

## PHILOSOPHY OF MAN

IN a recent address on "Science and the Humanities," I. I. Rabi, professor of physics at Columbia University, urged a more intelligent union of science and the humanities in education. While major institutions of learning are making an effort in this direction, Prof. Rabi is dissatisfied with the result:

We pour a little of this and a little of that into the student's mind in proportions which result from mediation between the departments and from the particular predilections of the deans and the president. We then hope that somehow these ingredients will combine through some mysterious alchemy and the result will be a man, educated, well rounded, and wise. Most often, however, these ingredients do not blend. They remain well separated in the compartmentalized mind, or they may form an indigestible precipitate which is not only useless, but positively harmful, until time the healer washes it all away.

One difficulty springs from the lack of communication between scientists and non-scientists. While the scientist may, if he will take the trouble, participate with relative ease in the works of the historian, the writer, and the philosopher, those who are at home in the humanities are seldom equipped to appreciate the scientific outlook. Rabi says:

. . . the great majority of educated laymen . . . simply do not possess the background of the science of today and the intellectual tools necessary for them to understand what effects science will have on them and on the world. Instead of understanding, they have only a naive awe mixed with fear and scorn. To his colleagues in the university, the scientist tends to seem more and more like a man from another planet, a creature uttering profound but incomprehensible truths, or a creature scattering antibiotics with one hand and atomic bombs with the other.

Prof. Rabi concludes on this note:

Only by the fusion of science and the humanities can we hope to reach the wisdom appropriate to our day and generation. The scientists must learn to teach science in the spirit of wisdom, and in the light

of the history of human thought and human effort, rather than as the geography of a universe uninhabited by mankind. Our colleagues in the nonscientific faculties must understand that if their teachings ignore the great scientific tradition and its accomplishments, however eloquent and elegant their words, they will lose meaning for this generation and be barren of fruit. Only with a united effort of science and the humanities can we hope to succeed in discovering a community of thought, which can lead us out of the darkness, and the confusion, which oppress all mankind.

One cannot help but agree with Prof. Rabi, and yet there seem to be missing elements in this proposal for synthesis.

What is lacking may perhaps be gotten at by giving close attention to his account of what it has meant for modern man to become "scientific." The key passage on this subject is as follows:

Science as we know it today is distinctively a product of the modern era. There was a glimmer of it in antiquity, but the fire soon died down. From time to time some man like Roger Bacon had a glimmer of its possibility but on the whole science is a product of the last few centuries.

It is often argued that physical science is inherently simple, whereas the study of man is inherently complicated. Yet a great deal is known of man's nature. Wise laws for government and personal conduct were shown in remotest antiquity. The literature of antiquity shows a profound understanding of human natures and emotions. Not man but the external world was bewildering. The world of nature instead of seeming simple was infinitely complex and possessed of spirits and demons. Nature had to be worshipped and propitiated by offerings, ceremonies, and prayers. Fundamentally nature was unpredictable, antagonistic to human aspiration, full of significance and purpose, and generally evil. Knowledge of nature was suspect because of the power which it brought, a power which was somehow allied with evil. Only God who is inherently good and just could be trusted to have dominion over nature and in fact that was his supreme practical attribute. In Greek mythology

nature was somehow kept going by the personal household of Zeus and his family. There were of course always men who had insights far beyond these seemingly naive notions, but they did not prevail over what seemed to be the evidence of the senses and of practical experience.

It was therefore not until late in the history of mankind, not until a few seconds ago, so to speak, that it was recognized that nature is understandable and that a knowledge of nature is good and could be used with benefit; that it did not involve witchcraft or a compact with the devil. What is more, any person of intelligence could understand the ideas involved and with sufficient skill learn the necessary techniques, intellectual and manual.

This idea which is now so commonplace represents an almost complete break with the past. It has changed the political, social and physical face of the world and is largely responsible for the great upheavals we now see in Asia.

Prof. Rabi is right—this idea that science has accomplished a *fundamental* change in human life is a commonplace of our time. It is an idea, however, which we wish to question.

First of all, there is one thing which never changes—the fact that human beings stand at the center of every system of thought, ancient or modern. Whatever may be the character of "ultimate reality," human behavior is determined by human estimates of that reality. And, finally, our relations as men with the world around us and with each other are governed by what we think to be the primal source of power, and what we hold to be ends worth striving for.

Now, in the pre-scientific world, according to Prof. Rabi—which is the commonly accepted view—the final powers of the world moved outside human beings. Only with the aid of the gods, or god, or by the power of spells and incantations, could man hope to deal successfully with the mysterious forces reigning over the world and affecting his destiny.

We—we now tell ourselves—have put an end to that impotence. We have reduced the gods to impersonal forces of nature. We have subjected those forces to harness and control. The world, while not quite our oyster, is at least on some sort of tether. So, at any rate, the scientists, who are the

experts of our time, and who manipulate the forces, tell us. And since we see them manipulate the forces, and profit in many mundane ways from their enterprises, we believe them. Whom else shall we believe? No one, surely, has evidence such as the scientist can provide for what he teaches.

So, for the ordinary man, the man in the street, or in the field, a great change is said to have occurred. When he wants a good crop, he does not burn some incense, or hold a ceremonial dance in the full moon. Instead, he reads the bulletins issued by the Department of Agriculture, he buys some fertilizer, terraces his land, and harvests a good crop.

He has also been instructed in "progress." If he is modern, he is proud to belong to a progressive nation. He knows—or used to know—~ that next year will be better than last year. He will have additional impersonal servants at his disposal—more horsepower, more watts, more everything.

To complain, at this point, that modern man is now beginning to realize how shallow are his satisfactions from "progress" would be to beat a dead horse. Prof. Rabi, probably, would be the first to admit it. Our failure to combine good sense with what we call progress makes the occasion for demanding more humanism in education, more wisdom in science, and more wholeness in human beings.

We shall not go up this familiar trail of criticism, but suggest, instead, that modern man has not dispensed with the demons, but only changed their names. The gods of the ancients, we now say, were no more than abstractions and personifications. They were functions of human ignorance, generalizations of the causes of misfortune. We do not believe in them any more. Now we know better.

We may know better about gods, kobolds, witches, peris and demons, but do we know better about Communists, Mau Mau, Reactionaries, Socialists, Militarists, Pacifists, Fascists, Nazis, Economic Royalists, Eggheads, and the whole tribe of modern principalities and powers?

Are these labels any more suggestive of the reality behind the people who are made to wear them

than the antique classification of gods and nature spirits was of the energies behind both natural and human events?

The lowly primitive man stuck splinters into the effigy of his enemy and burned the image over a smoky flame. Now we call a meeting of Nationality Supreme, or Utopians, First, Last, All the Time, and declaim against the Enemy. We respond to demagogues as to witch doctors—indeed, the parallel is so accurate that we speak of loyalty purges as witch hunts.

The frame of reference has changed, but not the *psyche*. The manipulating powers which threaten our lives have changed their names, but not their mystery nor their apparent evil or enmity.

But those old gods, someone will exclaim, were *supernatural!* Well, what is "supernatural," anyway? Psychologically, a thing that is supernatural is not answerable to any known method of rational analysis or control. Can you give a better account of the popular idea of a Communist?

What we are suggesting is that the role of the unmentionables, the dreadfuls, and the awfuls, is the same, now, as thousands of years ago, in the psychic life of mankind.

It may be argued that *intelligent* people don't think that way, today. Well, neither did the *intelligent* people of two thousand years ago. But they, in Prof. Rabi's words, "did not prevail." Will anybody come forward to say that they prevail today?

As a matter of fact, they prevailed with some success at the time of the great Buddhist reform, and wherever Confucian precepts shaped the lives of the Chinese people in centuries past. They have prevailed whenever the ultimate source of power and significance in human life has been defined in human terms.

We of the West are not very familiar with this sort of definition of values. We know about polytheistic and monotheistic definitions of power and significance, and we know about national and racial and political definitions of power and significance. We have had a try at definitions of

power and significance in human terms in the Declaration of Independence, but the problems of nations have overshadowed the philosophic findings of the Founding Fathers.

To bring science and the humanities together in any authentic way, we shall have to restore man to the center of the human universe, not egotistically, but philosophically. How do you define the really real, for human beings? This is the great question.

Why should we assume that when Galileo devised an account of nature which left man on the outside—a kind of extra-cosmic being looking in—he was doing a "natural" thing? The scientist, Galileo, did not pursue his researches under "natural" conditions. What was *natural* about the Holy Inquisition and its threats? How could any man do his best thinking in such an environment? And even if he could do it, how could he speak of it?

Galileo said in effect to the Holy Fathers, "I'll think about this, you think about that, and please leave me alone." They wouldn't, of course, because thinking about man and nature is bound to overlap, and Galileo's thinking and discoveries about the earth and the planets played hob with sacred cosmology. But Galileo *tried* to let the sacerdotal monopoly remain undisturbed. He became a specialist in physical motion. Because you can do a lot of practical things with physical motion, once you understand how it works, Galileo's specialty became very popular with bright young men in Europe. It is still quite popular, for much the same reason, and it is still a specialty.

There is nothing wrong with a specialty unless you try to turn it into a universal philosophy. Really devoted specialists usually do this. These high class mechanics eventually persuaded us that the world is a big machine. The ancients, who were more organically minded, said the world was a big egg, or a big animal. Is there any good reason why we should believe the Galilean specialists over the ancients? The *new* physicists are now said to have pretty good reasons for not thinking of the world as a machine, but as a field of energy. Well, an egg was probably a field of energy before it was an egg.

Where does man fit in all this? The scientists tell us that man began, with all the rest of organic life, as a bit of slime, or protoplasm, and that after a few million or billion years he became a mammal, and then, by a series of transformations that remain obscure, he turned into Nero, Jesus Christ, Shakespeare, Hitler, Gandhi, and John Doe. How's that for supernaturalism? Or naturalism? The larger the scale of the questions, the less meaning such words have.

A Humanism worth arguing for will insist upon the facts of human life as seen from inside the man, not outside. And this Humanism will be concerned with the meanings of existence for every man, not just tomorrow's man, who is supposed to enjoy the progress that is already frightening us almost to death.

There is not, of course, a simple and single doctrine of the meaning of life from a human point of view. If there were, we should all know it, and, very likely, turn out to be not very human at all. But the primary fact of human life is that we have, or rather are, minds. A further fact is that human beings find what equilibrium with their environments that they can, *with and in their minds*. This conquest which ends in balance is strongly infused with a dramatic element. It has a first, a second, and a final act. Worthy human life was lived in this way ten thousand years ago, and it is lived that way today.

There have been many cultures which took their pattern from the endeavor of wise men to set the stage for the human drama. As Rabi says, "the literature of antiquity shows a profound understanding of human natures and emotions.

Every human being has a deep need to weld his life into some sort of unity. There is a natural tropism toward unity in both the mind and the heart. It is this, perhaps, which enables us to make any decisions at all. Every human act is a declaration of some kind of unity, for when we act we commit our being. We may do it impulsively, or unwisely, but commit ourselves we must. The man who will not commit himself finally loses his mind.

This, then, on our hypothesis of Humanism, is the reality in human life—that every man must

produce for himself some working doctrine of the meaning of his life—and he must do this or perish. He may survive as a body, or some sort of human vegetable, or as the "mass man" Ortega talks about, but he will perish as a human being. The reality of human life is the projection of unity and meaning that the individual is able to impose upon his physical and psychological environment. He cannot avoid doing this: what we propose is that he do it consciously, with deliberation and daring.

The novelist is a great help to us in thinking about this question, for the novelist must make this projection for his characters. Only the stories which achieve a coherent projection live through the ages. The projection need not succeed; but it needs to have form and purpose. When a great projection fails, we have tragedy; and, in the endeavor to divine the meaning of the failure, we have catharsis.

But in the last analysis, it is the thinking, the searching and the striving which is real, for human beings. The humanities give us an account of that striving. So do the sciences, when they are truly engaged in search for meaning, and not merely a high polish on some form of technology.

So far as the sciences are concerned, however, it is the notion of *collective* knowledge which is devastating to human welfare. Collective knowledge is never more than technology. Collective knowledge or collective anything can never be more than mere stage settings for the human adventure. No doctrine, theory, or fact about life or nature which is irrelevant to or ignores the primary reality of the *individual* need for unity as a human being, has any fundamental importance. A fact which cannot be related to the act of discovery, understanding, and striving that is possible for every human being is either a sub-human or an antihuman fact. It is not really a "fact" at all.

## *REVIEW*

### A FINE NOVEL

JOHN O. KILLENS' *Youngblood*, now available as a fifty-cent pocket book, is a worthy candidate for any "recommended" list for interracial education. Compared favorably with Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* by critics, this book actually has greater scope and is written with sensitive understanding of all manner of human situations, taking it beyond the dramatic focus on racial tensions. Is Killens writing about Negroes or about Caucasians? Is he telling us about other people, or is he allowing us to discover more about ourselves? This is a fine novel, in our opinion, for the very reason that these questions are not easy to answer—in fact, cannot be answered with certainty.

There are now college courses in what is called "Negro-American literature," and every youth in college should find the time to take such a course. No single means could possibly prove as effective as this for future racial understanding, since excellent writing by a "Negro" demonstrates the most important thing of all for the future of the world—that human aspiration and the human mind speak a universal language that being "brothers under the skin" is not merely a sentiment, but a fundamental fact of nature. (Other outstanding books on race conflict, such as Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, belong in a similar category.) When such courses gradually find their way into the curricula of Southern universities, we can know that dangerous prejudices have been finally outgrown.

*Youngblood* is chiefly the story of a deep South Negro family, a fine and intelligent family, relentlessly oppressed by a state of mind known as "white supremacy." Then it is the story of a young Negro teacher from New York, who finds himself fighting both "races" to create conditions allowing the communication of understanding. *Youngblood* is also, although briefly, the story of a simple "cracker" whose integrity led him to declare for the brotherhood of the races in the face of threatening odds. "Oscar Jefferson" may even be the greatest hero of the tale, for he did the most with the least. The symbol of this man's willingness to suffer for the sake of love and truth is found when Jefferson and his son give blood to a dying Negro, in hiding from a lynch mob. Distrusted by both Negroes and crackers, Jefferson is the

prototype of "man alone," making his offer because his integrity compels it, not because of "ideological" commitment.

These passages give some idea of what Oscar Jefferson accomplished, first within himself, and then in courageous deed:

He remembered the other night a few weeks ago when Jim had been at the teacher's house and the boys at the hotel had been afraid to talk in front of him because he was a white man. He remembered what Jim had told him when he took him aside. "They want to trust you, Oscar—awful bad—but they just can't do it right long in now. Goddammit you got to prove yourself first. You got to make them know it. As far as they're concerned you're just another white cracker.

You might be spying on them for all they know." Jim had smiled bitterly down into Oscar's face. . . .

Two shots in the back at very close range. Maybe Joe was already dead. He got up again and he slipped on his clothes and he went and stood in his backyard looking up at the sky where the bright full moon had started downward. He wondered what time it was. He was a white man and he didn't have any business being bothered about colored. He was white and the Youngbloods were black and Mr. Mack and Mr. Lem were white, and he, Oscar Jefferson, was white. That evening a little after dark they had come for him with their shotguns and rifles and great big sticks, and it was—"Come on, Oscar, we got to teach some niggers a lesson" and—"Goddammit, Oscar, you act like a nigger-lover." But he had not gone with them and he had stood in his front yard and watched them go up the road laughing and talking like they were going on a picnic. And he had remembered another time when he was a boy on the plantation, and they had told him come on Oscar, let's go nigger-hunting, and he hadn't gone that time either. The same kind of people had asked him to go, including his father and brothers, and they had a wonderful time, wiping out the whole Kilgrow family that night, except Little Jim . . . He had not noticed that two of his own boys had slipped off with the rest till he saw them way up the road. "Sonny and Jim, come back here this minute!" And when they had come back, he told them—"If air one of you put they feet out this house tonight I'm gon kill you just as sure as you got to die." The older boy, Junior, who had been standing quietly near the edge of the yard, had come toward his father. "I wouldn't go, Pa. You

didn't have to tell me. I wouldn't go out tracking down poor niggers ain't done nothing to me." . . .

They walked together through the just-before-day-in-the-morning darkness, and he wanted to explain to Junior why he had to do more than just not-go-with-the-other-poor-crackers-like he had done when he was a boy, and also that morning at the factory gate. He was a grown man now and a man who had grown. But he couldn't explain it, because he didn't even know how to explain it to himself. The just-before-day noises were ringing all about them. He desperately hoped that they wouldn't run into any other white folks. He thought about the other two white men who had signed for the union at the hotel, and he was glad he had not seen them among the suckers who had passed his house last evening. They might have been in another such gang, but anyhow he was glad he hadn't seen them. He looked sideways at the strong set expression on Junior's face. He had told Junior the story of Little Jim Kilgrow for the hundredth time the first night he had come home from the colored teacher's house.

The boy finally broke the silence between them. "We be coming to the Quarters before long now." His husky voice trembled.

"That's right," Oscar said.

Joe Youngblood died from the bullet wounds in his back, despite a transfusion accomplished under hostile eyes in the "quarters," and Oscar Jefferson returned to obscurity; but what Jefferson did, and why he did it, signifies life for the hopes of all the striving characters of the story. And Jefferson left with his boy an unforgettable impression of the meaning of human brotherhood, strong enough to last through generations.

This event seems the psychological heart of Mr. Killens' story, distinguishing it from many another moving tale. But *Youngblood* is also a series of profound insights into the lives and aspirations of Negro Americans of many categories. For instance, in some we share the gradual discovery that prejudice and condescension are woven of the same fabric, that Negroes can't sing spirituals "for the white folks" without demeaning the dignity and the meaning of the songs. Rob Youngblood had always "felt there was something wrong, something nasty and dirty, about colored children singing Negro songs for the pleasure of white folks. And Mama had said that Negro spirituals were the most beautiful songs in the whole wide world, but colored folks ought not to be made to

sing them for white folks' pleasure—especially colored children. . . ."

The cynical belief that Negroes who gain favored positions in society keep aloof from their less fortunate kin is a false one, and Mr. Killens' story is, we think, important in its disavowal. Each year, capable teachers and professional men from Negro ranks decide to "tackle the South" because they want to serve the interests of their people where help is most needed. Every such effort is a gift to the whole human race, for the teacher who teaches well, teaches *minds*, not "races," paying no attention to the appearance or social position accompanying those minds. The doctor who doctors well, treats the human body because it is a body in pain, not because the body is loved or favored according to some social rating. Professional men, in other words, know something of the true language of non-discrimination, and when Negro professional men work in impartial dedication, they are recognized and understood by their Caucasian counterparts. One dramatic sequence in *Youngblood* shows the importance of professional integrity when crucial issues are at stake: the Negro teacher—who courts disaster in the South when he might have prospered in the North—inspires an eminent white physician to declare for justice, despite the threat to the latter's practice.

The time of *Youngblood* is between the two world wars. Much has been accomplished during the few years since, in both legislation and improvement of racial attitudes—and, we suspect, the sort of men and women about whom Mr. Killens writes have been largely responsible for the changes, even if their names have not appeared when non-segregation laws have carried. But there is obviously still much to do. Mr. Killens seems to know something about *how* to do it—that is, about the subtle understanding which must accompany all such efforts.

In conclusion, it strikes us as interesting and significant that one never pauses to ask whether Mr. Killens himself "is Negro." This seems so irrelevant that we are quite content not to know.

## *COMMENTARY*

### THE DEBATE ABOUT WAR

THE issue of "pacifism" (see "Children" article) is so frequently haunted by moralistic overtones that useful discussion of the subject sometimes becomes almost impossible. Doubtless there are pacifists who give the impression that the dirty business of war is beneath them—that they, by reason of their "stand," are better Christians or more "moral" than men who are willing to kill. Certainly those for whom Christian scripture is an unequivocal mandate for pacifism find it difficult to avoid an implication of this sort. Thus the letter and sometimes the spirit of self-righteousness are closely associated with pacifism, producing a natural resentment in many who take another view.

Then there are those who fight with mingled feelings. For them, war is a painful dilemma. They feel the guilt of its destruction, yet would feel guiltier if they refused to fight. But could not the indecisiveness of this position represent a greater integrity than easy resolution of the question by a simple, absolutist decision—to fight or not to fight?

The important thing, in any debate, is that the antagonists respect one another. Yet it is impossible to respect self-righteousness except on the basis of either sentimentality or guilt. How, then, can the atmosphere of self-righteousness be removed from the argument about war?

There is no easy answer to this question, since the State, in order to obtain an uncomplicated definition of "conscientious objection" (which means an *unphilosophical* definition), places the issue on an entirely personal basis. The objector must insist on religious grounds that war constitutes personal immorality for him.

This setting of the problem may suit those whose pacifism is a matter of personal righteousness, but it can only obscure the issues for people whose feelings of right and wrong will

not fit into such narrow categories. How can any thoughtful man cast himself in a position which automatically classifies as "immoral" many for whom he is bound to feel deep respect?

The trouble lies, we think, in the assumption that any act, or abstention from any act, can be morally more important than the reason a man has for the act or for abstention from it.

In the long run, socially as well as personally, to act without reason, or to abstain without reason, may be a greater moral offense than being "wrong" or "mistaken" in the light of some absolute stance. But these are thoughts in which the obedient believer, whether in pacifism or its opposite, indulges only at great peril.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IT is our opinion that the youth of America will eventually owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the outspoken monthly, the *Progressive*, for examining what is involved in support of military policy, by way of a condensation (in the October issue) of *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence*. The *Progressive's* editors thereby affirmed that the "pacifist" position merits serious consideration—and continued discussion. The *Progressive* has since issued the condensation in pamphlet form, reprinting also the critical comments of George Kennan, Karl Menninger, Robert Pickus, Norman Thomas, Reinhold Niebuhr, Dwight Macdonald, and Stephen Cary. Sub-titled "A Memorable Debate on the Crisis of Our Time," this twenty-five-cent, twenty-five-page pamphlet recommends itself to every parent, teacher—and young man of draft age.

A recent release from The Fellowship of Reconciliation, international Christian pacifist organization, gives further indication that "war resisters" are performing a national service by challenging conventional military assumptions. While the Defense Department in Washington piously disclaims any thought of deliberate military indoctrination in the public schools, the FOR charges that this is just what is happening. For example, there is something the Defense Department calls a "pilot project" in Michigan, indicative of an eventual all-out, nation-wide effort at military propaganda in the high schools. We quote from two FOR reports:

Last year something new in American school life came into the high schools of Michigan. Military recruiting officers told high school classes of the "advantages" of their particular branch of the armed forces. Military movies became a part of the curriculum. Military emphases appeared in social science, history, and other courses, and a complete textbook and teachers' handbook encouraged the students to look on military service as a normal and proper part of their life plans.

All this was a part of the widely publicized "pilot project," in which Michigan educators cooperated with the Pentagon in "preparing" young

people for military service. Since then an announcement from Washington confirms the Defense Department's intention to introduce the program into high schools throughout the country. . .

Ostensibly the Michigan project's purpose was "to aid youths in making plans for their future, to inform them of the choices open to them in fulfilling their probable military obligations and to describe the educational and career opportunities available to them in the military services."

Theoretically, the project's study courses were prepared by "civilian educators without influence from or bias toward the military."

But see what has actually happened:

Recruiting officers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force came into the schools to explain the "choices" open to the boys and girls. Each, of course, painted his own service in glowing colors, trying to "sell" it to the potential recruits. (Except in two schools where outside civilian pressure was exerted, no mention was made of the draft law's provisions for conscientious objectors, in one sense the only real "choice" the youths have.)

The 160-page textbook, "Your Life Plans and the Armed Forces," and the Teachers Handbook that accompanies it, were prepared "in cooperation with" the Department of Defense and make only the barest pretense of any objectivity except among the rival branches of the military. Explanations of world tensions are loaded with typical military oversimplifications; military service is made to appear not only inevitable but highly desirable; military strength is assumed to be the only effective method of countering communism and dealing with world conflicts.

Supplementary materials used included slick, expensively printed brochures in color on each of the armed forces, produced and printed by the military establishment. These showed handsome young soldiers, frequently accompanied by beautiful girls, strolling about a post, or engaged in some interesting task, in the most approved manner of modern high-calibre advertising. Needless to say, not a single picture in any of the lavishly illustrated brochures suggested any of the sordid and terrifying reality of which war actually is made.

Military produced or sponsored films were used regularly in classrooms and assemblies. Like the



brochures, these are slick professional jobs that carefully avoid contact with the realities of war.

While MANAS has never adopted a formal pacifist platform, MANAS articles leave little doubt in the minds of readers that the editors consider the position taken by conscientious objectors to be fully as "realistic" as that represented by orthodox policy. The argument, like that of the *Progressive*, is not that the pacifists be adjudged right, but that they be *heard*—that arguments such as those in "Speak Truth to Power" be met fairly, and no longer brushed aside. Young people of draft age need to know that these arguments are going on, and need practice in evaluating them. Whether the results of such "exposure" will lead some to refuse to bear arms, whether a personal resolution of the issues will lead, instead, to a more deeply felt conviction of the importance of military preparedness, or whether such youths will carry both sides of the argument with them into uniform, seems to us irrelevant. But there is no doubt about the fact that the mind of man grows by considering alternatives to orthodox assumptions, and that the pacifist alternative bears on a central ethical issue of our day.

In any case, the work of the FOR and the *Progressive's* version of "Speak Truth to Power" provide ground for hoping that the United States will eventually match England in serious respect for pacifist arguments. England has elected more than one pacifist to Parliament. If and when Congress and the House of Representatives gain similar representation, America cannot fail to benefit.

The reason for claiming central importance for the pacifist view, either in the forum of national debate or in the realm of adolescent discussion can, we think, be easily put: The man who believes that the taking of human life is never necessary or desirable believes in each man's capacity for good—and that, eventually, this can be awakened in even the most hardened of criminals. An optimist? Perhaps, in point of time and space, but is this merely optimistic in terms of ever present *possibility* with each one? Those who believe that criminals of a certain classification must be executed, and that predatory nations must be met by threat or destruction may be pessimists. Now, however

"wrong" the pacifist may be "in point of time and space," he is at least certain to explore *all* the possibilities of rehabilitation for the criminal, and every form of non-violent opposition to the destructive acts of nations. The logic is inescapable: since almost all men reason chiefly from their initial biases, and since those who feel that preparation for and prosecution of war are a part of the eternal order of things—"under existing circumstances"—have a most pronounced bias of a pessimistic nature, opportunities for peaceful settlement will continually be overlooked. The pacifist may make himself look foolish with his optimism, and may prove himself actually to be foolish as he attempts to stop a conflagration with a water-dipper, but he will not miss the *same* opportunities which his opposite numbers continue to neglect.

Moreover, the pacifist, because he presently belongs to a decided minority, will be apt to make useful criticisms of various prevailing orthodoxies. This is the most important reason, we think, why youth needs to have pacifists around, and why the pacifist point of view should have increasing opportunity for expression. No one, especially no young person, can ever be any worse for hearing it and for coming to his own terms with the issues raised. It is all very well to argue that young people need to have their responsibilities pointed out by their elders, that adolescents are simply not old enough to develop a proper sense of duty to the nation whose protection they enjoy. The fact remains that no one can grow toward maturity and responsibility save by the perception of an increasing number of alternatives for choice. And the pacifist alternative can hardly be considered an avoidance of responsibility—at least under present conditions, which ensure that the prospective "C.O." pay quite a price for his non-conformity.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Aspects of Desegregation

THE American South, including seventeen southern and border states, a quarter of the population of the United States, and a sixth of the geographic area, seems about to pass through another great ordeal. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that the separation of the white and Negro races in the public schools of the country is illegal, and on May 31 of last year it ordered the states "to take such proceedings and enter such orders and decrees . . . as are necessary and proper to admit to public schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis with all deliberate speed the parties to these cases."

Murmurs of rebellion in the South are now becoming loud. The northern liberal press has begun to print stories of stubborn resistance to the Supreme Court decision.

In the January *Progressive*, Murray Kempton tells what happened in Yazoo City, Mississippi, last August, when fifty-three Negro residents of that community signed a petition for admission of their children into the town's best school, "which was naturally the white school." Ten days later, the Yazoo City newspaper published the names of the signers. Six months later, all but two of the original signers had come to the county clerk's office to ask that their names be removed. One signer, a successful Negro grocer, found that he could no longer buy certain standard brand merchandise. His bank invited him to come get his money. Housewives who had signed the petition found that the local food stores would not sell to them. A Negro carpenter and a Negro plumber could no longer get work with white families. Sheer hope of survival obliged the signers to ask that their names be removed from the list. The two who did not had left the state. Kempton remarks:

But even recantation did not save the others. No man who signed the petition and lost his job and took his name off on the promise of its restoration is

working in Yazoo City today. . . . It is the mark of these clean-collared Kluxers that, even in total victory, they do not forgive.

The expression, "clean-collared Kluxers," is a reference by Mr. Kempton to the Citizens Councils which have been organized in many of the Southern states to combat desegregation. The Councils, according to this report, represent the "better element" in Southern communities. But it was the Citizens Council of Yazoo, Miss., which ordered printed in the newspaper the list of the fifty-three Negro signers of the petition for integration, complete with the address and telephone number of each one.

What happened in Yazoo City is doubtless an extreme case. Yet the extreme case makes the best story and is the story which ought to be told, since it illustrates what can happen to Negro families in Mississippi who dare to take the Supreme Court decision seriously. The irony of such events lies in the fact that it is the economic achievement of these Negroes as merchants and skilled mechanics which renders them vulnerable to a retaliation without violence.

On the other side of the ledger are the gains in desegregation reported in the *Nation* for last Dec. 17. In a two-part article, "Score on Integration," Henry Lee Moon briefly describes what is being accomplished in eight southern states and the District of Columbia, and lists the remaining states which so far have taken no action toward integration. The public elementary and high schools are the major testing-ground of the Supreme Court decision, and the resistance in some areas is bound to be great. This writer, however, after a survey of the field, is able to say:

Viewed from one perspective, the speed with which desegregation is proceeding may seem exceedingly deliberate. Yet in the long view it is incontestably evident that segregation, not only in education but in all phases of public life in America, is doomed. The basic conflict which it poses to the American ideal of a free society, is daily becoming more clearly recognizable.

The score on integration in Southern colleges is far more encouraging. This part of the *Nation* report is by Guy B. Johnson, who says that integration at the college and university level in the South is already in large measure an accomplished fact. Today, Johnson reports, there are approximately 195 institutions of higher learning in the South, formerly all-white, which now admit Negroes. These include State universities and various church-supported and private schools. The change was due principally to federal court decisions in 1948 which gave Negroes the right to attend the University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma. Similar suits followed in other states, and by 1953 all but five Southern States had admitted Negro students to their graduate and professional schools. Johnson comments:

The most remarkable thing about this revolution in Southern education and race relations is the fact that it has been accomplished so rapidly and so peacefully. In spite of fears and of dire predictions concerning bloodshed and the wholesale withdrawal of white students if ever a Negro was allowed to enter a white university, the transition was actually made in a rather calm and prosaic fashion. There are still hostile white students, of course, but they have rarely shown their hostility in overt action. In perhaps the worst incident to have occurred in the transition, when someone threw a rock and smashed a window in the apartment of a young Negro veteran and his wife who had been housed in a veterans' apartment project at Louisiana State University, the culprits found themselves very much in the minority. Other white students patrolled the grounds to prevent further aggression and some of them made friendly calls on the Negro couple to indicate their moral support.

Already, Negro students have won considerable recognition among their fellows. A Negro was elected president of the Men's Dormitory Association in one university, and in another school her white co-residents elected a Negro girl to a similar position. In still another university, an elderly Negro graduate student was

selected as orator for Honors Day. The academic record of Negro students tends to reflect the second-class schooling they received before coming to college, but Negroes are winning degrees in the "tough" professional schools of law and medicine. There seems to be a natural friendliness between the students of both races, and while the "color line" still exists, it has, as Johnson says, been "redefined." He concludes:

And so it happened that in less than a decade the South's system of higher education has moved from racial segregation to a high degree of integration. The transition period is over, and coracial education is getting to be old stuff to the younger generation. Many problems remain to be solved, but there is a basic decency about what has happened so far, and the general prognosis is good.

There is still a sort of Mason-Dixon line, of course, between the integrated campus and the outside community, but even this shows signs of weakening. In quite a few cases, especially in the border states and the Southwest, movies, cafés and other enterprises on the fringe of the campus are dropping their color bars. Perhaps in five more years this whole business of segregation in places of public accommodation and amusement will be well-nigh extinct.

*Harper's* has the distinction of being the national magazine which has opened its pages to the expression of a "Southern" point of view. In the January *Harper's* Thomas R. Waring, editor of the Charleston, South Carolina, *News and Courier*, endeavors to explain why public opinion in the South is opposed to desegregation. (*Harper's* observes editorially that it has no particular sympathy for Mr. Waring's view of the matter, but adds that the group he represents "consists of solid, stubborn, well-meaning, worried, middle-class citizens" whose influence, during the next few years, will probably be decisive.)

Like many other Southerners, Mr. Waring thinks that the "uplift" of the Negro, in which he declares belief, "is being forced at too fast a pace." He gives five reasons why white parents do not want their children educated in close association

with Negro children: (1) Health (Negroes, he says, have a much higher incidence of venereal disease); (2) Home Environment (Negroes are said to lack the cultural background which white parents want for their children and white people "fear to let down any dikes lest they be engulfed in a black flood"); (3) Marital Habits (the failure of the parents of one Negro child out of five to be married is defined by Mr. Waring as moral laxity, and intermarriage between the races is also seen as a threat); (4) Crime (no "Blackboard Jungles" are wanted in the South, and crime is more prevalent among Negroes than among whites); (5) Intellectual Development (Southern Negroes are usually "below the intellectual level of their white counterparts," and the whites are unwilling to risk the dangers of equalization through contact in the schools).

If we set aside the matter of accuracy in respect to these facts or claims of facts, two basic considerations appear, in connection with Mr. Waring's article. First, it is plain from his approach to the problem that Southerners of this persuasion are unwilling to accept any important measure of responsibility for the conditions described. The historic connection between the races is ignored. ("Slavery is so long in the past that nobody thinks about it any more.") Second, Mr. Waring gives absolutely no attention to the interesting progress at the college level reported by Guy B. Johnson in the *Nation*.

If, as Mr. Waring insists, the intelligent South looks forward to the day when the two races may live together in amity and justice, why don't we hear more enthusiasm from them concerning an advance which *proves* that, given an equal chance, Negroes are as competent and as "civilized" as any other race?

If the Southern gentlemen of Mr. Waring's stamp and ineffable background could be found taking pleasure in Negro achievement, *side by side* with white students and men, their appeals for "patience" and for the South's right to meet the

race problem "in its own way" might win greater sympathy in the North.