# SYSTEMS AND THE MAN

SOME weeks ago, in Frontiers, a correspondent described his psychological difficulties as an engineer working in the computer industry. Deeply concerned with the problems of the technological society, as formulated by Jacques Ellul, he spoke of his need "to stop each day to think about whether I am serving the computer system or whether the computer is helping me." (MANAS, April 28.) He found it necessary, he said, "to decide daily what part of the engineering problem I am working on can be mechanized in the form of a logical program of instructions for the computer to carry out and what parts require the unique qualities of a human being to analyze."

Now the question which occurs here is whether or not this situation can be generalized as an instance of the common human predicament. Emerson, for example, wrote in his essay on Spiritual Laws:

> The common experience is that the man fits himself as well as he can to the customary details of that work or trade he falls into, and tends it as a dog turns a spit. Then he is a part of the machine he moves, the man is lost. Until he can manage to communicate himself to others in his full stature and proportion as a wise and good man, he does not yet find his vocation. He must find an outlet for his character, so that he may justify himself to their eyes for doing what he does. If the labor is trivial, let him by his thinking and character make it liberal. Whatever he knows and thinks, whatever in his apprehension is worth doing, that let him communicate, or men will never know and honor him aright. Foolish, whenever you take the meanness and formality of that thing you do, instead of converting it into the obedient spiracle of your character and aims.

On the whole, Emerson and our correspondent seem to be talking about the same thing, although, in the case of the engineer, there is a kind of secularization of the issue. The latter, you might say, is concerned with refusing to shape his objectives merely in terms of the competence of the computer. He must not allow the quantification of human beings and their interests, simply because the machine is more efficient than a human being in solving problems that can be quantified. He must not become "a part of the machine." Obviously, there are great temptations in this direction. The engineer who discovers the extraordinary capabilities of a computer may find himself suffering from the same sort of intoxication that overtakes an astrologer when it becomes plain to him that he has learned how to make predictions which turn out to be correct. Dreams of externalizing and processing all the questions of human life may easily give him delusions of grandeur. He sets out to recast the questions people ask themselves in terms that can be fed into the computer, and if the idea of human individuality becomes lost in the process—well, the utilitarian ethic of the greatest good for the greatest number is an adequate excuse. Oddly enough—or perhaps not oddly at all—the argument of the most distinguished scholars of the Middle Ages against the *mathematici,* who included the casters of horoscopes, was in no essential psychological sense different from the arguments of present-day humanists against the computerization of modern knowledge. Peter Abelard had no doubt that men skilled in knowledge of the stars could predict events having natural causes, but he condemned prediction in matters where human choice and free will are involved. Albertus Magnus also allows that astrology is a science, but, as Lynn Thorndike notes in his *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (II, 584), he took exception to the idea that such computations could reveal a celestial determinism that ruled the human soul:

> Thus in his theological *Summa* Albert admits that the stars govern even the souls, vegetable and sensitive, of plants and brutes, but denies that they coerce the loftier rational soul and will of man, who is made in the image of God, except as he yields to sin and flesh. But this last is a very important exception, as we see in a passage in the treatise on minerals. "There is in man a double spring of action, namely, nature and the will; and nature for its part is ruled by the stars, while the will is free; but unless it resists, it

is swept along by nature and becomes mechanical *(induratur)."*

The advantage of looking at the general problem described by our computer engineer correspondent in a historical context which includes the Middle Ages is that by this means we have at least a fighting chance to overcome the delusion that modern "scientific knowledge" has somehow raised us above the superstitious past and now presents us with dilemmas that are completely unique, belonging to our time alone. The fact is that our difficulties are not unique. A great many of them grow out of the common human tendency to escape individual, independent decision and the pain of personal responsibility. We look for infallible systems which will take the difficult task of becoming whole human beings off our backs. This makes us vulnerable to the claims of people who say they have found out the one true system. The question of *how much* truth there happens to be in a given system is a consideration entirely secondary to the degree to which it tends to remove responsibility for individual choice from human beings. For example, the "workability" of a system of scientific theory of knowledge about the external world does not make it superior to a religious philosophy which urges, as Emerson, for instance, urges, the necessity of the individual "to communicate to others in his full stature and proportion as a wise and good man."

What is at issue, fundamentally, is the externalization of the answers to the ultimate questions of human life. When the externalization is systematically pursued and incorporated in an all-encompassing system governing both intellectual and social life, you get an emasculated, submissive piety and conformity to the system. Of this, Adam of Saint Victor's hymn on the Trinity is a good illustration:

> Of the Trinity to reason
> Leads to license or to treason
>    Punishment deserving.
> What is birth and what procession
> Is not mine to make profession,
>    Save with faith unswerving.
>
> Thus professing, thus believing,
> Never insolently leaving

> The highway of our faith
> Duty weighing, law obeying,
> Never shall we wander straying
>    Where heresy is death.

The origin of this system was the word of God as interpreted and applied to human affairs by His Church. The ethical-pragmatic justification for its ruthless rule is given by the Grand Inquisitor in the *Brothers Karamazov.* Conformity and obedience are the only virtues of which human beings are really capable, it is argued. For this reason the system must be maintained in power.

Some five hundred years later, another system of external explanation and authority was making its claims. The case for Scientific Mechanism is put by L. L. Bernard in *Fields and Methods of Sociology* (1934):

> The old theological assumption of personal control through spirit direction, which later developed into a theory of spirit possession, and thence into a theory of an individual or personal soul (a permanent indwelling directive spirit), has given way, under the influence of an analysis of neurons, cortexes, and endocrines, to the behavioristic theory of the conditioned response and stimulus-response or behavior patterns. The spiritualists and the theologians and the metaphysicians have not welcomed this growth of a science of personality and they have not hesitated to reveal their intellectual character by their strenuous efforts to sweep back the oncoming tide of behavioristic science with their witch brooms on which they have been accustomed to ride in the clouds of spiritistic phantasy. But in spite of this bit of diverting hobby-horse play a science of personality based upon a measurable mechanics of behavior is bound to replace the old magical and mystical spiritism which still survives in the thousand and one cults that delight in calling themselves psychological.

Of course, Adam of Saint Victor's was not the only voice of the twelfth century, nor was Bernard able to sum up the diversity of scientific philosophy in the first part of the twentieth century, but both gave clear expression to the "Establishment" views of their times. Peter Abelard was almost a contemporary of Adam, and Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow have come in close succession upon Behaviorists like Bernard, but what we are

attempting to isolate is the temper of an age and the assumptions which pass, for a time, without being seriously challenged. There was certainly enough acceptance of the conditioning theory of human nature to give plausibility to the environmental doctrines of "scientific socialism," and until very recently the idea of an independent, causal agency within the human being was either openly denied in scientific circles, or simply disposed of through total neglect.

Obviously, the Medieval "Establishment" was very different in the extent of its legal authority and modes of control. But in both periods of history, independence of mind is at a serious discount. In the Middle Ages the heretic was hunted and persecuted and often executed. In the present, it is considered good business to manipulate the plastic responses of the "consumer" and sound political practice to convert people by propaganda to the Establishment view. The interest of the individual, as such, is left to a handful of educators, essayists, humanistic psychologists, and anarcho-pacifists. In the one case, the preservation of the True Faith was at issue. In the other, the protection of the Nation-State and the preservation of what we call "Free Enterprise." And in both cases the individual is held to benefit because the System is being defended. The good of man is thus a consequence of his successful manipulation.

But who is "responsible"?

As usual, we are obliged to answer—everybody and nobody. This is the kind of responsibility which grows by degrees in people who see what is happening to themselves and to others. The scientist-technologist may say: "I am hired by the government. I do my job and the politicians and the people decide what to do with the systems I develop. *They* are responsible." But an Einstein can say, "I should have been a pedlar." When does a man become responsible for the power his skill places in the hands of others?

This question recalls a discussion by John Steinbeck in *Sea of Cortez.* Arrived at San Diego, he and his co-author, the biologist, E. F. Ricketts, visited a military installation occasioned by the onset of World War II. What Steinbeck saw brought these reflections:

> The military mind must limit its thinking to be able to perform its function at all. Thus, in talking with a naval officer who had won a target competition with big naval guns, we asked, "Have you thought what happens in a little street when one of your shells explodes, of the families torn to pieces, a thousand generations influenced when you signaled *Fire?"* "Of course not," he said. "Those shells travel so far that you couldn't possibly see where they land." And he was quite correct. If he could really see where they land and what they do, if he could really feel the power in his dropped hand, the waves radiated out from his gun, he would not be able to perform his function. He himself would be the weak point of his gun. But by not seeing, by insisting that it would be a problem in ballistics and trajectory, he is a good gunnery officer. And he is too humble to take responsibility for thinking. The whole structure of his world would be endangered if he permitted himself to think. The pieces must stick within their pattern or the whole thing collapses and the design is gone. We wonder whether in the present pattern the pieces are not straining to fall out of line; whether the paradoxes of our times are not finally surmounting to a conclusion of ridiculousness that will make the whole structure collapse. For the paradoxes are becoming so great that leaders of people must be less and less intelligent to stand their own leadership.

What is the literary man, John Steinbeck, questioning? He is questioning, incidentally, a particular technological system devised to defend and cherish a particular political system, but fundamentally he is wondering when it becomes an obligation of individuals to question the "whole structure" of which they have become a part. The gunnery officer, he says, is "too humble to take the responsibility for thinking." On the other hand, in behalf of the leaders, you could say that there is "too much at stake" for *them* to dare question the system of national defense to which they have been committed all their lives, and which they have told all those "humble people" out there is absolutely necessary for the freedom and peace of mankind. Manifestly, on this basis, it is too risky for *anybody* to question the system.

How shall we characterize this situation? Well, you could say that we have a systems-centered

civilization instead of a man-centered civilization. The systems are supposed to be in the service of man, and to question this assumption you have to have such clear and certain ideas about the service of man that you are able to argue with conviction that these systems are really anti-human. The will, as Albertus Magnus remarked, is "free," but "unless it resists, it is swept along by nature and becomes mechanical." And then, as Thoreau said—

> The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus,* etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense, but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses or dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders—serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the Devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men,* serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least:
>
> > *I am too highborn to be propertied,*
> > *To be a secondary at control,*
> > *Or useful servingman and instrument*
> > *To any sovereign state throughout the world.*

Thoreau, apparently, overcame the "humility" spoken of by Steinbeck, and resolved to think.

This brings us to a letter from a reader, who says:

> I would be interested to read anything I can find on the philosophic problem of present-day scientists and engineers who are caught up in the "space" or military programs. There must be many who have serious qualms about the value of their work to the human race and/or to the "security" of this country. But how many are able to resist the ample salary schedule, the nearly ideal physical environment

provided by such firms as Hughes Aircraft, STL, Aerospace, SPC, Rand, etc., etc.? How many are aware of the minor conspiracies that are the daily business of those firms doing work for Uncle Sam and who want to maintain or increase the flow of government dollars into their own particular organization? Certainly most employees on the managerial level are aware of the process for getting government contracts, the numerous and carefully cultivated Washington contacts, the large budgets allowance for putting together "proposals," the really outstanding ingenuity of the idea-men who determine not so much what the military wants and needs but what it "ought" to want!

> I can see, at present, only a small fraction of this huge body of talent turning toward the peaceful and useful tasks that cry out to be done. A minor effort in California, but promising, is the use of several aerospace firms by the State for "system" studies of civil problems such as water and mass transit. Another development of which I read in Los Angeles three or four years ago was a pilot plant for complete disassembly and utilization of city garbage (study by Lockheed, I believe).

> But how is it for the aware, the sensitive, the creative men inside these great companies? How are they able to influence company attitudes so they will deliberately seek activities of direct value to man? Are such men ignored? They have been in the past. This I know. Perhaps the entire economy has such momentum in one direction that it cannot painlessly change.

How is it for these men? Only they can tell, although we have no doubt that many of them feel the uneasiness implied by our correspondent. In one sense the self-questioning they pursue is no more important than similar conscientious inquiries made by any man in respect to a worthy means of livelihood. In another sense, however, a special responsibility attaches to scientists and technologist-engineers for the reason that, in our society, what they think and do has a decisive effect on all the members of the society. That is, they function as "leaders," whether or not they think of themselves in this way. There is of course the question of at what point the "hired man" must take on personal responsibility for what he is told to do by his employer. In the "extreme case," we have as precedent the ruling of the Nuremberg Trials, to the

effect that no one can free himself of moral responsibility by explaining that he did "what he was told." Here, social morality becomes indistinguishable from personal morality, and when there is no over-arching cultural dialogue on the issues involved, only rare individuals accept the kind of personal responsibility that is manifest in the letter of our correspondent.

What is wanted is not so much a rule-book declaring where a man ought to "draw the line" on what he will do for money, or in fulfillment of his "patriotic" duty, as an atmosphere of persistent questioning and open discussion of such matters. For example, last year, under the stimulus of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Harper & Row published *The Corporation Take-Over,* edited by Andrew Hacker. This book was a study of the growth in the practical power of the giant corporations to modify and control in many ways the common life of the American people, and a discussion of how these new foci of power came into being without any legal concept of their regulation for the public good. The book sought answers to the questions, as Scott Buchanan put them, "of whether the political nature of the corporation has been recognized and whether it would not be a good thing for our whole political life if the recognition were formalized in the body of corporation law." He adds: "These questions are hidden in the phrase 'private or invisible governments'."

Our present correspondent is in effect saying that it would be a "good thing" if men engaged in making the far-reaching decisions of modern technology would begin to think of themselves as individual agents of another kind of "invisible government," and to anticipate through personal responsibility the need for social control, before it becomes as nakedly manifest as it has in the case of corporate enterprise. And this, it seems to us, is practically the same as Emerson's recommendation, quoted at the outset.

The problem, here, is for all members of society to *internalize* instead of delegating to others the moral judgment of the relation between the proclaimed ends and the adopted means in all enterprises which are claimed to be in the public interest. The important consideration is that such decisions not be made as "systems" decisions. The logic behind them is a *moral* logic, not the autonomous logic of techniques, however complicated.

What a man may do, or ought to do, after he has thought about such questions, will depend upon a number of factors. He may, like Martin Luther, break with the system and strike out on an independent path of his own; or, again, he may, like Erasmus, give strong voice to criticisms within the system, attempting to strengthen its constructive side and to discourage all forms of institutional self-deception. The idea is to establish the *principle* of individual responsibility, without attempting to dictate a particular course of revolutionary or reformist action. The problem, it is plain enough, is not a technical one at all, but involves recognition of the sway of self-interest, searching decisions about the public good, and the feeling of competence each individual has to come to such decisions. No man should be pressed to reach decisions beyond his personal understanding, and there are always those who are "too humble to take responsibility for thinking." But if the need for this kind of thinking can be widely understood, as the very foundation of the good society, then a natural hierarchy of individually assumed responsibility will eventually result, with the best men doing the best thinking and being *heard* by their contemporaries. And then no man will be able to evade, before his conscience, Emerson's challenge: "Whatever he knows and thinks, whatever in his apprehension is worth doing, that let him communicate."

# REVIEW
## "LIFE AGAINST DEATH"

A STRONG recommendation from a reader invites attention to *Life Against Death* by Norman O. Brown (Wesleyan University Press), first printed in 1959 and now in its third edition. As both psychologist and anthropologist, Dr. Brown discusses the influence of Sigmund Freud, the relationship of Freudianism to existentialism and religion, against a background of anthropological insights. In respect to Freud himself, Dr. Brown contributes his own version of an awareness experienced by many writers frequently quoted in MANAS—including Erich Fromm, Abraham Maslow, Herbert Fingarette, and others. In his introduction, Dr. Brown writes:

> In the hands of Freud, psychoanalysis was a living organism in constant evolution. Since Freud's death orthodox psychoanalysis has become a closed, almost scholastic system, itself no exception to the general cultural trend toward stereotypy and sterility. Rigorous probing reveals that the entire metapsychological foundations of psychoanalysis need reinterpretation. It is well known that orthodox psychoanalysis has been unable to make much out of Freud's later concept of the death instinct; even the earlier and supposedly better-established concepts of sexuality, repression, and sublimation need reformulation.

> The hard thing is to follow Freud into that dark underworld which he explored, and stay there; and also to have the courage to let go of his hand when it becomes apparent that his pioneering map needs to be redrawn.

> Exoterically, Freud launched the psychoanalytical movement as a method of therapy controlled by professional adepts and available only to a select and wealthy few, individuals moreover whose usefulness to society was already impaired by an "abnormal" degree of frustration or mental disorder. We, however, are concerned with reshaping psychoanalysis into a wider general theory of human nature, culture, and history, to be appropriated by the consciousness of mankind as a whole as a new stage in the historical process of man's coming to know himself.

On the basis of his terminology in dealing with the biological referents of "human nature," Dr. Brown may seem to neglect considerations emphasized by the "third force" psychologists— having to do with what A. H. Maslow in his latest volume calls "man's higher nature." But when Brown states that "man the social animal is by the same token the neurotic animal," or that, "as Freud puts it, man's superiority over the other animals is his capacity for neurosis, and his capacity for neurosis is merely the obverse of his capacity for cultural development," he is simply formulating a basic postulate: human beings have not yet learned how to direct the "pleasure principle" so that it conforms to the subtle structure of their total being. But to note that all animals can be "happier" than most men is not to say that men should be animals, for this is a regression which Brown demonstrates cannot be achieved.

*Life Against Death* presents a bifocal view of religion. Like Herbert Fingarette and Erich Fromm, Dr. Brown endeavors to make explicit that which is often implicit in Freud but frequently overlooked. He writes:

> Psychoanalysis must view religion both as neurosis and as that attempt to become conscious and to cure, inside the neurosis itself, on which Freud came at the end of his life to pin his hopes for therapy. Psychoanalysis is vulgarly interpreted as dismissing religion as an erroneous system of wishful thinking. In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud does speak of religion as a "substitute-gratification"—the Freudian analogue to the Marxian formula, "opiate of the people." But according to the whole doctrine of repression, "substitute-gratifications"—a term which applies not only to poetry and religion but also to dreams and neurotic symptoms—contain truth: they are expressions, distorted by repression, of the immortal desires of the human heart. . . .

> Psychoanalysis is equipped to study the mystery of the human heart, and must recognize religion to be the heart of the mystery. But psychoanalysis can go beyond religion only if it sees itself as completing what religion tries to do, namely, make the unconscious conscious; then psychoanalysis would be the science of original sin. Psychoanalysis is in a

position to define the error in religion only after it has recognized the truth.

The psychological history of mankind, in terms of Dr. Brown's analysis, is the story of "man's desire to become other than what he is." Yet this is not to imply that to be human is to be in a "diseased" state *(cf.,* Nietzsche); rather it is inevitable for man to reach beyond any present condition of attitude or awareness, urged on by the mystical promptings of a subconscious which is *essentially* religious. And it is Brown's discussions of "mysticism" which, though brief, indicate the dimensions of his thought which we find particularly pertinent. To begin with, and at first glance surprisingly, Brown suggests that the most percipient practitioners of psychoanalysis have a clear kinship with such mystics as Jacob Boehme; both Freud and Boehme, he shows, saw beyond the traditional view of the professional philosophers, adopting the view that "the true essence of man lies in disembodied mental activity":

> The philosophers' efforts to overcome the mind-body dualism in theory are betrayed by the philosophers' own practical commitment to the pure life of the mind. The rationalism of the philosophers has only led them further astray, and the irrationality of the mystics has enabled them to hold fast to a truth for which the time was not ripe. Perhaps the time is now ripe when the mystic can break the glass through which he sees all things darkly, and the rationalist can break the glass through which he sees all things clearly, and both together can enter the kingdom of psychological reality.

> Psychoanalysis has something to learn from body mysticism, occidental and oriental, over and above the wealth of psychoanalytical insights contained in it. For these mystics take seriously, and traditional psychoanalysis does not, the possibility of human perfectibility and the hope of finding a way out of the human neurosis into that simple health that animals enjoy, but not man.

A passage from *Life Against Death* previously quoted in MANAS emphasizes Dr. Brown's expansive use of the word "Eros." But for Brown, the Dionysian ego is simply the ego freed from repression, the man who has thrown off the fetters of negation. In a discussion of "the Self and the Other: Narcissus," Brown gives further dimension to "Eros":

> Both the Platonic Eros and the Christian Agape, at their highest point of mystic exaltation, transcend their own limitations and their mutual differences. . . . And the poetic mysticism of Blake has the same intuition: "Exuberance is Beauty. . . . The cistern contains, the fountain overflows."

The overflowing of Eros is the description of man's growth toward universal empathy, and it is in this context that we find an appreciation of the qualities that have been stylized by religious formulations of sacrifice:

> What is the psychology of the need to give? We have already postulated a connection between the need to give and the principle of nonenjoyment; that is to say, the psychology of giving takes us beyond egoism, beyond the desire for individual happiness— in Freud's phrase, beyond the pleasure-principle. Archaic gift-giving (the famous potlatch is only an extreme example) is one vast refutation of the notion that the psychological motive of economic life is utilitarian egoism. Archaic man gives because he wants to lose, the psychology is not egoist but self-sacrificial. Hence the intrinsic connection with the sacred. The gods exist to receive gifts, that is to say sacrifices; the gods exist in order to structure the human need for self-sacrifice.

*Life Against Death* is not easy reading, but it is impossible not to recognize that the difficulties of assimilation are due to the care and profundity of the writing. The passages just quoted indicate that Norman Brown is a "germinal thinker."

# *COMMENTARY*
## "PEACE IS THE WAY"

SPEAKING of the contradictions in anarchist theory, the writer of this week's Frontiers observes that there are similar contradictions in the practice of all other political theories. We have not far to look for examples.

President Johnson's Johns Hopkins address was filled with the pain of contradictions. He said, on the very eve of renewed attacks on North Vietnam, that he did not find "power impressive." He added, "The guns and the bombs, the rockets and warships are all symbols of human failure . . . witness to human folly." Yet in his "prayerful judgment," he said, "they are a necessary part of the surest road to peace."

More impressive than "mighty arms," the President said appealingly, Americans find "healthy children in a classroom." Yet the arms are being used, and we are told that the decision to stop their use rests with others, not with us—and that "we must be prepared for a long continued conflict."

What is this war—for it *is* a war—about? "We fight," the President declared, "because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny.

This is what we say, and this is what a great many Americans believe. To whom are we saying it?

Obviously, we are saying it mainly in reproach to the Chinese—but they, we ought to remind ourselves, are a people who were permitted to say absolutely nothing about their "own destiny" for more than a hundred years—until their revolution. And we are saying it also to peoples everywhere who are determined to have their own sort of social revolution. If, today, these peoples seem inclined to rely upon military power and coercive spheres of influence, from whom did they learn these methods, which the "free world" now finds so threatening?

As A. J. Muste writes in *Liberation* for May:

> How shall those who, alas, set mankind so tragic an example of producing overkill, now deliver themselves and others, save by proving that we really do not regard these mighty arms as impressive? Can we not move through the mists that float before our eyes and see that the choice between "life and death, blessing and cursing," between helping Vietnamese raise harvests and blasting their harvests and forests with napalm, is to be made Now? The choice between building classrooms for healthy children and killing the children is to be made Now—to be made by all those who make war, whomever they may be, but surely to be made by President Johnson and the American people Now. The realization that war is not the road to peace must come now or it is too late. There is no way to peace; peace is the way.

Almost at the same time this material in *Liberation* reached our desk, we read a newsletter issued from the headquarters in India of the Dalai Lama, exiled spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, which tells of the ruthless practices of the occupying Chinese who over-ran Tibet six years ago. Of the fifty thousand Buddhist monks domiciled in monasteries in the environs of Shigatse, only 800 now remain—as "show-pieces," the newsletter states—while all the rest have been placed in concentration camps. Tibetan peasants are driven from their homes, contemptuously dismissed as sub-human, while their land is given to colonizing Chinese farmers.

What shall we say of the Chinese Communists who are doing these things? We cannot say less than that such behavior comes from the frenzied self-righteousness of a people in the grip of an infallible political theory and brutalized by long years of dehumanizing war and revolution. How can the Chinese be made to see the terrible contradiction in their Tibetan policy? Here is a far clearer case of the denial of self-determination, yet not even the suffering Tibetans, we suspect, would want their freedom at the price being exacted of the Vietnamese under circumstances of considerable political ambiguity.

War and violence are universal, world problems, not solutions for particular problems in particular parts of the world.

The anarchist, despite his defense of revolutionary violence, is a man who could not possibly become involved in the righteous wars of great states. He is a man, as Louis Horowitz points out, who "lives without pretense and above all without superficial reverence." His contradictions are not so important if they make it possible for him to provide "extreme criticism of the social order, and also an extreme celebration of the human being." We have full and sufficient reason for hearkening to the criticism of the anarchists, who, by the very nature of their stance, speak to issues close to the dreams of all men, and in days when the stark horror of the power of monster states—regardless of 'ism—calls into question the very sanity of the modern world.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves

### LECTURES AND MACHINES

IT is not surprising that MANAS continues to receive varied reactions to the radical revisions of higher education suggested by Donald Kingsbury, of McGill University in Canada (See MANAS, Jan. 13 and March 17). Prof. Kingsbury proposed that all lectures be abandoned, and that the factual material usually presented in lectures be made available on tapes to which students would have free access. This would give more time, Dr. Kingsbury argued, for "workshop" or "seminar" meetings of teachers and students.

The most recent comment on this plan comes from a professor at the University of Heidelberg, offering another view:

> Dr. Kingsbury's idea of eliminating lectures from the university program, it seems to me, needs further discussion. Of course, on the average, "a professor should never give a lecture unless he has something new to say or a new way to say it." But the fact that this is not often enough the case does not lead to the conclusion that the professor should be replaced by machines—although many of us would be quite happy to have more time for thinking and reading and for following up our most interesting research problems. The remedy is obviously somewhere else: a scientist ought to be allowed to become a professor only *if* and *when* he is able to grow with his subject, and to present, therefore, the material every twelve or twenty-four months with new content. During this time a good man certainly reads many new articles which contribute to the evolution of the content and often to the form of his lecture.

> Prof. Kingsbury's article could only have been written in Canada or in the U.S.A., where the "job of a professor" is still in many places and in many ways a job with lots of vacation and free time for fishing or for paid research and consulting. The two latter activities are certainly all right, if used for an improvement of knowledge and consequently of the lecture content, and even fishing may provide an excellent time for meditation on problems on the frontier of research. But that the suggestion of even further mechanization of teaching is made, and that such a deep trench is felt to exist between "schooling"

and education, shows that too few professors are true educators, *i.e.,* capable of transmitting in the spoken lecture, in the way of presentation which has to be honest and beautiful, in addition to being factual—giving not only barren "facts" but at the same time an æsthetic and ethical attitude.

> Those who really think that "facts" are so simple and technical, and that their transmission to our young people should be done by machines, should first inform themselves of the relativity of "facts," and of the role of the written and spoken word, in the following books, and then decide whether a constant personal contact with an educated personality is not better for the searching minds of our students than a teaching machine:

> E. H. Hutten, *The Language of Modern Physics,* Allen & Unwin, London, 1960.

> B. L. Whorf, *Langnage, Thought and Reality,* M.I.T. and

> G. Holton, "Presupposition in the Construction of Theories," in *Science as a Cultural Force,* Johns Hopkins Press, 1964.

> Of course, the grading and accreditation system has become somewhat rigid, especially when used mechanically, or even when put through machines. However, if handled by educators who know that very bright young people are often not "adjusted" in the dogmatic, rigid way, rigid systems can be modified or made reasonably flexible. But only independent, courageous educators with a clear understanding of the usefulness *and* the limitations of systems can do this.

> It may be added that the European system is a balance between the drastic and rather unrealistic solution proposed by Prof. Kingsbury and the rigid British-American system. But this is just added as a recommendation for comparison, which should always precede revolutionary new proposals; it is by no means intended to offer it as a better solution. Each country must find its own proper ways and means.

> Sincerely,
> G.C.A.

This communication illustrates an increasingly apparent fact—that the differences between men who teach in conventional institutions and those who are pressing for radical experiment in small colleges are reduced by the quality of their

thinking—both concerned with overcoming the limitations of educational "systems." Meanwhile, there is interesting evidence that students are asking more of education than can be provided by the "knowledge industry" approach. A column in the May 5 *Wall Street Journal,* by Alfred Malabre, Jr., notes that liberal arts enrollment is exceeding by far the enrollment in technological areas. Mr. Malabre writes:

> The amazing feature of this concern is that those expressing it often appear unaware of the swift rise in nonscience degrees. For example, Presidential aide Stevens admits "surprise" when informed of the post-Sputnik breakdown of degree-holders.

> What factors are behind the expansion of the nonscience sectors of U.S. education?

> Undergraduates show growing awareness that although the physicist or engineer initially commands more pay, the gap tends to narrow, or even may close as time passes. . . . Economic factors, however, don't entirely explain the steep rise in nonscience degrees. A major reason appears to be the spectacular increase in women on the campus in recent years. In the past decade, the annual number of women freshmen entering U.S. colleges has soared 83%, dwarfing the rise of 57% for men. An unusually high proportion of the girls study for liberal arts degrees.

> "The pressure for women's higher education seems to have become mainly a pressure for liberal arts education," says Paul L. Ward, president of Sarah Lawrence College.

> The rise of nonscience, some observers believe, also may be linked to what many educators feel is an explosion of social consciousness among undergraduates.

> "Activities such as the Peace Corps and the civil rights movement demonstrate that an ethic of social service has recently been assuming more moment in the lives of college students," declares Mervin B. Freedman, a Stanford University official. "The Puritan ethic of hard work and success in competitive struggle is on the wane."

> As a result, Mr. Freedman contends, students "are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with specialization of knowledge; they are instead seeking breadth in their studies." Thus, the educator says, "the number of undergraduates majoring in broadly defined fields such as literature, philosophy and history is increasing at a considerable rate.

Apparently, the decisions of students themselves, as distinguished from the plans of educators, are becoming a major factor in the development of the higher learning in America.

# *FRONTIERS*
## The Anarchist Vision

CONCEIVABLY, it will be more useful to the general reader to have a report of the reviewer's reactions to Vernon Richards' volume, *Errico Malatesta, His Life and Ideas* (London: Freedom Press, 1965), than any attempt to summarize and "evaluate" the contents. Malatesta (1853-1932), called the most notable anarchist agitator since Bakunin, is hardly more than a name to many readers, mainly, Mr. Richards points out, because he wrote in Italian and has been little translated into other languages. The publisher of this book, Freedom Press, is an anarchist house which is responsible for the British anarchist weekly, *Freedom,* and the monthly magazine, *Anarchy* (17a Maxwell Road, London SW6, England). The editor of *Malatesta,* Vernon Richards, has long been associated with Freedom Press and is himself an anarchist thinker.

The best thing about this book is the direct encounter it provides with revolutionary integrity. We read the writings of a man who for fifty and more years of his life worked and fought uncompromisingly for what he believed to be the conditions of human freedom. At least ten of those years he spent in prison, mostly awaiting trial on charges of subversive activity. Interestingly enough, he was usually found innocent by juries, probably because of his manifest personal integrity. Malatesta wrote extensively for the anarchist press in Italy, and the material in this book is mostly translations of articles done as propaganda in behalf of anarchism and anarchist education. He made his living as an electrician.

In 1922, Malatesta wrote for *Umanita Nova:*

> Why are we anarchists?
>
> Apart from our ideas about the political State and government, that is, on the coercive organization of society, which are our specific characteristics, and those on the best way to ensure for everybody free access to the means of production and enjoyment of the good things of life, we are anarchists because of a

feeling which is the driving force of all sincere social reformers, and without which our anarchism would be either a lie or just nonsense.

> This feeling is the love of mankind, and the fact of sharing the sufferings of others. If I . . . eat I cannot enjoy what I am eating if I think there are people dying of hunger; if I buy a toy for my child and am made happy by her pleasure, my happiness is soon embittered at seeing wide-eyed children standing by the shop window who could be made happy with a cheap toy but who cannot have it; if I am enjoying myself, my spirit is saddened as soon as I recall that there are unfortunate fellow beings languishing in jail; if I study, or do a job I enjoy doing, I feel remorse at the thought that there are so many brighter than I who are obliged to waste their lives on exhausting, often useless, or harmful tasks.

> Clearly, pure egoism; others call it altruism, call it what you like; but without it, it is not possible to be real anarchists. Intolerance of oppression, the desire to be free and to be able to develop one's personality to its full limits, is not enough to make one an anarchist. That aspiration toward unlimited freedom, if not tempered by a love of mankind and by the desire that all should enjoy equal freedom, may well create rebels who, if they are strong enough, soon become exploiters and tyrants, but never anarchists.

A substantial portion of this book is taken up with Malatesta's explanation and defense of revolutionary violence. "We want," he said in one place, "to expropriate the property-owning class, and with violence, since it is with violence that they hold on to the social wealth and use it to exploit the working class." He insists on the violence as both necessary and inevitable, yet he is equally firm in the claim that "no man, or groups of men, should be in a position to oblige others to submit their will or to exercise their influence other than through the power of reason and by example." Running through the entire book is the attempt—by no means successful, we think—to resolve this dilemma. What the reader must guard against, therefore, is the casual dismissal of anarchist ideas as "contradictory." Of course they are contradictory, but only the blind can maintain that there are not similar contradictions in the practice of all other political theories, in this matter of freedom versus order. It can be argued

that the anarchist resolution of *his* dilemma seems less plausible than other resolutions of the problem only because the anarchist is unwilling to submit even in theory to the compromises which history seems always to impose upon the execution of all utopian projects. For some reason or other, we find theoretical contradictions harder to bear than the hypocrisies of betrayal in practice.

We are not trying to justify Malatesta's argument, but rather to justify the view that his uncompromising love of justice and of human freedom cannot be brushed aside as of no consequence, because the solution he proposed is not in our view the correct one. The point that should be brought home, here, is that if the critics of anarchist theory had all been as devoted to their ideals as Malatesta was to his, and if they had all worked as hard as he did to realize them, it would almost certainly be the case that he would have found violence to be quite unnecessary as a revolutionary tool. Complacent rejection is no answer to a life like Malatesta's. The failure to *hear* the cries of the revolutionists is at bottom responsible for (*a*) the terrible settling of accounts that periodically overtakes Western civilization, and (*b*) the anguished and desperate violence which, until the time of Gandhi, has been the resort of men who come to believe, as Malatesta believed, that justice can be obtained in no other way.

Finally, while reading and sympathizing with Malatesta's expressions, and Mr. Richards' showing of their contemporary pertinence, we were haunted throughout by memory of the equally earnest expressions of men who gave their lives in public service—say, Gifford Pinchot's autobiography, *Breaking New Ground,* and John Collier's *From Every Zenith.* Pinchot founded and headed the Forest Service of the United States, and Collier, while Commissioner of the Indian Bureau, administered the Indian Reorganization Act of 1933. Anarchist doctrine, it seems to us, being in large part a passionate reaction to political crime and social indifference, has little patience with the enormous complexity of the problem of ordering a modern mass society and ministering to its needs. While the rejoining argument would naturally be that an anarchist society would decentralize radically and cut all such problems down to a manageable scale, there is a Procrustean mood in these plans which seem to rely too heavily on the *Götterdämmerung* sort of solutions. But then, this is the price we pay for the lucid purity of the anarchist ideal.