

## IVORY TOWERS REVISITED

THESE are days in which, were it not for the ominous events which threaten theorists and philosophers as well as ordinary men, the ivory towers of isolated intellectuality might again become popular resorts. There are several reasons why men seek out ivory towers. There is first what may be called a religious reason. This reason embodies the view that the world is an evil place, ultimately beyond redemption, and that there is little to be done in or for it. Accordingly, the wise man will withdraw as much as possible from worldly activity, in order to conclude what peace he can with the decisive forces that affect his life or destiny. These forces may be named "God," and the one who withdraws may be a monk of some sort who seeks a private salvation.

But the man who thus withdraws may also cherish the belief that in isolating himself and perfecting his nature, he exerts an invisible but beneficent influence on others. Such a man will regard practical efforts toward material welfare as benevolent but futile undertakings; even "education," in the conventional sense, he will see as a delusive pursuit of knowledge by inadequate means.

Then there is the withdrawal from the world on cynical grounds. The cynic has no pretensions to an all-inclusive theory of knowledge. Skilled in the study of human frustrations and defeat, he retires to whatever citadel his personal ingenuity can devise, there to conduct his life in a mood of sophisticated melancholia, defending himself against vulgar intrusions as well as he can.

Professorial retreats are somewhat different. The specialist (who may be a scholar or some kind of scientist) regards himself as entitled to live remote from the confusion and pain of the workaday world because of the importance of his specialty. He is, he proposes, adding to the

knowledge of the world. His role is limited, but appropriate for him, since not everyone is *able* to make the contribution his unusual abilities afford.

There are probably other classes of ivory towerists, but these several types may serve to illustrate the entire group, which is far from being distinct and sharply defined, but, instead, shades off into the general population and less distinctive motives for isolation from the general problems of mankind. It is not, after all, simply a general indifference to the welfare of other human beings that is castigated by popular opinion. Such general indifference is too common to gain special criticism. The people who are charged with living in "ivory towers" are always the people who take the trouble to explain themselves, who offer some justification for what they are doing. An intellectual who hires a house on a hill and spins out theories of the universe, refusing to mix with ordinary folk, is regarded as "queer" or selfishly impractical, whereas a rich industrialist who builds himself a mansion on an imperially scaled "estate" and enjoys himself with a private golf course and other diversions peculiar to the wealthy, while he may be envied, is seldom condemned for withdrawing from the world. It is the man who makes withdrawal into a principle, instead of the indulgence of a preference, who excites criticism.

This is probably just. A rich man's enjoyment of his money hardly merits the dignity of serious criticism. The man who theorizes, however, enters the arena of judgment about the nature of things. He dares to think, and other men who think are entitled to comment on whether he thinks well or poorly.

What is the meaning of the charge, "Ivory Towerism"? The man off in an ivory tower is a man who refuses to come to grips with the "real" issues of life. He will not take a hand in history.

He is said to be deluded, or his motives are suspect. He seeks "escape."

Why, then, should the present be a time when ivory towers may again become popular? Because there is no clear way, these days, to take a hand in making history. There is not even a generally popular theory of how to take a hand in history. All that we have is indisputable evidence of what *not* to do.

A man of fifty, today, can look back over his life and remember practically every theory of progress in history that is known to man, and see its relative or absolute failure within his own lifetime. He has seen the program of vigorous "self-interest" eventuate in disastrous economic depression. He has witnessed an even worse collapse of the socialist dream of a "classless society." He has seen the progress of technology change the face of a free, democratic society into a tightly integrated industrial behemoth, and he has watched the industrial genius of that society mount its resources for incalculable destruction in the name of human "ideals"!

He can still "fight the good fight"—that is, he can oppose corruption, expose deception, and apply what virtues remain to him in the practice of contemporary politics—but the vision of changing the world according to some great, over-arching plan of the good of mankind is now denied him. He is, in short, the victim of profound frustration. Such a man, were the world not perilously close to insane self-destruction, could easily succumb to the temptations of an ivory tower. Are we so very sure, after all, that the "saints" of antiquity were not right?

What, actually, are the choices before us? The popular mind, and, therefore, the movement of history, tends to throw such questions into unequivocal categories of black or white decision. Either you are a materialist or you are an idealist. Either you believe that politics will save the world, or you believe that God will do it for us. There is no area between. Politics is a clear principle of action. If you see no hope from politics, you *must*

believe that God will save you. Or if you cannot believe in God, and embrace "Idealism" or "Metaphysics," it comes to the same thing. You refuse to take a hand in history.

This, of course, is the definition of the issue as of thirty or forty years ago. No one but die-hard sectarians of Progressive-Materialist tendency would state it this way today; the point, however, is that no other formulation of the issue is presently available, except that of the anarcho-pacifists.

It seems likely that we shall have no other statement of the issue without, first, a better understanding of the sterility of ivory-tower thinking and of the failure of political action as we have known it.

Why, basically, did the political revolution fail? It failed because to succeed it had to have power, and the steps that seemed necessary—doubtless *were* necessary—to gain power brought irremediable corruptions of the common life that the revolution was intended to produce.

The dilemma, then, in these terms, is this: You can't change history without power, and with power you seem to make it worse. And if you renounce power, but still wish to theorize, you occupy one of those hated ivory towers.

The application of this reasoning to the development of the anarcho-pacifist movement is obvious. By anarcho-pacifism a special kind of power may be generated, through which the revolution may succeed. No one, however, knows what sort of revolution it will turn out to be, since the anarchist element is nihilistic toward conventional notions of order, while the exercise of pacifist power (non-violence) is known chiefly as a form of resistance, and hardly at all as the constraining principle behind positive administration.

But despite these difficulties, anarcho-pacifism, of all attempted resolutions of the dilemma, at least has a future. That future may be completely undefined, but the energies of men of

imagination are devoted to its development, and it is difficult to see how an expansion of this movement can bring disaster.

Meanwhile, there is a need to study the failure of politics. Revolutionary politics has been almost entirely conceived as the establishment of institutions that would compel desirable behavior on the part of the members of society. The difficulty, here, has been that, for political purposes (not the least of which is the successful prosecution of war), desirable behavior has meant a narrow conformity in thought as well as in action. This requirement of conformity has destroyed any semblance of revolutionary society to the dream of the Good Life. What is "good" has suffered fixed definition.

Here, surely, is the essential evil in politics. When it attempts to define the good, it destroys it. The good is a private matter. It exists only in that vaguely defined area which reaches from the inner thoughts of individuals to the margins of institutional control, but cannot be subjected to control. It is *here* that we succeed or fail. It is here, where we fight out our battles with ourselves, that we shape tomorrow's politics, virtually unaided by today's politics.

Here are forged all art, literature, ethics, morality, and religion. Here we make our freedom, our justice, our truth, or neglect and lose them. A state which is forever tinkering with these matters is an anxious State, filled with apprehensions and dark intuitions of its own failure and decay. It is a State which, if allowed to continue, drives the thinkers of the time either into ministries of propaganda or into whatever ivory towers can be found, and drives the rest of the population into the cattlepens of army, industry, and government bureaucracy. Or it drives them into the thinly scattered but stubborn files of the anarcho-pacifists. Where else are they to go?

## *Letter from* **INDIA**

[Some weeks ago we sent our Indian Correspondent a thoughtful criticism of India's policy in the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. The criticism, which appeared in *Peace News*, was by Reginald Reynolds, British journalist and pacifist, long active in the cause of India's freedom and a writer on Gandhi's life and work. Following is the reply from our Indian Correspondent.—Editors.]

SOME months ago, Mr. Aneurin Bevan, the British Labour Leader, wrote in his *Tribune* supporting India's stand on Kashmir. Unfortunately I have lost the press cutting and so am not in a position to send it to you. Mr. Bevan argued India's case far more clearly and briefly than our own representatives at the UN. He wrote that there has been a failure of publicity on the part of India and consequently foreign criticism of India's Kashmir policy is not informed.

We are not surprised that India's stand on Kashmir has made her unpopular abroad and caused regret among her friends. We are prepared to ignore outbursts from the British Tory Press and certain chronically anti-Indian lobbies in the U.S.A. But when well-disposed friends like Mr. Reynolds despair over India's Kashmir policy, India has a duty to explain her conduct to them.

Mr. Nehru believes that India's policy on Kashmir is right. I also do. But the presentation of India's case has been very inefficient.

India is guided by certain principles which Mr. Nehru holds dear but in the particular case of Kashmir, there are two principles apparently opposed to each other—India's non-religious secularism and democracy—and India's adherence to the former and apparent rejection of the latter has made her very vulnerable to criticism and condemnation. It is unreasonable to expect foreign countries, however friendly, to attempt an understanding of that phase of India's recent history which has determined her Kashmir Policy. They judge her only from the obvious: India refuses to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir and abide by the people's verdict.

Things are really not that simple. A plebiscite in Kashmir has the hazards of ushering in people and

ideas that are far removed from everything progressive or modern. When Indian representatives explain that a plebiscite in Kashmir is fraught with dangerous consequences of a terrible communal upheaval, their explanations do not carry conviction and they cannot get round the weakness of their plea. Mr. Nehru has good reasons for shrinking from a plebiscite—an accepted democratic procedure—and they are quite above reproach. I hold no brief for either my government or for Mr. Nehru, so that I can speak with a frankness which statesmen cannot perhaps afford.

There is no reason to believe that a plebiscite is *always* a reliable and safe democratic expression. Mr. Nehru knows this, but for a man of his courage and integrity, he has not stated it categorically in any of his numerous speeches. If he has been burdened with a sense of guilt, it is wholly unnecessary. The necessity of having to reject a democratic procedure usually regarded as sacred has perhaps bewildered and confused him and his advisers. The vindication of India's stand in Kashmir is possible only if India has the courage to question certain accepted fundamentals and point out that they have no universal validity.

Western countries have no experience of Indian conditions and not unnaturally believe such values as democracy operate similarly everywhere. They are perhaps not aware or have forgotten that the plebiscite and the franchise can serve interests wholly evil. The Nazi experience in Germany is instructive. Hitler came to power only through the vote. Religion and communal fanaticism in India have done much harm in the past and Pakistan itself came into being only through the efforts of politicians who pleaded that the Moslems of undivided India were a separate nation. The Congress which worked for a free United India had to yield because of Mr. Jinnah's successful appeal to the Moslem masses. As you are aware, India and Pakistan went through a blood bath before and after partition. Indian leaders believed and still believe that religion is irrelevant in politics and does not confer nationhood. India therefore has been made a secular state where no one is discriminated against on grounds of religion. There are still forty million Moslems in India despite Pakistan.

The vote and the plebiscite brought Pakistan into being and they reaped a harvest of killings which the West does not care to take into consideration.

Democracy in countries where the masses are illiterate promises power to politicians who can skilfully appeal to and exploit popular passions. A dispassionate student of Indo-Pakistan history will easily see that the creators of Pakistan were only such politicians and not patriots. Islam carries a powerful appeal to the Moslem masses and the creators of Pakistan did not hesitate to exploit it in the name of democracy. It is only natural that they should seek to repeat their success in Kashmir. India is sure that a plebiscite would be fraught with bloodshed and her evidence is the carnage that India and Pakistan went through ten years ago.

The rightness of exploiting religious sentiments and securing political benefits through plebiscite has been taken for granted by the West and it has not been competently contested by India. It looks as though India's spokesmen are themselves not aware of what they are about and this lack of clearness about purposes and aims has lost India her prestige as a nation so far guided by moral principles.

India dispatched troops to Kashmir in October of 1947 at the request of the State Government, when the State was invaded by tribals at the instigation of Pakistan. India offered to hold a plebiscite in 1948, but now realises the offer was a mistake and is embarrassed at the commitment.

That India has not the courage to face the people's verdict in Kashmir and has good reasons to fear that it will go against her is not a mere allegation. It is a fact. Any knowledgeable Indian will admit in private that many people in India's External Affairs Ministry believe that Kashmiris will vote for uniting with Pakistan in a plebiscite. Whether this fear is well-founded is entirely a different question. Possibly Kashmiris themselves are aware of India's suspicions and the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Mr. Bakshi Ghulam Ahmed, has found it necessary to affirm repeatedly that Kashmir's accession to India is final.

I have no hesitation in telling you that if India feels that she cannot face and therefore hold a plebiscite in Kashmir, there is no reason for her to fight shy of admitting it. Given time, India hopes to reduce religious passions and animosities whipped up by the creation of Pakistan ten years ago to total meaninglessness and irrelevance and to achieve the kind of moral relationship that exists between the

various religious denominations in the West—as the Catholics and Protestants. She is determined not to let Pakistan resurrect a monster laid long ago.

It is more than a hundred years now since religion lost all political validity in the West, but strangely enough the West has no difficulty in countenancing the revival of such medievalism in Asia. India believes that the decision of the Moslem masses of Kashmir will not be free when it is prompted by the cry of Islam in danger and Pakistan has all along been raising such a cry in her war of words against India. It is India's misfortune that her sincere convictions are misconstrued as imperialistic ambitions.

I am not claiming that India's hands in Kashmir have been very clean. The detention of Sheikh Abdullah has puzzled Indians themselves and I do not know how I can manage to defend it. My only plea is that the West must not be obsessed with the plebiscite as an always sound determinant of political destinies. To question India's morality on the basis of her refusal to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir is to be deluded by a deceptive simplicity and to ignore realities which are bound to be unintelligible to Westerners who have had no experience of politics bedevilled by religion.

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## REVIEW

### LAST DAYS OF THE WEHRMACHT

HAILED by some reviews as a book of greater impact than *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Willi Heinrich's *The Cross of Iron* is, indeed, an impressive novel (Bobbs-Merrill, 1956; Bantam Edition, May, 1957). This is the chronicle of the mighty German army's last stand in Russia, of a series of desperate but courageous battles fought at a time when every competent soldier and officer in the field knew that both the campaign and the war had already been lost.

The story revolves around a sergeant, a "modern centurion" who embodied all the disciplined virtues of the selfless soldier. Capable of love, he lived without it, capable of giving and receiving kindness, he lived to perform his duty; he was not without originality or ingenuity, at one time leading a whole battalion in a maneuver of highest strategic importance. The tragedy of Steiner's life is not that he suffers and dies, but that he accepts with such stoicism the meaninglessness of his fate. He knew that he had been betrayed by the profession he served, by the ideology of the war-making State. The dialogue shows that he could perceive deeply, yet play out the game. Steiner begins one conversation by saying, "There isn't any place really where you can keep your balance without dancing like a tightrope walker. Do you see what I mean?"

"No," Hollerbach said.

Steiner frowned. "No wonder. There's a lousy clever system in it. From childhood on they put blinkers on us so we won't see to either side of us. Every time, just before you're about to see, they toss you a bone like you were a dog. You can sink your teeth into that and forget about it all for a while. The older you get and the more demanding you become, the bigger the bone. And when the time comes that you're sick of it all—school, job and so on—then they throw you the biggest bone of all. That's the one that really does the trick; it's guaranteed to wear your teeth down because it keeps you busy even in bed, so that you don't have a minute to spare to think about other things. Ah . . ." he waved his sound arm disgustedly.

"What's the matter with you?" Hollerbach asked.

"I don't know," Steiner answered tonelessly. "You always think you no longer have any illusions. But believe me, the biggest illusion of all is believing you're without illusions."

"I'm not sure I follow you," he said, "when you talk about somebody tossing us bones. Who the devil is this 'they' of yours?"

"If I knew that, I'd know everything," Steiner replied. "But it isn't something you can prove; you just believe it or you don't. Maybe some day I'll get to the bottom of it."

*The Cross of Iron* takes one behind the scenes with high ranking officers, showing the same Germanic capacity for looking Nemesis square in the eye and still remaining men. In a later chapter a battalion commander and his subordinate finally face up to the end of the German world. These are moving passages. We read about the final defeats as though the Wehrmacht were a hydra-headed monster whose officers deserve nothing more than the death they find. But they are men, and sometimes men of both integrity and courage:

Brandt leaned forward, probing Kiesel's pale face. "What are we going to do when we lose the war?"

The question was such a bolt from the blue that Kiesel started. He shrugged wearily. "Start life all over again," he said softly.

A dark frown passed over the commander's face. "You may, but not I. I'm too old to start life over again." His big head drooped. "It's no longer worth it."

"There are ways." Kiesel spoke without conviction.

"Certainly." Brandt nodded absently. "Certainly there are ways. Being a salesman, for example. Going from house to house and door to door. Can you imagine it?"

Kiesel did not reply. Several painful minutes passed, until Brandt laughed harshly. His whole body stiffened. "Perhaps we are thinking further ahead than is really necessary. There are other solutions. A hero's grave, for example, or Siberia, or running away across the lines to join General Paulus' National Committee. What do you think about that?"

Kiesel saw the rage and anguish in his face, and something of the commander's hopelessness affected him. "I would prefer the first," he answered.

"That surprises me," Brandt replied loudly. "I would have thought the last."

Kiesel felt that he was looking for a quarrel, and shook his head. "You misunderstand me. That would be an escape into self-deception, and in the long run you can't go on deceiving yourself."

"What about your ideology?" Brandt asked scornfully.

Kiesel looked down at his cigarette and remained silent. When the commander drummed his fingers impatiently on the table, he raised his head. His voice was cold. "I'll put it this way: in principle I can't enjoy a full dinner when others sitting beside me are hungry, especially when they wear the same uniform and have sworn the same oath as I have."

"I'm glad to hear that." Brandt said. His face relaxed.

"There is no excuse for the Committee," he said harshly.

"Germans call on Germans to desert although they know perfectly well what is awaiting them on the other side. Filthy scoundrels." He began to knead the skin above his cheekbones.

"I've never thought about that before," he went on. "But for several weeks now it's been weighing on me. I really don't any longer see what I'd do with myself if I should take off this uniform today."

For some time we have been wondering what to do with some interesting passages in another book on the peculiar "karma" of German militarism. Before and during two great world wars, the propaganda line for all those hostile to Germany insinuated that there was something ultimately bestial about the "German soul"—that the Teutonic strain meant a determination to dominate, to fight, to kill. But the word "karma" seems to approximate the compulsion that is involved. Edward Hudiburg, in *Killers' Game*, presents a German family's connection with three wars against America. The last two lines, italicized by the author, illustrate what we mean:

"For my family, this is the third war against America." He dropped down to take a seat on the wooden platform, and considered the statement he had made. "No, there has been one more. This is the fourth," he said. . . .

"My great-great-great-grandfather Valentin went to the first war, lifted like a prime piece of livestock from the Hessian farm and set down a great

distance away from home, wrapped in a foreign scarlet coat and hugging an untrustworthy musket in both his hands. . . . when he came back home—as some people do from wars—he brought along a set of pewter spoons on which appeared the image of a snake in thirteen segments and the motto, 'Don't Tread on Me.' "

"My great-uncle Karl set out for American shores on a different kind of mission, and willingly. They sailed as settlers to the new State of Texas, to which many thousands of their kith, kin and neighbors had already gone before them for a generation. The winters were desolate and lonely. Hell came with the summer. And so it was with an overwhelming sense of relief that he found his real career, before too many years had passed, in the volunteer army of the Confederate States of America."

"The third war involved my father, and in various and vital ways it involved me too. I was four when my father went away from home to join his regiment. And after a long interval, when he returned, I had developed this—" Dr. Rossuth indicated his crippled back. "And from shame and fright I ran away to hide when the limping shadow of my father fell across the door-sill. My crippling had made me shy. And father's injuries had made him self-conscious and impatient. He limped from a mortar fragment in his hip, and only two fingers remained on his right hand. I hardly remembered him, and they dragged me back to the room, raging and kicking, to meet a silent stranger whose grotesque hand, as it reached out to touch me, seemed certain to scratch or claw or gouge, like the weapon-foot of an animal. Covering a retreat before the American forces near Chambley, father had received these honorable decorations of war."

The bacteriologist's nervous features took on an even greater agitation. "What does it mean, this distorted, jumbled history?" he inquired of Gregor. "I have asked myself many times, and I have tried to find a meaning. It *seems* to have no meaning, but it may be possible to pick one out. Within the brief span of a century and a half, for a small human group, for one family, it means: *although my determination is to nurture my own kind, I am compelled, by government decree, to turn and rend it.*"

## COMMENTARY TO BE ACHIEVED IN TIME

ANOTHER reader of "The Object All Sublime" (see Frontiers) suggests that this article ignored the sort of experience which usually raises the problem of justice for the individual. This is the experience of gross *injustice*.

It is easy to recognize injustice. The revolutions of the eighteenth century were uprisings against injustice. And the principle for which those revolutions were fought, in order to end injustice, was freedom. No one has put this with more clarity than Joseph Mazzini, who wrote:

The eighteenth century, too generally regarded as an age of mere scepticism and negation, had yet a faith of its own, a mission of its own, and a practical method for the realization of that mission. Its faith was a Titanic, limitless belief in human power and human liberty. Its measure was . . . to sum up, and reduce to a concrete formula, that which eighteen centuries of Christianity had examined, evolved, and achieved, to constitute the *individual* such as he was destined and designed to be—free, sacred, and inviolable. And this mission it accomplished through the French Revolution—which was the political translation of the Protestant Revolution. . . . The instrument adopted to work out the revolution, and reach the aim it was its mission to achieve, was the idea of *right*. From the theory of *right* it derived its power, its mandate, the legitimacy of its acts. The *declaration of the rights of man* is the supreme and ultimate formula of the French Revolution.

But man cannot, as Mazzini says, "remain quiescent like an emancipated slave, satisfied with his solitary liberty." Instead of reacting against wrong, he must now establish and secure the right. Now he must say what *is* justice.

To love freedom, a man need only be a man. But to assure justice he must be an extraordinary man. This is what we have not understood, supposing that laws and institutions can make justice secure. Governments based only on *rights*, Mazzini wrote, grow from

theories of *distrust*; their organic problem, a remnant of patched-up Constitutionalism, reduces itself to the discovery of a point around which individuality and association, liberty and law, may oscillate forever in resultless hostility; their . . . republic is the turbulent, intolerant democracy of Athens; their war-cry a cry of vengeance, and their symbol Spartacus.

Mazzini was indeed a prophet of our confusion.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

Editors, "Children . . . and Ourselves": Because so much of a parent's relationship with a child is taken up with training of one kind or another, the question of how and when to give praise or encouragement is continually arising. At times it seems far better to refrain from praising an action which has been well done. At least this is true if praise sounds like a reward for remembering to do something which is simply desirable practice. For if helpful action is acknowledged with praise, it may be regarded as something more than that which is justly due. A constant application of praise and blame may lead children to focus attention on the parents' feelings in the matter rather than on the value or meaning of an act. The "training" thus becomes a matter of how diligently a child can discover and remember what things his parents like best.

Another alternative would be to acknowledge actions which are clearly of a kind which makes living easier and more pleasant for others with a simple but deliberate "thank you." This does justice to an essentially personal gesture, in an impersonal way, leaving the child free, in a sense, of involvement in feelings not belonging directly to the act.

Praise and blame, insofar as they can be justified at all, belong properly to the sphere of the doer's own inner judgment. He alone really knows the correct value of any act of his; if he does not, he must discover it for himself, or develop the ability to do so. Only when a man can impartially assess the value of his actions, has he any right to think that his motives and judgments are really his own creations. It seems very important for a child to learn something of this.

In a situation where learning to do something is the main issue, rather than a particular act which has been done—that is, where perfection is not to be even expected in the near future, praise and blame are quite irrelevant. For praise and blame relate to results and what a child is able to perform may only be the fruit of former effort or of natural endowment rather than new ground broken.

So perhaps we could say that encouragement should seldom if ever manifest as praise, but instead be an impartial appraisal, or, to put it another way, a reaction which is but an expression of the nature of the act from another aspect than that of the doer. Differently motivated acts call forth naturally

different reactions. An effort to learn something might call for wholehearted encouragement, while a spontaneous gesture, a helpful act arising in the moral nature, should not be judged at all, but simply appreciated for its help and timeliness. This is because there is something, a "core of maturity," perhaps, in a child which we ought to reach out to continually and which we take for granted in dealing with adults.

Again, perhaps both praise and blame can assume a legitimate place in education if one praises the act rather than the actor. Then whatever is held out in the way of approval should leave the child with a hint of something further that can be envisioned and brought within the realm of possibility.

OUR correspondent, whether by force of habit or as a result of making what seems a new discovery, proceeds largely from the assumption that adult values are innate or instinctive in the child. Whenever this assumption is the basis of a comment, it is necessary to point out that few psychologists agree with it. While our own inclination is in a similar direction—witness remarkable and sometimes prolonged displays of sympathy on the part of the child for the plight of an adult, or his desire to "make up" as the consequence of a destructive act, even when the parent in no way expects this—it is also necessary to understand the reasons for counsels against giving the child a "junior-adult" status. While all human beings, even children, evaluate to some degree on an individual basis, it is also true, as we all know, that our standards and capacities for evaluation are constantly broadened by encountering the evaluations of others. Praise or blame, in this context, would appear to be odious only when imbued with the quality of absoluteness—when given with either cold rejection or the promise of boundless rewards. In either case, the excess of blame or praise stultifies the child's innate capacity for evaluation, at the same time making it impossible for him to assimilate his parents' standards.

Our correspondent carries her view to an extreme when she says that the child "alone knows the correct value of any act of his, or if he does

not he must discover it for himself." Complete "permissiveness," or even parental action based on the assumption that the best government is the least government, often *reduces* opportunity for "discovery." When it comes to motivation, all that a child is able to know, left to himself, is that he *wants* to do what he does. But what he will "want" to do the next time will depend upon what he learns respecting the consequences of the present action. A primary function of parents and teachers in ethical education is to insist that the child observe, think about, and "feel" something about those consequences.

We have had so many educational warnings against rigid conditioning that we tend, particularly in this country and this era, to swing toward an opposite extreme. The result for the child may be to deprive him of opportunity for learning. Of course, the freedom required is freedom to "resist" a parent. We must allow the child to resist, but it is important to suggest that he recognize his motivation or plane of action, and *our* resistance to his apparent desire for unbridled freedom is also an important educative factor. The parent who resists the child's egocentricity too little at first, may end by resisting, not wisely, but too well, at a later stage of desperation. The child must on occasion come to terms with obedience, strict and absolute obedience. This is not to say that his life should be governed solely by following commands, but only that there are cases and times when obedience expresses acceptance of the leadership principle—a principle which extends throughout all areas of adult life. The Greeks, in their best philosophizing, held that a youth must be trained both to obey and to command and, truly, it is impossible to command even one's own life intelligently without knowing what it means to obey some commands from another.

So we are all for discipline, but we are also for leaving the door open to allow time for gradual assimilation of the need for some imperatives—save in those instances where an

immediate response is required, *i.e.*, a command issued sharply to save the child from harm. "Training" is in part the development of a habit-system. Each habit-system is a closed context of responses, involving a high degree of assimilation of a limited number of factors, and while each habit-system, like every formulation of philosophical or religious belief, must be reevaluated and transcended at some time, it provides a necessary base on which to build. These two aspects of "training" were illuminated by Adler when he once wrote that "the child learns in increasing degree to 'control' the environment. At the same time and no less important—it becomes psychologically *dependent* upon a growing circle of environmental events." The dependency of which Adler speaks also provides a form of security, arising from the child's ability to meet the "growing circle of environmental events" with habit patterns. On the same topic, Prescott Lecky, in *Self-Consistency*, describes a relationship between the need for dependence and habits which promise correct discharge of responsibilities:

The problem of maintaining unity and of preserving the integrity of the habit system is therefore the same, for until an organized system of behavior has begun to develop there is nothing, psychologically, to be disorganized. And yet the organism cannot continue to develop, or succeed in maintaining its unity, except by repeatedly facing new conflicts and risking the security it wishes to attain. Learning is not mechanical but adventurous. If a certain type of situation has been assimilated, its presence tends to support the attitude of confidence, but if it has not been assimilated the normal attitude is threatened, and the process of assimilation itself brings about a temporary disturbance. Thus the problem of development is that of maintaining and strengthening the normal attitude by gradually assimilating the situations which formerly had a disturbing effect. To use a spatial metaphor, the field of normal behavior grows at the expense of the abnormal.

## *FRONTIERS* More on "Justice"

A LETTER from a reader commenting on "The Object All Sublime" (MANAS, May 8), an article which dealt with the obscurities of "Justice," sent us to the unabridged dictionary, and then, successively, to the *Britannica*, *Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, and the *Encyclopædia of the Social Sciences*, in the hope of more light, since our reader was dissatisfied with what we had quoted on the subject from *The Maurizius Case* by Jacob Wasserman. Finally, finding ourselves not much improved by these learned authorities, we turned to Plato's *Republic* and its conclusion:

*Socrates*: Where, then, is justice, and where is injustice, and in what part of the State did they spring up?

*Adeimantus*: Probably in the dealings of the citizens with one another.

Elsewhere in the *Republic* Socrates affirms that "in a State which is ordered with a view to the good of the whole, we should be most likely to find justice."

This seemed a basis for renewing the discussion, since our correspondent's account of justice is very close to Plato's. The former writes:

Justice is an item of social concern. It involves individual conduct toward other individuals. Justice is that course of conduct which promotes group welfare and group survival. Injustice is that sort of conduct which promotes individual welfare and survival at the expense of group welfare and survival. Conduct which exploits, inhibits, or frustrates other members of society is unjust conduct.

Wasserman, however, in *The Maurizius Case*, proposed that "good and evil are not determined by the intercourse of people with each other, but entirely by a man's relations with himself"—drawing from our correspondent the comment: "This seems to me hazy, unclear, obfuscating Lewis Mumford stuff."

"Hazy" and "unclear" may be proper adjectives, here, but a splendid certainty, on the other hand, might be exceedingly misleading if it should conceal matters both essentially important and essentially obscure. Now the fact which our correspondent neglects, and which is also unapparent in Plato's passages, is the need for every system of justice to provide for rebellion against itself. This is another way of saying that the *idea* of justice must take account of the dual nature of man. (In passing, we should say that we welcome the comparison with Mumford, whatever the context!)

The monolithic systems conceived as final answers to "the good of the whole" have without exception proved to be historical evils. The good of the whole, in other words, is difficult to define. You may work out an extremely "reasonable" theory of the common good, but if it fails to command the spontaneous assent of the individuals who make up the whole—and its failure in this respect is practically certain—you find that you have erected a monstrous tyranny. In other words, what men think about your theory is far more important than your theory. And they are bound to think differently.

Justice, then, with this problem in view, is an arrangement which allows and encourages individuals to think freely and even contradictorily about the good—their own good and the good of the whole. Justice cannot permit these questions to be *settled*. On the other hand, the administration of the social community requires at least a tentative settlement of many practical questions. What, then, becomes of justice as an ideal?

True justice, it seems to us, always has some hope of existing so long as human beings require an essential modesty of the institutions which regulate the relations of people with one another, and with the State, never allowing themselves to suppose that their institutions of law are anything more than blind gropings toward justice. For justice, ultimately, lies in the reaching of

individuals after the good. And since there is a moral struggle in every man, or ought to be, good and evil are determined "by a man's relations with himself."

To whom, for example, was Socrates accountable? He was fundamentally accountable to himself. His accountability to the State arose from his accountability to himself. The memory of Socrates is a force for good in history because of the power of his integrity. The *Apology*, the *Crito*, and the *Phaëdo* report the relations of Socrates with himself. And, for a later time, one of the most moving fragments in literature is the few pages of Tolstoy's confessions which describe how he found himself intolerable and what he did about it. These were Tolstoy's relations with himself.

There is an agony of the spirit in the life of every great man—a Gethsemane, a Caucasus, an exile from Ithaca, or a lost treasure. Good or evil is forged by the way a man meets the private alternatives in his life.

The greatest of men have been the men who broke with the prevailing system of "justice" in their time. One may argue that they have wanted to do away with a bad system of justice and to set up a "good" one. But all systems are subject to decay, and the best systems are never more than approximations. The essence of the matter lies in the quality of integrity in individuals which makes them revolt. This quality is expressed by their relations with themselves. A man's conception of what *ought to be done* grows from his conception of what or who he *is*, which, in turn, defines his relations with others. The secret, then, of justice, lies in this self-conception.

We very soon see that the spirit of rebellion is of the essence in the matter of justice, from a review of our correspondent's definition. "Justice," he says, "is that course of conduct which promotes group welfare and group survival."

Well, which group, or how big or inclusive a group? Take the atomic scientists. Some of them believe that making atom bombs contributes to justice ("group survival"), and others of them (the eighteen German physicists, for example, who have refused to make atom bombs for West Germany) believe that *not* making bombs is necessary to survival.

Are you ready to say which scientists are right? In other words, will you give us a *final* definition of justice on this point? Is there any known system of "group welfare and group survival" that is specific enough to be workable, yet general enough to be beyond dispute?

If not, then we had better admit that justice is either beyond our reach, or that it lies in an area which cannot be made into a "system."

The most that men can know of justice we should like to argue, is in that alchemical moment of reflection when a man decides what is right for him to do, according to the best light he has. We can ask no more of any man, and the best he can do is his highest "justice." Anything, then, which confines that decision, is opposed to justice.

But, you will say, that is *anarchism*. Precisely. It is anarchism full-blown, and since we are not yet sufficiently disciplined to live in anarchy, we are obliged to submit, collectively, to an expedient order of social constraints which takes the place of the self-regulation we long for as an ideal. All that we ask, here, is that you do not pretend that the social constraints provide "justice."

In the dictionary, there are two general definitions of justice. It is said to be "The maintenance or administration of that which is just; also, merited reward and punishment." And that which is "just" is said to be "conforming to spiritual law," or "conformed to the truth of things."

There is very little agreement among men as to what the "spiritual law" is, and a similar lack of consensus on "the truth of things." And the

difficulty of apportioning "merited reward and punishment" is so plain as to need no discussion. How, then, can you have a system of justice at all? About all you can do is attempt to devise a system which leaves the meaning of "spiritual law" an open question, and makes no pretense of either rewarding or punishing human beings appropriately for what they do.

You can restrain a bad man or try to widen the scope of a good man's freedom without the least presumption that you are doing "justice." Simply a refusal to "judge" a bad man while restraining him could conceivably have a salutary effect on his own estimate of himself. Condemnation never helps anyone to change for the better, nor is it ever necessary for "the good of the community."

In fact, the less pretense to justice, the more of justice may be done, since justice, on this view, is a private discovery.

A great principle is involved here, a principle which applies in many directions. When we speak of matters like Reality, or Justice, or Truth, we speak of the incommensurables, which we must always pursue, but can never confine. Tolstoy, writing an introduction to Amiel's *Journal*, speaks of the Belgian diarist's wholehearted search for truth, remarking that "the contemplation of his search is the more instructive because it never ceases to be a search, never becomes settled, and never passes into a consciousness of having attained the truth, or into a teaching." Tolstoy continues:

Amiel is not saying either to himself or to others, "I now know the truth—hear me!" On the contrary it seems to him, as is natural to one who is sincerely seeking truth, that the more he knows the more he needs to know, and he unceasingly does all he can to learn more and more of truth and is therefore constantly aware of his ignorance. He is continually speculating on what Christianity and the condition of a Christian should be, never for a moment pausing on the thought that Christianity is the very thing he is professing, and that he is himself realizing the condition of a Christian. And yet the whole *Journal* is full of expressions of the most

profound Christian understanding and feeling. And these expressions affect the reader with a special force by their very unconsciousness and sincerity. He is talking to himself, not thinking that he is overheard, neither attempting to appear convinced of what he is not convinced of, nor hiding his sufferings and his search.

In these terms, the search for truth and the search for justice are one and the same. Can a "society" discover and apply this point of view? Only, perhaps, in the Platonic Utopia where philosophers are kings. But the first step of a society in this direction is surely the abandonment of the assumption that it knows how to provide justice, and is in fact providing it.