About 25 per cent of this was sold locally; the rest went into Boston.

Bill McElwain was fifty years old when the town bought the farm. He is still project director for the Youth Commission, despite his cavalier view of keeping fiscal records, and he still writes a column for the *Weston Town Crier,* in which he

proposes dozens of other activities for the young to take part in:

> One fall, for instance, Bill counted 600 maple trees along Weston roadsides. In a year and a half, he and a crew built a sugarhouse near the junior high school (using pine boards milled from local trees); scrounged buckets, taps, and evaporating equipment; and produced a cash crop of 250 gallons of grade A maple syrup. There was cider pressing, orchard reclamation, firewood cutting, crate making, construction of a small observatory, and an alternative course at the high school with regular field trips to Boston's ethnic neighborhoods, and to rural New Hampshire.
>
> Virtually all his plans, large or small, have these common ingredients: They provide young people with paying jobs that are educational, socially useful, and fun; they operate on a small scale, need little capital, and use readily available resources, preferably neglected ones; and they bring a variety of people together to solve common problems in an enjoyable context. Building community is one of Bill's more crucial goals, and he'll seize any opportunity—planting, harvesting, "sugaring off," a woodcutting workshop, or May Day—to bring folks together for a festive occasion.

A typical day in Bill's life begins with the loading of crates of vegetables at the farm, to be taken to Boston that morning. This time they will be cabbage, collards, onions, string beans, summer squash, okra, and corn.

> He has worked long and closely with Roxbury's Augusta Bailey to provide vegetables that are staples of the black diet and others that are less familiar. Mrs. Bailey, unofficial first lady of Boston's urban gardening movement and founder of the Roxbury-Dorchester Beautification Program, has an ulterior motive: She wants to introduce new foods—at virtually no cost—that will change people's eating and health habits. It was to her that Bill brought his first trickle of produce in 1970 and to her that he brings the lion's share of the bounty now.

He and the youngsters are farming twenty acres, which had been named Green Power Farm, but his mind is on seventy acres in nearby Topsfield, donated by an admiring benefactor, along with a substantial endowment. Bill will help to organize these resources into a model farm.

The writer of the *Horticulture* article wonders about the long-term effect of Bill McElwain's unceasing efforts:

> It is his stubborn, patient persistence that makes Green Power Farm viable in Weston and much more than a token gesture to the city [Boston]. Seventy tons of vegetables are hard to argue with. And yet Weston does not appear greatly changed. While hordes of junior-high kids are knee-deep in cider and maple sap, only a handful of older kids really get involved in the projects he offers—even fewer than five or six years ago, he recalls. The high school has not become a center for alternative education; the town hasn't employed a youth corps or bought any of his ideas for sewage disposal, at least not yet. And the kids he does serve are not the "problem kids" the Youth Commission was formed to help.
>
> How will the life of a thirteen-year-old who taps trees with Bill today be different for it in twenty years? What impact will Bill have on the physical and mental health of a Dorchester boy who learns to enjoy vegetables at the age of seven, or a Chelsea girl who learns to love gardening from a summer on Green Power Farm? The corporation executive who, in spite of vested interest in the status quo, has been taken by Bill's ideas—how will he affect the world he controls?
>
> How much, in how many subtle ways, have Bill's actions and ideas changed the lives of the countless people he's touched in Weston and elsewhere? Will our economy and ecology be the slightest bit different because this man had the courage to do his "bit"?

These are certainly pertinent questions to ask, and to take some time in answering.

FRONTIERS

"A Form of Slavery"

IN these days of talk—and more than talk—of reviving the draft, resistance to war emerges once more as a primary frontier. There is this summarizing paragraph in a long article by Tom Conrad (reprinted from *Inquiry*) in *Fellowship* for July/August:

> Now, top military strategists and leading congressmen are conspiring to reactivate the Selective Service System and introduce a program of youth registration as the first step toward reinstating conscription. The move back to the draft is profoundly significant: at a time when détente is under fire, the effort to revive the draft is a conspicuous show of strength by the more hawkish American policymakers. And it is the military establishment's most decisive bid since the end of the Vietnam War to reassert its control of the lives of citizens.

Strong civilian resistance to this attempt is expected by the Pentagon, which warns that the cost of enforcement of registration on an unwilling population "could be very high." One form of resistance has expression in a letter by Gene Hoffman, of Santa Barbara, who wrote to the Internal Revenue Service:

> Because I believe the military policies of my government are endangering the health, welfare, and happiness of my country-people, peoples in the rest of the world, I can no longer conscientiously pay that portion of my income taxes which is allocated to the present military budget.
>
> I have taken the estimate of thirty-six per cent as the amount for future wars and present armaments. This is the figure which appeared in the February 1979 issue of the *Friends Journal* (a Quaker publication). I intend to allocate this amount to organizations I believe are dedicated to peace and to furthering life for peoples on this earth. . . .
>
> Please observe that by withholding only thirty-six per cent of my taxes, I demonstrate my willingness to pay for past wars and veterans' benefits. I believe veterans of all past wars deserve our cherishing care. I also believe past debts should be paid.
>
> I take this stand in full recognition of the many benefits we all derive from our representative form of government and the freedoms it has enabled me to enjoy. But I firmly believe nothing good my government has done or will do can endure if we do not halt our military pollution of the planet.
>
> I recognize it will be difficult to change from a military to a peacetime economy. But I know it can be done if we decide to do so. I know we can invent a future without war, and without the vast monopolies of power and money a military system creates.
>
> I call upon you to turn your energies toward a future that promises life to me and to all human beings.

Since this year is the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Albert Einstein, it seems fitting to recall a statement which he signed in 1930:

> We believe that everybody who sincerely wants peace should demand the abolition of military training of youth and should help abrogate the right of governments to impose conscription upon their citizens. Conscription places the individual entirely at the mercy of military powers. It is a form of slavery. The people's unquestioning acceptance of this slavery only illustrates its insidious effect.

The background of Einstein's thinking about such questions was given in the March *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* in a page which he wrote in 1959 on the moral obligation of the scientist. After speaking of the pride a scientist may take in "almost completely eliminating muscular work," he went on to say:

> He [the scientist] is distressed by the fact that the results of his scientific work have created a threat to mankind since they have fallen into the hands of morally blind exponents of political power. He is conscious of the fact that technological methods, made possible by his work, have led to a concentration of economic and also of political power in the hands of small minorities which have come to dominate completely the lives of the masses of people, who appear more and more amorphous. But even worse: the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few has not only made the man of science dependent economically, it also threatens his independence from within, the shrewd methods of intellectual and psychic influences which it brings to bear will prevent the development of independent personalities.

> Thus the man of science, as we can observe with our own eyes, suffers a truly tragic fate. Striving in great sincerity for clarity and inner independence, he himself, through his sheer superhuman efforts, has machined the tools which are being used to make him a slave and to destroy him from within. . . . the man of science has slipped so much that he accepts the slavery inflicted upon him by national states as his inevitable fate. He even degrades himself to such an extent that he helps obediently in the perfection of the means for the general destruction of mankind.
>
> Is there really no escape for the man of science? Must he really tolerate and suffer all these indignities?
>
> Is the time gone forever when, aroused by his inner freedom and the independence of his thinking and his work, he had a chance of enlightening and enriching the lives of his fellow human beings? In placing his work too much on an intellectual basis has he not forgotten about his responsibility and dignity? My answer is: while it is true that an inherently free and scrupulous person may be destroyed, such an individual can never be enslaved or used as a blind tool.

While Einstein was tortured by the prospect that the Germans would be first to learn the secret of atomic energy, and in 1939 signed the letter to President Roosevelt warning of this possibility, he remained staunch in his labors for world peace and the rights of conscience. In 1951, commenting on the Nuremberg war crimes trials, he said:

> There is a curious inconsistency in a government which punishes aliens for *not* following their conscience in a given conflict, while penalizing its own citizens for *following* their conscience in the same kind of conflict. Apparently such a government holds the conscience of its own citizens in lower esteem than that of the aliens.

He signed the Russell-Einstein Manifesto against nuclear war on April 11, a week before he died. (For a splendid summary of Einstein's thinking about war and peace, see the article by Bernard Feld in the March *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.*)