

## CONSIDERATIONS ON PEACEMAKING

JUST as micro-organisms in the soil live on the minerals and organic matter, and plants live on these microorganisms, and grazing animals and some birds and insects live on the vegetation, and human beings live on both the vegetation and grazing animals, so, I believe, ideas and institutions live on and derive their energies from men.

Each element in this food chain provides energy to the element next above it in the chain. Each animal chooses from the many varieties of vegetation the kind that will nourish it. But we could say that in effect each plant chooses which kind of animal it will support by being or becoming the kind of nourishment that certain animals need.

In similar fashion, human beings, with wider choices than animals or vegetation, can decide what kind of ideas they want to support. They do this by making their character such that it will easily support certain kinds of ideas. If I am by nature fearful and suspicious and desire to feel superior to other people, then ideas of suspicion and anxiety and hostility will live on my energies. If on the other hand, I am trusting and good-willed, ideas of that nature will live on my energies.

The great economic and military power of the United States naturally has been envied and feared by other nations. So our great power has made us fearful that it might be taken from us. That happens always with great material riches; it makes the owners fearful and mistrustful and suspicious. So we were ready to believe Winston Churchill when he came over about 1946 and made his speech at Fulton, Missouri, with President Truman on the platform, warning us of Russia. Thus began the Cold War.

For the past twenty affluent years (1947 to 1966 inclusive) the people of the United States have entertained suspicion and fear and hatred toward the Russians and Communism. Motivated by these suspicions and hatreds, the people of the United States through the Defense Department of their Government have in that period spent well over seven hundred and eighty-two billion dollars on war or so-called "defense." These figures are taken from the latest edition of the *Statistical Abstracts* of the United States. They do not include the cost of interest on the debts from past wars. To make the word "billion" perhaps a little more concrete, there have been a little over one billion *minutes* since the birth of Christ. In passing, note the hypocrisy involved in that word "defense."

Twenty years of hate and suspicion and the investment of 782 billion dollars in these attitudes has built up a tremendous momentum. It has engaged and consumed the thoughts and energies of all ranks and sections of our society. It has affected all of education—especially the universities—and the churches, science, technology, communications, labor and the poor. This hatred has been expended not only against Russians and Communism and now the Chinese, but also it has generated suspicion and hatred between groups in our own society. To some extent the hatred is fed by anxieties from rapid changes as well as the Bomb. Consider the Bible saying, "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." This saying used to be disregarded as an exaggeration, but now the world is more crowded and people are closer together by reason of modern technology and communications, and the bomb is present and fears and anxieties are deeper and more pervasive. If the word "sword" is a symbol for divisiveness, then the nation that goes in strongly and for a long time for divisiveness (fear, anger, suspicion and

hate) will have that divisiveness turn in upon itself and will be greatly weakened. That is, such swords are double-edged.

In this connection there comes to mind the saying of Lord Acton, "Power tends to corrupt." He did not make it absolute; he did not say that power always corrupts, but that it tends to corrupt. But he added that "absolute power corrupts absolutely," that is, the greater the power, the greater danger of corruption. The corruption may be of the mind, the imagination, the sympathies, or the morals. The United States is now the most powerful country, militarily and politically, in the world. Hence the people of the United States are now in a very dangerous moral position. The old Greek saying was that "Those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." One wonders whether that could not safely be modernized to read, "Those whom the gods would destroy they first make powerful." Jesus put the idea the other way around, saying that those who will inherit the earth are not the powerful but the meek. The meek are more adaptable than the powerful.

I realize that the bonds that hold society together are tough, so I am not prophesying, but these bonds can be severely weakened, as evidenced by the fall of some twenty-one civilizations before ours, as related by Toynbee.

And now our greed for power and a fast buck is causing us to poison our air with soot, exhaust fumes from cars, smog and radio-active fallout, and to pollute our water supplies, destroy our forests and erode our soil, deteriorate and poison our food with pesticide chemicals. This is wholesale disrespect for life of every sort, including our own.

Let me quote from a pamphlet I wrote in 1939 (published by Pendle Hill in that year):

War is an important and necessary institution of our present civilization. War is not just an ugly excrescence, or superficial illness, or occasional maladjustment, or temporary personal mistake of a few leaders of an otherwise fair and healthy society;

war is an inherent, inevitable, essential element of the kind of civilization in which we live. For that statement there is ample authority from statesmen, economists, sociologists, historians and philosophers of the Left, Right and Center. War is of the very tissue of our civilization, and the only way to do away with it is to change, nonviolently and deeply, the motives, functions and structures of our civilization. Such change is required in order to meet successfully the vast changes of our environment during the past two hundred years. We must alter many habits and change many routines and expectancies. We cannot eliminate all conflicts, but we can reduce their number and use nonviolent methods of settling them before they reach a violent stage. Our present order produces war. We must make a new civilization. It is a task to stir men's imaginations and energies.

This is more clearly true now than it was in 1939.

As I see it, this is our situation in regard to war. What can and should we do about it?

Pacifists, like everybody else, are continually making choices—accepting one set of ideas or situations or actions, and rejecting all others. No choice can be all acceptances and no rejections, or all rejections and no acceptances. If I accept the idea of going to a party tonight, then I thereby reject the idea of going elsewhere or staying home and reading. No enduring choice can be made without the action of both elements. In difficult choices, to be effective we must put as much energy into the acceptance as into the rejections. Up till now most pacifists have been saying *No* very vigorously and steadily to war, but making little or no definitions of or efforts to create the kind of a society they want in place of the present warlike one. That is, their action is all rejection and little or no acceptance. If you say that their acceptance is toward a society such as the present one, except with the war removed, that leaves all the factors which make for war untouched, so they come into operation again. That is not peace-making, and if my reasoning is sound, such pacifists seem to be incomplete pacifists. (I myself, by reason of age and bodily infirmities am an incomplete pacifist.) Such pacifists forget that war is a symptom and result of something deeper.

They operate against the symptom and leave the underlying motives and institutions and causes alone.

In my opinion, the results of the protests and demonstrations against the war in Vietnam indicate that the twenty years of hate and suspicion and the investment of seven hundred and eighty-two billion dollars in those attitudes, on top of the general violence of American folk-feelings and folkways, have generated so much momentum and moral deterioration that it cannot be overcome by protests. The protests are healthy and will keep alive the consciences and strengthen the character of some American people. The protests should continue. But they will not stop this war or war in general. Not until the American people begin to pay for the war by greatly increased taxes or economic inflation or depression, experience the deaths of many more thousands of American soldiers, and feel the abhorrence of the people of practically all other nations toward the United States, will the people admit their folly and compel a stop to this war.

The people have been too unwilling to think, too complacent and comfort-loving, too misled and kept in ignorance, too trusting of the propaganda put out by the selfishly interested parties—the military-industrial complex that former President Eisenhower warned against. We the people have not been honest with ourselves, and are unwilling to admit our own faults and failings. The people have let their pride lead them into believing that "we" are always right and "the enemy" always wrong. The people have followed the newspaper editors and broadcasters like sheep. Well, if people are too lazy to think, too willing to conform, too unwilling to admit they have made mistakes, too ready to believe that moral law does not apply to the relations between nations, then they will have to learn the hard way.

But while all Americans, to say nothing of the Vietnamese, are paying the piper, what can pacifists do to make the world a better place? It won't come automatically.

Well, they say that charity begins at home. So does civilization. If we recognize that peace also is a symptom—a result of widespread inner attitudes—we pacifists can try to change our own inner attitudes by thinking more honestly and deeply, by doing many little things, what William Blake called "minute particulars," that create mutual respect and mutual trust and good will. Henry L. Stimson, who was Secretary of State under President F. D. Roosevelt and Secretary of War for the first part of President Truman's term, in a memorandum to President Truman in September, 1943, said, "The chief lesson that I have learned in a long life is that the only way you can make a man trustworthy is to trust him, and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust!" Expectation is creative. We can do these things in the home, in the neighborhood, the village, town, city, or country. We can do them without waiting for organization or with organization. Try to heal some of the indignities and wounds inflicted by our society on so many people—the Negroes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, the poor of all sorts. In so doing don't permit yourself to think you are "doing good" to anyone. That would make it too easy to be self-satisfied and righteous about yourself. You are merely cooperating in helping to make all human society endure successfully.

Such little deeds are not dramatic or exciting except to sensitive people. If you want more muscular action, there are lots of roads that need building or repair, as Danilo Dolci showed us, and many poor and run-down houses to be repaired, many littered streets to be cleaned—so many ways of restoring self-respect and good feeling.

Such activities are what Gandhi called his "constructive program." There were eighteen of them. They went on all the time. They generated good will and trust. They filled in the times when political action was suppressed by the British. They kept up the hope and morale of the people in times of discouragement. Such activities generate

moral power from which in time flows political power. But if political power is aimed at from the first, the lust for power develops for its own sake, and then come the moral compromises characteristic of the search for power, and so the moral power is not developed . . . Morality, and unselfish service of the public are and must be kept superior to politics. Such constructive action will appeal to many more people than the demonstrations, and will elicit more money support. Such constructive programs can heal the wounds in society and help build a sounder civilization. At least half of the energy of all peace organizations should be in direct constructive programs.

Nobody can make a blueprint for a future society; a civilization is too vast and complex a thing for that. But if we believe that the character of the means chosen determines the nature of the result achieved, then we do not need to worry about the future only to be sure to make the means for the next immediate little step morally sound and intelligent. We will need to be experimental and invent many small social devices adapted to immediate situations. We must be realistic and willing to admit our mistakes when we make them. If we are not honest with ourselves, we cannot ask other people to be honest with one another.

Previous civilizations have grown unself-consciously, but always on the basis of deep and often unrecognized assumptions and intuitions. The next civilization will probably grow more self-consciously. It, too, will have to develop on the basis of different deep assumptions and intuitions. I believe the most important assumption is as to the nature of the self. That will require investigation and thinking and intuition far beyond the limits of this article.

One thing is clear; that the assumption that war is a sound way to settle great disputes no longer applies to the kind of world we live in.

But since a civilization is a mode of association of men and women, it cannot grow

faster than human minds and feelings grow. Most of the people follow leaders, especially in times of confusion. So the change and growth does not have to be of all people at once. But it must be of a significant minority of clear-minded and courageous people. Hitherto, new ideas have required one whole generation (about thirty years) to be adopted by an appreciable number of people, another generation to grow more comfortably and widely accepted, and a third generation to be really accepted and put into action. So, unless the rate of growth of new ideas and feelings speeds up far more rapidly than hitherto, it might take ninety years before we can attain a truly pacific civilization. Of course, we may all be destroyed by nuclear weapons before then, or, on the other hand, this kind of social change may speed up immensely.

If you say that we must first stop the war in Vietnam, you are advocating the removal of a symptom and postponing treatment of the disease at its roots. If that could be done, the disease would break out from the roots in some other form or place.

If you say that pacifists are too few to do the work, and that we must not be presumptuous and foolish, the answer is that every great human movement was begun by a very small group of people and often when the clouds were dark. The decisive work of the governments of all nations is done by only a few people. The development of the theory of modern nuclear physics, for example, was accomplished by only thirty-six people, one roomful.

If you say that such a task is too difficult, I reply in the terms of the old Sanscrit saying, "Magic powers do not come to a man because he does things that are hard, but because he does things with a pure heart." Mahatma Gandhi was such a one.

RICHARD B. GREGG

## *Letter from* **MOSCOW**

THERE is something odd about a society that has so much champagne and so few sidewalks. The latter fact gives me more trouble, since my rubbers, constantly in use, wear the color off my good brown shoes.

One would suppose that in a planned society provision might be made for tomato juice *and* orange juice. It is not, of course, so. There is no orange juice, and the excellent tomato juice is said to come from Bulgaria. I presume this arrangement, due to the socialist mechanism of Comecon, is of mutual U.S.S.R.-Bulgarian benefit. At any rate, a very large new building of daring architecture is being thrust skyward in Moscow, to house the personnel of Comecon, which obviously is expected to be around for a time. This in itself is a change. Several years ago, when I first asked to see the technicians of this then-novel effort, I was advised that there weren't any, really, not to amount to anything. Apparently the overwhelming logic of socialist arrangement was expected to carry on automatically. But now Parkinson may have arrived.

In fact there is some evidence that Parkinson may be himself Russian. In Yugoslavia some years ago I was told that most Yugoslavs held two jobs. The "moonlighting" extended even to salaried doctors of the socialist medical system, who supplemented their incomes by offering their services to those who chose, for whatever reason, to pay. Here in Moscow it is quite the other way about. At a wild guess, based upon the visible workings of hotels, Intourist and the like, one might say there were perhaps 2.6 persons for every job—that is, for every job that obviously ought to be performed. A Pole once formulated the motto for me. "Never," said he, "let a single person perform a job which could be more satisfactorily confused by ten." Since Parkinson's Law has, after all, a good deal to do with time and with space, I think it a fully tenable suggestion

that Parkinsonism was invented in Russia. It may not, of course, be of recent origin at all. If one searches in present U.S.S.R. for roots, one finds they reach exceedingly deep into the past.

So many changes have taken place here in the past few years that it would be tedious to relate them. In sum, I am tempted to say simply that the New Soviet Man is arriving, though not at all in the form anticipated by the theorists. For one thing, he throws waste paper about on the streets, exactly as in the U.S.A., even in the presence of waste-bins. The difference is not between him and an ordinary American, but simply that in five years the amount of paper to throw has increased to the nth power and, I suspect, outstripped the formerly adequate system of supervision. The New Soviet Man may aim his long, empty cigarette tubes at the waste-bins, but he is a poor shot, and obviously he is not now concerned that his delinquency may be noted.

A change very obvious indeed to the returning visitor to Moscow relates to the telephone. There is still no telephone book, but whereas some years ago one could get no telephone numbers for oneself, all calls being placed for you by a functionary, now one is awash in a sea of numbers, most of them wrong, and with the dominance of the dial system, no ready path to dependable correction.

This is one legacy of the apparent Russian belief of some time ago that the telephone should be so organized, if possible, as to prevent rather than to facilitate communication. Another such legacy is the fact that never by any chance does a telephone operator in office, institute or hotel, speak anything but Russian.

There is, however, a new freedom among one's Russian contacts to talk about things a visitor naturally questions. I had on this trip a fascinating three-hour conversation in my hotel room with a Russian acquaintance of perhaps seven years, a man who had on the occasion of our first meeting taken me out for a walk in the snow so that we could talk. He is a perfectly

good Russian citizen. Never has he said or even intimated any views which, by your standards or mine, could be held questionable. But standards, of course, vary. On this recent visit I had had great difficulty reaching him at his office, and kidded him a bit about the "curtain." "I know from my years in the U.S.," he said, "how your system works. You have a sort of secretarial discipline. Your secretary answers your telephone always; she knows where you are—always—and when you will be back. There are times when I envy this system, though you haven't allowed yourselves much freedom. We, on the contrary, have the discipline of convocation. Whenever the highest authority has an idea or an instruction, he calls his deputy, who calls the department heads, who call the section heads, even at midnight. By morning, if necessary, we are convoked, and at work speedily meeting the directive. We have learned that by this means, concentrating on a single problem, we can accomplish practically anything we want. But when each such convocation is over, we do relax a bit. Normally, I go to the office only three days a week, anyway. I can work and think better at home." No doubt he can. No one knows his telephone number. Yet we must take this seriously. Think of U.S.S.R. accomplishments in space. Though these are clearly two different dimensions, they may give us a clue to better understanding.

Maybe this "New Soviet Man" idea can be made fruitful in other ways. One might say that the U.S.S.R. is still a wholesale society, but is altering tentatively into an approach to the retail phase. There is clearly more recognition, at certain selected levels, of the individual human being. The Russian still typically does things in the mass, He travels in groups, vacations in absolute mobs, and he demonstrates, eats, drinks and entertains himself in the same way. But toward the end of 1966 he walks home with clear plastic bags of bright-colored toy animals for the kids. He responds to polls of various kinds, in which presumably any difficult variation from the norm can be expressed with saving grace of

anonymity. He—or she—buys grapes and tangerines in the cold months from street stalls in which the saleswoman tenderly places the fruit in a paper bag for weighing, and even accepts payment with some sort of grace. These are homely examples, I know, but they are what the sensitive visitor can see in Moscow, these days, and I think they are significant. Is it too much to hope that a bit more of this sort of change, together with a lot more and more widespread understanding on our part, may finally break the compulsive negativism with which we have for so long viewed the U.S.S.R. ?

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### THE PLANNER'S SIEGE PERILOUS

ONE often sees, these days, attempts to revive enthusiasm for some admirable but limited vision of the past. The truth of Emerson's rule, that nothing is accomplished without enthusiasm, is obvious enough. Our difficulty is that, while we believe the rule, a sophisticated knowledge of history produces *déjà vu* responses to practically every kind of exhortation. We've heard it before. Critical intelligence opposes itself to involvement. Although we may recognize here and there elements of an over-arching vision for the future, just "elements" are not enough to arouse people to commitment. Driving expressions of human purpose are called into being only by great, unifying conceptions, and our time, for all its acute intellectuality, is peculiarly lacking in such views.

Rather than speak of this situation pejoratively—which can lead only to very gloomy conclusions—we might say that it represents a *crisis in self-consciousness*. If we feel that we have boxed the compass in terms of the inspiration for social arrangements—if we have become convinced that high effort upon high effort brings only a succession of failing partisanship—then it may be that we have reached a time when only another kind of vision can move us to act. We are able to say, for example, that new feelings of identity are being pressed upon us by rudimental forms of psychological self-discovery, and that this is happening against a background of intolerable moral contradictions in historical events. If this is correct, then it is reasonable to maintain that our confused and often apathetic state is not pathological, but exactly what might be expected, prior to finding new ways of thinking about human selfhood.

Among the MANAS exchanges is one magazine which seems a veritable theatre of such confrontations. *Landscape*, which is published three times a year (Box 2323, Santa Fe, New

Mexico 87501—annual subscription \$3.00), covers serious thinking in a wide spectrum of fields, with emphasis on architecture, city planning, and related areas of human ecology. Very nearly every philosophical and social problem of the human race gets attention, however briefly, in its pages. And since men who plan and build houses, public buildings, and cities are directly concerned with the practical means by which human beings relate to both the natural and the man-made environment, their thought is of a sort that is expected to be acted upon. It has a "do business" quality.

The general reader may find a certain excitement in the sudden passage of a specialist—a man who devotes his life to the objective reality of houses for people, parks for their children, and markets where they will buy what they need—from practical matters to ultimate questions of *beauty* and the means to human fulfillment. Self-consciousness makes an architect more than an architect—he begins to think of his profession as one which obliges him to seek frames for self-realization. He discovers that he is supposed to house, and in some measure to direct, the motions of an activity which has not yet been defined! This sounds like an impossible task, and a certain anguish seems to characterize the writing of some of these men, no doubt because of the built-in uncertainty of their undertaking.

How can anyone cope with such incommensurables in a practical calling?

But this may be precisely the assignment of all men, in an age of increased self-consciousness. It may appear to be a special problem of architects and planners only because, in studying their deliberations, we see through their eyes.

But why, again it may be asked, should we turn the simple act of building a house or planning a town into what sounds like a cosmic dilemma? The answer to this question is soon found by reading what people concerned with planning think about most. Designers and planners have become enormously sensitive to the anti-human

aspects of the living and life-arrangements of the mass technological society. In seeking remedies they have discovered what seem to be almost impassible obstacles and a long range of unanswered questions. The planner or environment-maker wants to contribute to the "good life" of the people he plans for, but as artist and human being he knows that you can't manipulate people into a good life. He knows that to live a good life people have to want it, and that besides wanting it they need also to understand it. The designer-planner, after a lifetime of study of human behavior, is likely to paraphrase Thomas à Kempis and say, "All men desire the good life, but few men desire those things that make for the good life." Yet the designer has here-and-now decisions to make: he still must plan.

The opening editorial paragraphs of the Winter 1966-67 issue of *Landscape* briefly survey the history of city planning, showing the differences between various schools. What the writer calls the Progressicist model is of an ideal city in behalf of the *individual* inhabitant. The city is conceived as "a vast garden"—"a place of plentiful light and air and greenery." This model has certain consequences. The street, for one thing, loses its traditional importance. The urban area is divided according to functions—"work, dwelling, culture and leisure." An austere beauty results from simple geometrical forms. "Like the city itself the edifices are inspired by preconceived models—models of dwellings, schools, workshops, etc." A very different spirit pervaded the vision of those whom the writer calls the Culturists—planners who saw in modern industrial society the destruction of the homogeneous community of the past, bringing alienation from nature and the isolation of the typical city dweller. A nostalgia for the spirit of the medieval town led to planning for community rather than for the individual, with "emphasis on the public building, the monument, the historic reminder of the collective experience." *Landscapes's* survey of planning theories concludes by summarizing a later view:

The third approach is based on the assumption that not only will cities continue to exist but that new ones will be produced and that the problem confronting the city planner is how to adjust the city to the existing needs and desires of its inhabitants. Consequently a fundamental part of the planning process is *finding out* what those needs and desires may be. It is here that the sociologist and the psychologist enter the picture: to provide the background which the planner must have. How does the individual respond to certain types of urban environment? How can an urban environment be designed that encourages a new relationship between the city and its inhabitants? These can hardly participate in its design or construction and yet something like dialogue must be brought into being. . . . This realistic acceptance of men as they are, of cities as they are, gives the third approach its flexibility; and the fact that its concern for a dialogue between citizen and environment is also the concern of much advertising and promotional architecture does not diminish its value. But it would be foolish to ignore the dangers latent in any undue emphasis on behaviorism in urban design. It could easily produce—particularly here in America—a kind of environmentalism to maintain a psychological status quo. A relationship between environment and individual which seeks to outlaw friction and challenge, which attaches excessive importance to harmony and security and togetherness would be a denial of the civilization which the city is supposed to foster.

A paragraph from Percy Johnson-Marshall's new book, *Rebuilding Cities*, quoted by a reviewer, lists the typical considerations which impress the contemporary planner:

First we want urban *cleanliness* so we can say we need *Hygienic Cities*; second, we all want *longevity*, so we will want *Safe Cities*; third, we want *efficiency*, hence we shall expect *Functional Cities*; fourth, we want a sense of *continuity*, so that we shall need *Continuous Cities*; fifth, we want to lead *well-tempered* lives, and this implies the need for *Balanced Cities*; and sixth, we want above all to be *civilized* and therefore we shall need *Beautiful Cities*, cities as collective works of art.

What seems apparent is that modern planners are here trying to reduce the fundamental mystery of human purpose to a manageable size by dividing it up among the lesser mysteries of



particular human purposes. To be civilized, balanced, and beautiful—how wonderful this would be!—but do we really know any more about filling in these objectives than we know about ourselves? We already know a great deal about being "functional"—what throws us out of balance is our abysmal ignorance as to the ends to which our functional efficiencies are taking us. These lovely resolving words, in short, do not resolve.

It seems clear that if human community is to be restored, it will have to be *grown*, not "made"—and grown, first, in the heart, after which the planners will be able to get their directives as men who build for other men have always gotten them—by reading their hearts. Planners can of course lead other human beings by a little bit, and for small distances, but if they attempt much more they are likely to become (often without knowing it) either theologians or dictators, or both.

This is what makes being a planner so hard to bear. The same might be said of legislators, and all those who sit down in the Siege Perilous and start acting in behalf of other men in a way which tends to shape or direct their lives. There is a sense, of course, in which all men are their brothers' keepers. But those whose activities affect others in a public or institutional way have special powers, and corresponding responsibilities.

*COMMENTARY*  
**THE NEXT CIVILIZATION"**

TOWARD the end of his discussion of peacemaking, Richard Gregg says:

Previous civilizations have grown unself-consciously, but always on the basis of deep and often unrecognized assumptions and intuitions. The next civilization will probably grow more self-consciously. It, too, will have to develop on the basis of different deep assumptions and intuitions. I believe the most important assumption is as to the nature of the self.

There are numerous threads of development in the present which confirm this view. Not the least is the open declaration on the part of various humanistic psychologists of the importance of self-knowledge. Similar themes pervade literature wherever the influence of the Existential philosophers is felt.

The ferment among college and university students bespeaks the thrust of a new self-consciousness which is only superficially political. After all, given a rebellious contempt for commercialism, altruistic longings, and opposition to conventionally stratified social injustice, where else could these feelings in combination find outlet except through some mode of political activism? Yet at the same time the work of modern sociologists, almost all of whom are psychologically oriented, is making it plain that revolutionary authoritarianism is as anti-human as any other kind. Thus the appeal of Gandhi's Constructive Program, referred to by Mr. Gregg, along with growing recognition of the futility of seeking social progress through coercion, is in the air.

All such attitudes are deeply involved in insights and implications concerning the nature of man. A virtual hot-house for the development of these insights is the constructively engaged voluntary group. New forms of discovery which can only be called "social" are arising throughout a wide area of experiment—including industry and business. Probably the most fruitful of all

voluntary groups is the educational association formed by those devoted to a better understanding of both the self and the growth-processes of human beings. Here, almost certainly, lie the principal roots of what Mr. Gregg terms the "next civilization."

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves EVERYBODY'S TASK

A PEACE GROUP in Los Angeles wonders about the possibility of a program dealing with "how our educational system should be changed in order to produce a better value system in society and less hostile people." The first thing that occurs, in relation to any such project, is that nobody really knows how to go about it. Plato has Socrates ask almost the same question early in the *Republic*, and then devotes the rest of the volume to trying to find the answer. Can virtue be taught?

Getting "a better value system" means getting rid of the taken-for-granted self-righteousness in the content of education. It means embracing non-sectarian moral values and wearing away at the cultural egotisms which children absorb from their parents and other sources. It also means devising ways to generate self-respect in children who come from minority backgrounds. Such undertakings may involve what might be called an "oblique" approach on the part of the teacher. In the case of the boy who was ashamed of being an Indian, the teacher needed a year to open his eyes to the rare qualities of his tribal grandparents:

Alfred began to know his grandparents rather than just take them for granted as part of his environment. Mrs. Kraus used the good judgment not to push acceptance of ideas on Alfred's part. She planted ideas gently, then she had the patience to wait for their nurture. She accepted Alfred's belligerent feelings in regard to the baskets (woven by his grandparents) which were "trash." She helped the group, as well as Alfred, to see the local Indians in a light that was new to all of them.

Patience is obviously a necessary factor in all such growth processes. As E. F. Schumacher said in the lead article of two weeks ago (Feb. 15), in human development (whether educational or economic), there are no "jumps." Growth comes from the slow accumulation of tiny increments. Overcoming hostility means learning, bit by bit, to identify with other people, learning to feel as they

feel, hurt when they hurt, long as they dream. And "teaching" these things is equivalent to knowing for oneself the fundamental maturity that harmonious human life requires. "Systems" are hardly pertinent.

Plato was well aware of the far-reaching steps that would need to be taken in order to modify human attitudes. He knew that the stereotypes which had been printed on the minds of the young Greeks by their oral tradition were emotional barriers that would have to be overcome. You could say that the conventional egotisms of Greek youth had been learned to the tune of stirring rhythms. Their psyches were involved in attitudes which Plato believed had to be changed. Hence the inquiry pursued in the *Republic*. A passage quoted last week from Havelock's *Preface to Plato* illustrates the problem as Plato conceived it:

When confronted with an Achilles, we can say, here is a man of strong character, definite personality, great energy and forceful decision, but it would be equally true to say, here is a man to whom it has not occurred, and to whom it cannot occur, that he has a personality apart from the pattern of his acts. His acts are responses to his situation, and are governed by remembered examples of previous acts by previous strong men. The Greek tongue, therefore, as long as it is the speech of men who have remained in the Greek sense "musical" and have surrendered themselves to the spell of the tradition, cannot frame words to express the conviction that "I" am one thing and the tradition another; that "I" can stand apart from tradition and examine it; that "I" can and should break the spell of its hypnotic force. . . .

The emotional language of the Greeks was what Plato set out to change. Socrates had worked on this before him, and had suffered somewhat in popularity because of his attempt. It is difficult for us to realize how deep-seated are identity-attitudes—whether old Greek or American—until some historical confrontation begins to challenge the images we hold dear. A passage in *Hurry Sundown*, a book on the tensions between the races now emerging in the Deep South, shows the kind of habitual feelings which education must eventually overcome. In this part

of the story, a beautiful, sentimental white woman meets the Negro son of her old "mammy," and tries to recapture the emotional "niceness" of her childhood past. She says to this sturdy black war-veteran:

"Reeve, answer me! Where has it all gone? Ever since I can remember, when I'd wake up in the morning, all day long, any time, you could hear colored folks singing in the kitchens, out in the yards, in the street. You could always hear colored folk singing. I never hear them singing any more. All this division among us today, all this dissension you're sowing: Where's it all going to end? . . . Something's been lost out of our lives . . . a quality of feeling, the kind of selfless devotion your mother gave me. . . .

"Oh, I've made mistakes, I admit that. . . . But it wasn't all bad, was it? There were good things to it, too, weren't there? Tell me the truth now. The truth. The way it really was."

The black man reflected:

Did she know what she was asking for, so innocently sitting there in the car in front of all this crowd? A sock in the jaw, a kick in the slats, to be assaulted and beaten and left for dead was nothing, Reeve thought, to this. . . .

"You want it straight?" he said with brutal relief, laying it down, committing himself body and soul. . . .

"My mother never loved you more than she did herself," he said. There it was, on the line. "She didn't work for you. She worked for us."

Reeve didn't get through to her, of course. More time was needed—time and pain. It is the crisis character of such confrontations that makes us turn in desperation to education as the source of all hope. What else is there to turn to? Yet there is a high price tag on the kind of education that is needed. It involves extreme commitment, and in a society hardly committed to anything but comfort and evasion of unpleasantness, an incomprehensible "extremism" sometimes appears to result in the committed educator. When Mario Montessori proudly told A. S. Neill about how his mother had succeeded in reaching illiterate parents and getting them to learn to read, by teaching reading to their small children, Neill exploded,

"This is beyond me!" Asked what he meant, Neill explained:

It's beyond me because you're talking about education, the three R's and science, and I'm thinking about the dynamics of life, the dynamic in a child, how we're going to prevent the child from becoming a Gestapo, or becoming a color-hater and all these things. The sickness of the world. I'm interested in what we're going to do *for* children to stop them from becoming haters, to stop them from being anti-life.

## *FRONTIERS*

### More Liberty Houses?

THE land-office business done last December by the new Liberty House retail store in New York City is making its sponsors wonder whether such stores, if spread around the country, might not go a measurable distance toward solving some of the basic economic problems of black Americans in the South. Liberty House headquarters is in Jackson, Mississippi, where the products of twelve craft cooperatives, recently organized in that state, are warehoused and offered for sale. It was a daring thing to open an outlet for the cooperatives in New York, starting with limited capital and locating on Bleeker Street (No. 343), along with the exclusive "shoppes" of that district, but the attractive and well-made co-op products found plenty of customers.

Most popular with New Yorkers were the handsome, "Villagy" suede bags of all shapes, sizes and colors, which the co-ops have been turning out from the beginning. Other lively items were hand-made candles, hand-made patchwork quilts, brown-skin stuffed dolls, jewelry and coin pouches of suede, ties made with African fabrics, calico smocks for little girls, and bean-bags. Mississippi cotton bolls were sold as Christmas tree ornaments. There was excellent press coverage for the opening (just in time for the Christmas rush), and more TV cameras than could get in the store.

The basic achievement of Liberty House is in making it possible for some two hundred former cotton field workers and maids in Mississippi to earn their living in production shops they organized themselves (with know-how and financial help from Liberty House and the Poor Peoples Corporation). Capital, of course, has been a problem, as with the starting of any business, and another particular need has been for people to teach craft techniques to the workers. Effective marketing is also essential, since workers in the South are reluctant to organize and

start producing unless a market exists for what they will make and they are reassured at the beginning by immediate sales. The notable success of the Bleeker Street store has encouraged the dream of a network of Liberty Houses in all sorts of communities throughout the country.

At present, in addition to the Jackson and New York stores, there are Liberty Houses in Detroit and Little Rock. The kind of question which comes up in planning a new store is illustrated by choices now open in the Boston area. Should it be located in Harvard Square, with its college student and arty population, or is the Negro community of Roxbury a better place? Sales might be higher in Harvard Square, where people flock from neighboring towns to do their "interesting" shopping. But Roxbury has *no* stores that sell craft goods, and its sizeable middle class can afford the co-op merchandise as well as other goods that a Liberty House might decide to carry. Possibly, in this case, the right solution will be to open two stores.

In anticipation of the spread of retail outlets around the country, Mr. Abbie Hoffman, manager of the Bleeker Street store, is working on a franchise agreement in which new Liberty Houses would participate. A simple affair, it would involve commitment to sell to all people, regardless of color or belief, and to stock goods from the Mississippi co-ops. Already the Jackson Liberty House, basic distributor for the Mississippi co-op producers, is supplying hundreds of wholesale accounts in various parts of the United States. There are novel possibilities for increasing sales. A Headstart-type program recently ordered 20,000 Negro dolls. A Radcliffe student who worked a year for the movement in Mississippi is now New England campus representative for Liberty House, placing goods in college book stores and recruiting skilled people to go to Jackson to teach production methods on new items. A Bennington student has fitted full-time work for the co-ops into her college work-study

program. Members of the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) at Brandeis University are scouting Negro and white craftsmen to teach Negro workers and will pay carfare and subsistence for those who want to do it. On the general problems of Liberty House growth, one of the planners said recently:

We have had to face the fact that in order for co-op workers in Mississippi to earn a decent living, their products must be adequately priced. The things they make are quality goods, since this is what they want to make and what sells. These workers couldn't make a living by producing for the needs of the poorest people in the ghettos. Meanwhile, Negro leaders in the northern cities are thinking in down-to-earth terms: why not egg cooperatives, laundromat cooperatives, etc.? Quite possibly a Liberty House in a northern ghetto could sell some things for a little less by getting their sales cost down. Then, the Mississippi tote bags last for years and cost less in the long run than a cheap bag that falls apart in a few months. Installment buying might be arranged, and food items sold. And there are sound reasons why ghetto people might decide to trade at a Liberty House store.

The Liberty House operations could easily afford a stimulus to local production. The Bleecker Street store, for example, is selling large quantities of African-type jewelry made by the Harlem Workshop. Along with quilts from Mississippi it is displaying quilts made by a co-op in Selma. A Liberty House store which opened in a Negro community might allot some of the margin on the sale of goods from Mississippi to finance craft classes, having in view the establishment of production units in its own neighborhood. The store, of course, would be a convenient outlet for whatever was made. And in it black people could be trained in retailing, advertising, publicity, and even community organizing, with the store as a functioning base. This would not be abstract, like the training programs offered by some anti-poverty agencies, and would certainly be less expensive! According to the manager's judgment, the store could be opened on week-ends or evenings for Freedom School classes, craft education, consumer

education, and political education. Liberty House stores across the country could handle merchandise produced by the co-ops fostered by the other stores, and all the stores could be linked by a newsletter published at Liberty House headquarters, P.O. Box 3193, Jackson, Miss.

One supporter of Liberty House expansion spoke in terms of a wider perspective:

It seems to me that such a chain of stores could be the community institution such groups as SDS and SNCC have been looking for. One obvious advantage is that stores are at least a self-supporting project, if not profit-making. And while co-ops are frankly evolutionary instead of revolutionary, they can be established *now*, and how foolish it would be to dismiss as "ugly capitalism" these going concerns that are taking field workers and enabling them to be independent craftsmen!