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THE OBSCURE ALLIANCE

THE heightened ethical perceptions of the age impose difficult dilemmas on men who feel that their labors for justice and freedom require an association with well-established allies in order to be of practical effect. Take for example the Civil Rights movement, as a non-violent drive to secure full rights of citizenship for American Negroes. It is natural, one may say, for the leadership of this movement to seek or expect the help of the Federal Government. After all, the laws which the Civil Rights movement seeks to make operative throughout the country are federal laws. While it may be true, as Paul Goodman points out, that "most progress has come from local action that has embarrassed and put pressure on Washington," the appeal of this action, you could say, is twofold: it is an appeal to the government to enforce, and to the segregationists to obey, the law. And you could say, also, that to the extent that the appeal works, people who believe in civil rights and in the essential dignity and justice symbolized by the Constitution can hold up their heads with a certain pride. We are trying, they may say to themselves. We are beset by difficulties, and progress is slow, but we are trying.

But suppose, to the goal of even-handed justice at home, you add the goal of full self-determination for peoples abroad? That, you may say, is a separate problem. But is it? In an article in *Liberation* for February, A. J. Muste considers the significance of a recent tour of nine African nations by James Farmer, national director of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), during which he was to "interpret" the United States to the peoples of these new nations. Farmer went, he said, as a "free agent," representing the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa, and upon his return would make a report to President Johnson and to the State Department. The trip, one may conclude, has the assent, if not the blessing, of the Government of the United States. In any event, the potentialities of this situation caused Mr. Muste to propose that "men like Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, Bayard Rustin, and the S.N.C.C. leaders, should at this time contemplate what their attitude is toward the United States as a world power, toward the role it is playing in Vietnam, the Congo, Cuba."

Mr. Muste is here a stern spokesman for principles which insist upon the service of nothing less than all mankind. Is he then some kind of "perfectionist" who neglects the practical exigencies of the rights struggle in order to make an abstract point? On the contrary, his reasoning is such that his motive soon becomes plain: he does not want the civil rights movement to abort. His argument is as follows:

It seems to me that it cannot be successfully contested that the role of the United States in the South Vietnam war is stupid, politically inept, wicked. The New York Times daily provides the evidence. It seems to me extremely difficult, to put it conservatively, to contest successfully what I have been saying about the general role of the United States in relation to popular movements of our age, the power struggle, the obscene build-up of nuclear weapons. This should have the attention especially of those who profess commitment to nonviolence. How can the leaders of a movement which is based on non-violence associate themselves, tacitly or openly, with the nuclear build-up of this Administration or the war in South Vietnam? Are we truly moving toward a peaceful world and a non-violent society when we ignore these aspects of national life while occupied with the violence in Mississippi, Alabama and New York? Are these really separate matters so that a movement can attend to one and ignore the other?

There is, of course, the general consideration that if the nations continue on their present course the nuclear catastrophe will overtake us. And what will racial equality mean for Negroes in a world living in fear and doomed to annihilation? But there is another way to state the issue. . . . The civil-rights

> movement seeks the end of white domination in this country. Perhaps it should be said that it remains to be seen whether it will rest satisfied with improving a section of the Negro people in a society which continues to be based on the pattern of domination-submission. But let us for the present accept what the movement says about its goal. Then it cannot consistently fail to back the struggle for that goal on the part of non-white people anywhere. In other words, the civil-rights movement for Freedom Now has to be for *Liberation* of subjugated and humiliated people everywhere, or carry a cancer in its own body. To be for liberation means that you cannot side with any force that obstructs liberation, certainly you cannot give support to that force. But the role of the United States in the world today is largely that of obstruction. If the civil-rights movement does not dissociate itself from that role and support the liberation movements it will in the end stultify itself. Obviously this presents a grave problem for the civil-rights movement: how can it be involved in the Johnson regime and look to it for aid in the struggle here at home to the extent that it does, and at the same time dissociate itself from the role of that regime in Asia, Africa and Latin America? . . . These, I submit, are questions which those of us who profess non-violence, including the leaders of the civil rights movement, have now to wrestle with and that will involve agony.

It is not our purpose, here, to press further Mr. Muste's immediate point, which is directed to individuals who stand at barricades already difficult to define, but to seek a more general conclusion. Certain deep human needs are evidently at cross-purposes in this situation. The "agony" of which Mr. Muste speaks is real, and it is not the lot of the civil rights leaders only, although for them it seems inescapable.

The hunger for "belonging" is in us all. There is also the longing to do the right thing. We write our best histories in terms of the struggle of men to create circumstances under which they will be able to do the right thing. This has been the positive drive of revolution, from the eighteenth century on. In the twentieth century, however, two things happened which tended first to tarnish and then to make absurd the pretensions to righteousness of both revolutionary and conservative movements or establishments. The first thing that happened was that both our circumstances—in the form of massive social institutions—and the means for changing them (the tools of war), became so unwieldly that any decision, whether for or against revolutionary change, became a choice between two evils. Acts of revolution became acts of long-drawn-out suffering and ruthless destruction. The means quite plainly corrupted the ends. And the same means used to suppress revolutions seemed, in contrast to the spirit of the revolutionary tradition, far worse by reason of the sordid excuses and brazen reaction which attended their use.

Now the second thing that happened in the twentieth century was the viable birth of a new kind of uncompromising social idealism. The problem of those in whom this idealism flowers has been to relate to existing associations of men without suffering mortal compromise of their vision. It is not of course a new problem. It was faced by Socrates in the *Apology* and in the *Crito*. It was faced by Lincoln during the Civil War, and by Gandhi throughout his life. If you can tolerate the "lesser of two evils" argument, the problem is solved fairly easily. But in the present—and this may be what sets off the present from other periods of history—it is increasingly manifest that the "lesser of two evils" solution has become intolerable. We are under some kind of historic necessity to find an alliance, a kind of "engagement," in which our ends are not betrayed at the outset.

Faith in existing institutions dies hard. Perhaps it should die hard. At any rate, it cannot die suddenly, but with the time during which faith weakens from progressive disillusionment we may be able to reconstruct some of our attitudes toward "belonging" and commitment.

It is obvious, for example, that something of this sort has already taken place as a result of the tide of moral ideas set rising in the world by Gandhi. Gandhi had two social ideals: The village and the world. While the state has a place in Gandhi's thinking, its role is transitory and of only

temporary importance. He wanted to see it disappear, its functions absorbed by the decentralist patterns of many small communities. Of course, an arrangement of this sort is the only one consistent with Gandhi's idea of a nonviolent world. What happens, then, when the Indian state of today feels obliged to exercise the traditional function of armed coercion? Agony happens, for the followers of Gandhi, and for all those who, hoping against hope, imagined that the Indian state would somehow contradict the intrinsic nature of all modern states.

So, the question arises, are there any non-violent institutions of sufficient identity to give the awakening idealism of the century a sense of "belonging," of having allies? Is it psychologically possible for human beings to suffer extreme alienation from some of the acts of their country and at the same time feel hope and faithfulness in relation to other aspects of its complex national being? Can a man honor the living *polis* within the hardening body politic?

If we have faith in the future, it is necessary to recognize that these are crucial questions in respect to the decisions to be made by all human beings during the next, say, thirty or forty years. There is the problem of not frightening each other into refuges of blind reaction, by reason of unmeasured feelings and expressions of alienation, and the equally important problem of not soothing ourselves with a complacency which no man, these days, can justify save from ignorance or dark indifference.

Our point is that these are the critical processes that will go on in the minds and feelings of human beings, no matter what any single individual chooses to do, at any time, in relation to any particular crisis. It is in the light of this conclusion that we assert that any deliberate policy save that of non-violence, in connection with such decisions, will be sheer insanity. These decisions cannot be made wisely in a context of killing and obsessing fear. If we want a world laid in ruins, not merely by nuclear weapons, but most of all by the collapse of the human capacity to reflect with impartiality, then violence is the way to get it.

There is a sense in which the spectacle of the business community in the United States, pursuing the even tenor of its profitable way, is the most pathetic sight in all the world. Here are men who have cut themselves off from what is really happening in the world by protecting the commercial integrity of the press from any slight infection by impartial or thorough reporting. In material terms, they have by far the most to lose; and what do they do? Do they, in self-protection, take some of their profits and set up research foundations to explore in realistic terms the meaning of current events? Do they, in defense of their future as entrepreneurs, establish newspapers as instruments of authentic public service to shape a national opinion that cannot be turned by hired rabble-rousers to support one midsummer madness of policy after another? They do not. Instead, they pay a few scholars to publish papers knocking socialism, more or less in the fashion that Calvin Coolidge knocked sin.

In the same issue of *Liberation* as that in which Mr. Muste's analysis appeared is an article by Henry Anderson, "The Backlash Nobody Knows," which examines the failure of liberals to grasp the meaning of the undercurrent of dissatisfaction behind the recent capture of the Republican Party by embattled "Rightists." Publication of this article, by a man long associated with the labor movement, proves *Liberation's* right to be called a "radical" magazine, since this discussion cuts across all conventional lines of political criticism. Following is an account of the cultural breakdown which, Mr. Anderson believes, produces much of the emotional energy of angry political reaction:

> Many Americans sense that there must be something fundamentally wrong with a society in which people don't care whether they live or die: where suicide is the tenth leading cause of death, and another form of self-destruction, alcoholism, is eighth; where people go on smoking cigarettes in full

knowledge of the fact that it will kill one in every six of them, where people go on making bombs and bacterial weapons that can kill sixty out of every six of them. Many Americans sense that there must be something fundamentally wrong with a society in which human relationships are so shallow, exploitative, inconstant: where the divorce rate approaches the marriage rate; where the mass media are saturated to the point of obsession with promiscuity, adultery, sex without love. Many Americans sense that there has to be something basically wrong with a society in which living is drained of coherent purpose and existence is little more than a quest for fleeting, artificial excitement to relieve the everyday boredom and emptiness: where youngsters torture animals, assault elderly strangers, smash the windows of schools; where people enjoy watching other people punch themselves senseless in something called the "prize ring"; where motion pictures and television search for ever greater brutishness, horror, violence, and sadism. Many Americans sense that there is something basically wrong when it is possible for people to be maimed and murdered in public with no one troubling to come to their aid.

Many Americans know in their hearts that we are on the highroad to dehumanization when so many of us don't really believe in anything or anybody, including ourselves; don't really care about anything or anybody, including ourselves; perceive no point in living; are morally dazed, uninvolved, self-indulgent, as flabby intellectually and emotionally as we are physically.

Where are Americans with these discontents to turn? Self-styled liberals and moderates do not talk seriously about divorce, suicide, crime and delinquency, addictions, sadism, and other pathologies. They dare not—for to do so would be to confess a grievous failure. Liberals and moderates have been in control of the national administration uninterruptedly for 32 years. The society around us is the society they have made—and they dare not criticize their handiwork. They prefer to limit the discussion of social problems to so-called urban "redevelopments," poverty, race relations, and a timid extension of the social-security system. To the extent that they talk about the social pathologies at all, they would have us believe that everything will somehow come out for the best if we pass a few more laws, create a few more commissions, and appropriate a few more hundred millions of dollars.

Mr. Anderson probably overstates his case, but what is true in what he says has needed saying for so long that he may be forgiven the rhetoric of blaming all this on the liberals. The causes, surely, are deeper than politics, likewise the remedies. Yet it is hard to fault him for the following:

> The pursuit of the liberal's vision will not solve, or even try to solve a single one of the social pathologies. Nobody is even talking about the Good Society, as distinguished from the Great Society—a good society being, simply, one which is good for human nature.
>
> Liberals fall back on their clichés. They tell us that it is inescapable that civilization becomes big and complex and centralized. They assure us that to talk of decentralization is to try to turn the clock back to the Nineteenth Century. They call it reactionary, which is added evidence that words have lost all sensible meaning. The dream of a society in which men are masters of their own fates is not conservative—since it does not attempt to preserve the present order—and it is not reactionary, since it does not attempt to recapture anything which has ever gone before. It is, if anything, subversive, radical, and Utopian, in the best and truest senses of the words. Self-styled liberals are the true conservatives of today. It is they who are committed to preserving the existing social assumptions, values, and drift.

So that there will be no misunderstanding, since we are not quoting those strictures, it should be said that Mr. Anderson is rougher on the Ultra Right than any of the liberal critics. His own proposals fall into an entirely different category. They represent the devoted thinking of a man who is obviously in touch with *people* and is concerned with something far more basic than any of the current political abstractions or partisanships. He puts his own position in the form of a question:

> . . . what would happen if some public figure showed that he had a grasp of the meaning of freedom in a real rather than a platitudinous sense? What if some candidate for public office had a consistent vision of what is dehumanizing our society, and a consistent vision of the Good Society and how it might be pursued? For example, suppose someone were to propose a "war on alienation"? Suppose that someone were to propose that every dollar spent on job retaining, extended unemployments, youth-corps camps, and other liberal orthodoxies, should be

matched with a dollar spent helping people to set up ways to influence their own lives: community newspapers to be controlled by subscribers; radio and television stations to be supported and controlled by listeners and viewers; schools to be administered by parents, teachers, and students; medical plans to be administered by the recipients of medical care; consumer cooperatives for the purchase of housing, groceries, transportation, funeral services, whatever you please; producer cooperatives for the production or distribution of foodstuffs, works of art and whatever you please.

What would happen? I don't know for sure. I don't know how many Americans are discontented, alienated, unfulfilled dehumanized. There are no public opinion polls on this type of backlash. Nobody knows. Nobody is even asking. The important questions are outside the competence of a social science paralyzed by the statistical method. There is no way of asking people, with a standardized interview, "What is your conception of your identity?" "Are you alienated?" "Are you responsible, joyful, creative, loving, doing something worth-while with your life?"

But I have an intuition, based upon a lot of unstatistical things—watching parents with their children and husbands with their wives, listening to the tones of peoples' voices crowds at baseball games, someone coughing in the next hotel room, laughter, shrieking, sighing. I talk to old people who are poor and sick, but who are more concerned by the poverty in human relationships than their material poverty or physical illness. I look as deeply as I can within myself, for I am bearer of the human mission, too, no more and no less than everyone else. I have an intuition that a public figure who called for an authentically humanizing society would leave his mark. Not at first, but sooner or later. My own humanness and my own Americanness suggest to me that many, and perhaps most Americans are ready for humanization—but before they recognize this fact, and act upon it, they will need the knowledge of what such a process implies. Somebody must start talking in clearer terms, about the Good Society.

Well, *who?* Well, Mr. Anderson for one. The point is, he does not speak in familiar political terms. The point is, the kind of a Good Society he is talking about cannot be spoken of in familiar political terms. He is talking about a democratic process much subtler,. much more real, than the electoral process. His questions are of the sort that might be asked by a latter-day Socrates, wandering in the market place—supposing, of course, that we *had* a market place where a latter-day Socrates could find a few people wanting to talk.

It is a matter, first, for dialogue. It is a matter of getting the right questions going, and generating the kind of grassroots morale that Socrates helped to make so dangerous to the Athenian demagogues. But if Socrates had been a dozen men, instead of only one, he might not have had to die. Of course, he didn't *really* have to die. He died because he loved the *polis*—the living, breathing, human community that was being strangled by the indifference of the political community. So he died rather than do the smart thing—get out of town, promise to keep quiet, make a small campaign contribution to the party in power. The *polis* is killed by men who do smart things.

If there had been more ordinary Athenian citizens who loved the *polis*, Socrates would have lived. What is it to love the *polis?* If you could make a formula out of this, everything would be quite easy. You could turn the problem over to Madison Avenue and turn on the television. The proper alliance would not be obscure. But loving the *polis* is not Madison Avenue's Universe of Discourse. Loving is not something that sales-promoters understand. We have another name for what happens when sales-promoters get the idea that they can do something with love. Love is possible only for unmanipulated people. Actually, Mr. Anderson's "war on alienation" would begin with a war on manipulation. But it would also be a war without scapegoats, and that doesn't sound even remotely possible—which is the reason, of course, that Mr. Anderson's Good Society seems so hard to define.

The alliance of human beings in behalf of immediate human ends and in behalf of humanly-scaled means to practical needs is an obscure alliance because its definition can be only half objective—the other half depends upon a wisdom

of the moment, the spirit of fitness and the good applied to each unique situation. Every good project can be ruined by total definition, because then you don't have to think any more, and when people stop thinking they stop being human, and the system takes over. And then you are off on that long and desperate journey which ends in the hopeless encounter of one closed system with another—ideological war. It seems ridiculous, today, to worry about what a computer-controlled society will do to us—when there is no mystery at all about what it will do. Our present circumstances are the triumph of inhuman systemization, as the result of relying on total definition and then making everything fit. Procrustes was the original model for the computer. He had a system and an objective measure of the good. He fed people into the machine, just as we do.

Theseus stopped all that, and went on to other acts of liberation. Of course, Theseus' mother told him he was a Hero. How did she know? Well, that is a difficult question for the people of our time. If we knew how to teach our mothers to mother Heroes, we could probably get the Good Society going in twenty or thirty years. But after mothers come midwives—a role Socrates was proud to play. We may be able to make do with some of those.

REVIEW
"THE POWER OF GREEK TRAGEDY"

ROBERT KIRSCH, literary editor of the Los Angeles *Times,* uses this title for a discussion of a contemporary novel *(Times,* Jan. 12). Mr. Kirsch has a notable capacity for linking forms of literature customarily classified in separate categories. Perceptive notice of interpretative works on psychology, philosophy and religion will be connected with something like Ross Macdonald's *The Far Side of the Dollar.* This latter book, for example, Mr. Kirsch suggests, will be widely read partly because it "has the power and dimension of a Greek tragedy, though the reader is not blackjacked into realizing it." He continues:

> I will grant you that his [Macdonald's] manner and matter (to use the old-fashioned Aristotelian concepts) are on the surface of the here and now. I mean that literally in Southern California which is the setting of Macdonald's novel and in the present.
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> The theme of this book is not as comforting as the simple victory of good over evil, the meeting of crime with punishment, that the reader finds in most mysteries. The point is that Macdonald understands that the violent act is only the last and most overt expression of an impulse which lies deep in character and that unless we understand this calculus of circumstance, we understand only the slightest part of the darker side of man.

Mr. Kirsch concludes that Macdonald presents by indirection a classical Greek point of view, indicating that "evasion is perhaps the ultimate sin; if not, it is the fertile soil in which most evil can develop."

The growing interest in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, accompanied by frequent reprinting of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* and Michael Grant's *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (Mentor), is paralleled by searching psychological evaluations of myth and symbol. Miss Hamilton gives reasons why the Greek view cries out for contemporary rebirth:

> The world of Greek mythology was not a place of terror for the human spirit. Of course the mythical monster is present in any number of shapes,
>
> Gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire,
>
> but they are there only to give the hero his need of glory. What could a hero do in a world without them? They are always overcome by him. . . . He fought the monsters and freed the earth from them just as Greece freed the earth from the monstrous idea of the unhuman supreme over the human.

Michael Grant writes:

> Time after time these products of ancient imagination have been used to inspire fresh creative efforts. Today new political systems have fabricated their own myths which Coleridge, . . . under the Graeco-Roman spell, had never imagined. Yet twentieth-century writers, from tragic theatre to comic strip, have continued to employ the archetypes with renewed vigour. These dramatic concrete, individual, insistently probing ancient myths still supplement the deductions of science as clues to much in the world that does not alter.
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> The atmosphere to which they translate us is life-enhancing; for it gives us fresh strength by providing a route of escape. The escape is from day-to-day reality, of which, as we know, it is not possible to endure very much. Yet this is not escapism of an ordinary kind, for the road leads to another sort of reality, a more imposing sort, than the reality which dominates our ordinary lives. At times, in receptive conditions, these myths generate and throw off potent, almost violent, flashes of inextinguishable, universal truths. Those are not of course, as far as we are concerned, the religious truths which (among much else) the Greeks and Romans saw in their mythology. However they are truths that still impinge, sometimes with ungovernable force, upon the mind and feelings, and illuminate aspects of our human condition.
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> This particular brand of enlightenment is difficult or impossible to grasp by more logical and rational means and would elude non-mythical presentation. Yet it would be wrong to say that myths seem modern or topical; they are as relevant to our time as to any other, no more, no less. That is to say, they are not specifically antique either. They are ostensibly lodged, it is true, within a certain framework of the remote past, but that does not impede their perpetual compulsive tenacity. Indeed, their relevance to life's basic, continuing situations is

> sharpened into high relief by this setting which, though ancient in origin and form, remains unaffected by temporal circumstances.

Walter F. Otto, in *The Homeric Gods—The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion* (Beacon, 1964), speaks of the "organic structure" and "naturalness" with which the religious myths of the Greeks confronted notions of supernatural monstrosity beyond the range of human comprehension. There is always a "proximity of the divine," but both the fabulous powers of the gods and the efforts of man to become a hero are part of one great chain of life. Mr. Otto writes:

> We hear, indeed we see in lifelike imagery, how a god whispers a saving device to a baffled warrior at the right instant, we hear that he rouses spirit and kindles courage, that he makes limbs supple and nimble and gives a right arm accuracy and strength. But if we look more closely at the occasions when these divine interventions take place, we find that they always come at the critical moment when human powers suddenly converge, as if charged by electric contact, on some insight, some resolution, some deed. These decisive turns which, as every attentive observer knows, are regularly experienced in an active life, the Greeks regarded as manifestations of the gods. Not only the flow of events with its critical moments, however, but also duration itself indicated the divine. In all larger forms and conditions of life and existence the Greek perceived the eternal visage of divinity. Taken all together these essences constituted the holiness of the world.

The great value of Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces* lies in his showing that every man—as Theseus in the labyrinth, as the prince Siddartha seeking enlightenment, as Prometheus provoking the gods to bind him, yet later proving that he can free himself—has in him a latent "magical" power to reach some dimension beyond verbal communication. Indeed, magic and heroism are always present in the interplay between the individual and a destiny which is seen to involve, however obscurely, the whole cosmos.

COMMENTARY
THE GANDHIAN CHALLENGE

THE thing that makes serious social criticism so difficult, these days, and the ordering of affirmative propositions a matter of much subtlety and abstraction—save for the platitudes which further no cause—is the fact that if social reconstruction is to come about through non-violent means, little sense of class partisanship can attend the process. This is to say that there can be no easy identification of the righteous and the unrighteous. And this means, in turn, that genuine good will must be recognized, and honored, as such, in whatever sector of society it appears.

This is very bad for the traditional forms of revolutionary *esprit de corps.* Gandhi achieved this extraordinary balance and embodied it with consistency, but he irritated and even enraged people who felt he was digging out the ground from beneath their feet. He had some rich friends. He let them do for his movement what they were willing to do. He even suggested that the conscientious rich perform a useful function (as "trustees") for society, although a society-in-transition. He plainly believed that a regenerated society would have no rich people in it. But his attitude on this question was unrelievedly disturbing to believers in the Western radical tradition.

In all criticism that is to serve the future, there must be two frames of reference—one subjective, the other objective. There is the morality of motive and the morality of objective situations. Gandhi was convinced that you can't make wise judgments in one frame of reference without making them in the other. He rejected the idea of fixed categories of men who do social wrong. He would not ignore the subjective side of life in order to generate the partisanship that would get the revolutionary process swinging. He didn't want the revolutionary situation to ripen through the hardening of the divisions of society into righteous and unrighteous sides. He saw the external social situation as a projection, writ large, of the internal moral situation in the lives of all men.

It was not only that a partisan struggle could not become a non-violent struggle. He also believed that it would not work for long-term human good. How much historical evidence must we accumulate before we are ready to admit that he was right?

But it is so *easy* to be a righteous partisan! And it is so simple to generalize the social evil all about as resulting from the wrong-doing of a comparative few!

And, turning the question about, how easy it is to justify a do-nothing, muddle-through approach to all problems if you don't feel obliged to "take sides"! How can we distinguish between non-partisan dispassion and the old, personal-virtue solution used by the complacent and well-fixed to justify neglect of poverty and want? A man can always escape his responsibilities this way.

There is only one answer to that. Reliance on a formula, on partisan over-simplifications, is also a way of escaping responsibilities—of forwarding to future generations problems that angry partisanship can never solve. You could argue that if status, position in relation to power, and accumulated wealth are the only criteria by which you can really tell who is on the wrong side—then the revolution has come too late to do any good. All it can do, then, is set things up for another fiasco.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

FUTURE EDUCATION—PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

KIPLINGER'S *Changing Times* for March presents an interview with Donald N. Michael, author of the just-published *The Next Generation* (Random House, now available in paperback). Some of Dr. Michael's predictions, based on "an extensive study of youth in our changing world for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare," are encouraging, some confusing, and some, in the opinion of the Kiplinger writer, rather "shocking." One portion of the interview brings out a point to which we have already given considerable attention:

> You say our children's world will depend on specialists. You also say it will need broadly educated, well-informed citizens. How can schools prepare children to be both?
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> Dr. Michael: This is one of the most difficult dilemmas facing education today. It is important to educate children so they will later be able to become *either* specialized *or* generalized. Moreover, they'll need education that not only prepares them to be specialists in some areas but also enables them to shift from one occupation to another. This will be a common experience in the years ahead.
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> On the other hand, there will be a growing demand for what you call generalists, "philosopher-King" types who will work across areas of management, planning and public service. We really don't know yet how to educate for this type of work. Such education seems to call for training in logic and method as well as history, philosophy, ethics, science and so forth.

Princeton's Dean J. D. Brown, writing for the May, 1964, *Atlantic*, outlines difficulties attending the development of these "generalist" philosopher-king types. Under the title, "The Squeeze on the Liberal University," Dean Brown examines inadequate conceptions of the university:

> In the climate of bigness and diversity which pervades America today there is danger that we may lose sight of those values in our society which size and complexity do not automatically enhance. In fact, there is reason to believe that bigness and diversity make it ever more difficult to reinforce in the minds and purposes of the multiplying numbers of persons and groups in our society the values which should motivate the whole.
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> This danger of attenuation of a sense of values in the organization peculiarly responsible for enhancing such a sense is clearly evident in the evolution of the American university. A university bears a name which embodies its purpose of resolving diversity into a unity centered in enduring values. However, the name carries such a tradition of dignity and distinction that it has come to be applied to what are, in fact, complex state systems of higher education held together largely by the control of funds and the veto power which such control affords.

The "liberal university" should never, in Dean Brown's opinion, be considered as part of what Clark Kerr has called "the knowledge industry." He continues:

> It is not easy to maintain the traditional role of the liberal university in a century of exploding knowledge. The multiversity allows itself to ride with the forces toward increasing differentiation which are ever present in specialized scholarship and research. The harder task of assuring a counter-force toward the integration of fundamental truth receives far less emphasis. But the liberal university, which faces the same forces, must, if it is to fulfill its proper function, strive vigorously to bring order and relationship to expanding knowledge as a means to human understanding and fulfillment. By so doing, the liberal university serves to orient both scholarship and the scholar in a time of widening tangents of interest and increasingly difficult intercommunication.
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> The integrating function of the liberal university is of great importance not only to society but to the advancement of knowledge itself. With increasing specialization there comes an easy assumption of arrogance and of intolerance among the competing areas of learning. There result not merely the two worlds of science and the humanities, but scores of little worlds, of more manageable size but even further apart. Not only do areas of specialization lose valuable contact, but they also lose reasonable proportion. The counting of this or that may become a discrete end in itself in any line of research. Knowing more and more about less and less is not an empty quip. It can become a way of life of a scholar who has removed himself from the integrating influence of relationship with scholars in other

disciplines, or even in his own, in a university which does not encourage the mutual reinforcement of learning.

In the light of these considerations, the educator is bound to view with mixed emotions the predictions made by Robert T. Oliver, of Pennsylvania State University. In an address titled "Education in the year 2,000 A.D." (*Vital Speeches*, April 15, 1964), Dr. Oliver looks forward to a "uniworld university" for which there will be no registration, no tuition collected and no graduation. Crowded lecture halls will be a thing of the past, competitive grading unnecessary, and in age these university students of the future will range from "a few precocious youngsters of eight or ten to a large number of still curious oldsters in their sixties, seventies, and eighties." He continues:

> The classrooms for these courses in the core curriculum will be wherever television sets happen to be handy—out on the lawn, in small study rooms, or in large lounges and auditoriums. On the side of each television set is a language selector button, so that the students may listen in whatever language they choose. The lecturers are experts of worldwide renown. They do their lecturing from wherever they happen to live, or wherever they may be visiting at the time, whether it be Rome, London, Tokyo, New York, or Tanganyika.
>
> The central curriculum, as has been suggested, will be developed around a common core of subjects studied by everyone. Mathematics, for example, will be taught in a continuous range of always available sequential courses, running from simple arithmetic through set theory. The common all-inclusive history course will be world history—and it will be taught by professors from many lands. The basic structure of this course will be based on a syllabus worked out under the auspices of UNESCO; for by 2,000 A.D. educators will be agreed that it is better to teach the harmony than the discordancies of our common human experience. Many of the historical topics will be treated not by single lecturers, but by panels of professors from different lands, who, if they cannot always agree, will, at least, present sympathetically a wide range of viewpoints.
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> The physical sciences, literature, philosophy, sociology, political science, and economics, similarly, will be taught not as a variety of segmentalized individual courses, but as subject areas which are constantly under discussion by experts with complementary specializations, and into which students may dip at any level or in any aspect which appeals to their interests and for which they are competent. A student, for instance, may listen all year long to lectures on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or he could take his choice among innumerable offerings on such broader topics as Shakespeare, nineteenth century Utopianism, the Russian novel, or Chinese poetry.

This prospectus, however, does not tell how the essential problems of education will be solved by the mechanics of such a universalist program. Dr. Oliver feels that the technical availability of continuous learning for everyone can make more obvious the challenge of increasing amounts of leisure time and bring emphasis on individual learning and group discussion:

> Still another prediction that requires no more information than we already have is that leisure time is no longer going to be a luxury enjoyed by the few but will be a challenge confronted by everyone. The time is finally close upon us when the age-old ideal of liberal education is becoming the practical fact for us all: earning a living is a less demanding challenge than properly and fruitfully living a richly rewarding life.
>
> Other predictions could no doubt be added to or derived from these; but there is no point in trying to see more of the future than we actually need to know. If everyone is going to have much more education than at the present, if the physical demands of life will be less, and if leisure is to be multiplied, it follows inexorably that the abilities to discuss, to argue, to explain, and to persuade will be of even much greater value than they now are.
>
> If multiple millions of people are learning primarily through reading and from listening to lectures, it will become of the highest importance that they also have an opportunity to get together in small groups to tell one another what they understand and believe—and that they are taught how to develop and communicate their own ideas and feelings.
>
> When leisure is multiplied and intellectual capacities are far better developed, conversation and discussion are arts that will flourish as they never have. For the same reasons, the art of reading aloud for pleasure will be revived and extended as the most useful and appealing of the popular humane arts.

> The educated person in 2,000 A.D. will resemble fairly closely the old symposiarch of the great days of ancient Athens—one who loved good talk, and who talked well to critical and appreciative listeners. The great difference will be that whereas in Athens this kind of education was restricted to a very few aristocrats at the top of the social order, in the age of abundance upon which we are entering, there is no practical reason why such social achievements cannot be attained by vast numbers of people.

In the meantime, as hundreds of thousands of new professors enter the educational field, it is of primary importance that the ideal of the liberal university be vivified. The "continuing dialogue" of which Robert Hutchins so often speaks is the key to understanding that education is a process of continually transforming the means by which values are realized—a challenge to the static elements of both school and society.

FRONTIERS

"The Coming Culture"

ONE of the chief difficulties in understanding books which dare to speak of cultural syntheses of the future lies in the ambiguity of the vocabularies of religion. There seems little doubt, for example, that Gandhi would have enjoyed a much wider audience of serious readers in the West if he had consistently employed a naturalistic vocabulary. The fact is, of course, that the naturalistic vocabulary did not give him words for the meanings that were all-important to his thought. It follows that, in reading Gandhi, it becomes crucial to know what he means by words like "God." For the agnostic Westerner, God suggests submission of the mind to irrational controls and institutional betrayals. Yet this word had no such meaning for Gandhi, as his extreme unpopularity with the advocates of theocratic Indian religion made very plain. The idea of God, for Gandhi, stood for self-reliant pursuit of truth, emancipation of the individual from any and all institutional barriers to self-discovery. It was Gandhi, for example, who did more than anyone else in the twentieth century to restore respect for the Buddha in modern India, and to make Hindus realize their injustice to one of the greatest teachers and religious reformers of India, and indeed of the world.

This problem comes to the fore in considering the contents of a remarkably useful little book, *The Coming Culture*, by Daniel P. Hoffman, of San Mateo, California, just published by Sarvodaya Prachuralaya, Thanjavur, India ($1.00). It is an attempt to give coherent unity to the flow of social-religious philosophy which began, in the West, with Leo Tolstoy, was taken up by Gandhi in India and integrated with ancestral Indian beliefs, and now returns to the West in a rising tide of enthusiasm for the work of Vinoba Bhave and other Gandhians. You start reading this unpretentious volume, with its numerous typographical errors, its mix-spelled proper names, its imprecise and diffusely eclectic "religious" appeals, wondering how it can hope to have an effect on sophisticated Western intellectuality, and then, somewhat suddenly perhaps, you realize that these superficial shortcomings have no importance at all. The book is good, its arguments pertinent, its basic assumptions and starting-points crucial to the kind of changes that must take place if the modern world is to have any future at all. The author has a surprisingly complete grasp of the various facets of the problems of Western civilization and if he does not offer, ready-made, a rendering of Gandhian economics into a formula for application to a mature Western economy, what right have we to expect this of him, or of anyone? The provision of first principles in persuasive form is a service that has to come first, while the elaboration of methods of application must be the work of many minds.

The keynote of the book is struck with a quotation from G. T. Wrench's history of agriculture (*The Restoration of the Peasantries*), in a passage on Gandhi:

> Gandhi with other men of vision was very critical of the state of this world. He had no faith in capitalism, communism, fascism, etc., because they all strove for mastery of the people. He attacked modern civilization at its very roots. He preached a change of heart, and a change of values. He taught a return to the dominant idea, not of satisfaction, but control of man's numberless wants. His main concern was the agriculturalist, the providers of the world's food and clothing. He made the village of the peasants the human unit of his reform.

The question of how this wisdom can be applied to a country like the United States has to be suspended until one has read the author's analysis of the economic and socio-psychological consequences of extreme urbanization. The more the reader recognizes the debilitating and even mutilating effects of urban life on the great majority of city inhabitants, the more willing is he to accept the necessity of a change, instead of claiming that we have "gone beyond" any application of such reforms. What *must* be done

cannot be rejected simply because it seems difficult.

Mr. Hoffman quotes from Vice President Humphrey a judgment of American cities: "Without adequate planning, cities are already strangling themselves in housing, transportation, air pollution, and by dividing their sections by race and class." He concludes by saying: "This is a built-in pattern for destruction of democracy." Mr. Hoffman ends this chapter with the observation:

> It should be recognized that the problems of an urban culture historically have always been present. The suspicion with which thinkers such as Jefferson, Emerson and Thoreau held the city, was based on historical understanding. The world abounds in the ruins of dead cities of forgotten ages.

The chapter on Vinoba's Bhoodan movement has this passage in it, quoted from Vimala Thakar:

> Has not the time come to apply our faith in the existence of God, our faith in love and cooperation, not only in India, but in the West, too? Has not the time come to apply these values in social, economic and political life? We ourselves feel that there is no other alternative to the war that is threatening. If we really want a peaceful society and a peaceful world, cannot we make a new start with these values as our real strength?
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> We, in an agrarian context, are trying to apply those values in our own way. The industrialized West will have to evolve different methods and techniques for translating those values into practical life. If there is any message from Vinoba and the Land Gift Mission to the Western World, I think it lies in the bold attempt to translate his faith in the existence of God and human love into our individual and social life.
>
> If we think it is too difficult to change the social and economic order in this way, if it is too big, then let us start with our own individual lives. Individual conduct can introduce a new dimension. In this technique of social change Gandhi was alone when he started. Vinoba was alone when he started.

This view is confirmed by Jayaprakash Narayan:

> Mahatma Gandhi insisted that while there has to be a social revolution the starting point of that revolution must be man himself. It is only through a human revolution that we can have a social revolution that is meaningful. And therefore he always said that he was a double revolutionary and that his revolution was a dual revolution—internal as well as external—human as well as social. Without the internal revolution, the external was meaningless.

These few quotations illustrate some of the basic themes of Mr. Hoffman's volume. The context is made up of numerous suggestions concerning Western sources for similar ideas. For example, there is a chapter on economic theory which examines the thinking of Silvio Gesell, a German business man whose book, *Natural Economic Order*, resulted from practical experience. (Gesell's ideas are given in greater detail in an appendix.)

Mr. Hoffman is a pacifist and a pantheist. His book is rich with seminal ideas gleaned from many sources. In a thoughtful introduction, Oliver Reiser, professor of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, has this to say:

> We all agree that there is much that is evil and ugly in our societies. But how do we make socially effective the consciences of men of good will everywhere? There is a divorce between the lovers of peace and the manipulators of power and policies. The forerunners of the new era—a federation of friendly peoples the world over—are impotent to change national policies. The progressive separation of our cultural motivations and higher values from institutional power is the great alienation of man from his world. This is the immorality of a mass culture in an elementalistic and fragmented society. But just to become conscious of this impotence and incapacity to do something about it is the first constructive step toward a more positive program for rebuilding our world. And here the author does not fail us.