

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL

THE common tendency, given a question such as this, is to begin by compiling a list of obligations. One gets, eventually, a synthetic system of morality, more or less applicable to the human situation. Yet it is a system deduced from various pains and adversities. It is morals without first principles. The chief question—what is the individual?—has been neglected.

Dislike of this question has various grounds. It is first of all abstract. When it is asked, men hurry to find quick answers that will enable them to go to more pressing matters. Man, they say, recalling Aristotle, is a political animal. This proposition will justify a wide gamut of constructive and critical activities. Or, they say, man is a higher mammal with a history that can be understood according to the doctrines of Emergent Evolution. And they invite you to the study of the social and behavioral sciences. There are of course other claims about the nature of man which give some account of the individual, commanding various degrees of attention and assent, but it must be admitted that criticism of these claims has greater power over modern thought than their affirmative content. To find this to be the case we have only to examine the *operative* ideas of individual responsibility in modern society.

Operative ideas are the ideas men act upon in their lives. A young man, coming into maturity, has to concern himself with what he will do to make a living. Since he will probably marry, he must become a "provider." The range of responsibility covered by the word "security" extends from this idea of individual obligation. Is there anything more? Well, there is a cluster of "virtues" regarded as appropriate for the guidance and regulation of the pursuit of security. These virtues are conceived partly in response to weak intuitive feelings about goodness of life, partly as

the result of moral instruction inherited from the religious systems of the world, and partly as practical ground-rules to reduce the friction in human relations.

These ground-rules are of an ethically mixed character. In one breath you say that integrity is an independent good, and in the next you say that honesty is the best policy. And you add that the codification of the rules into law is a common-sense necessity enabling people to get along and to know what to expect from other people. Then, as relationships become complex, due to what we call "progress," there is endless improvisation in the making of laws to cover exigent "social" needs.

There are other, wider conceptions of individual responsibility which have conventional assent from most people, but which actually motivate the lives of very few. Words like "public good" and "patriotism" cover some of these conceptions. There are people who sense immeasurable human value in the feeling-tone behind the word "freedom," and spend their lives in efforts to preserve and strengthen the institutions which are supposed to maintain the open spaces for free choice in modern society. Then there are callings which have an obvious relation to the public good—education, medicine, science, public works, communications, food supply, transport, technological advance, etc. Each of these fields has an aspect which offers fulfillment to the feeling of individual responsibility, although there are other aspects which often seem to have more influence on particular decisions.

In passing, it may be observed that little or nothing is known about why people are attracted by these different conceptions of individual responsibility. Family and local cultural influences

play an obvious part in generating feelings of responsibility, but other, quite mysterious factors are also at work. Neither heredity nor environment will explain all such differences among people. The differences in felt responsibility are simply a fact of life.

We must not ignore the revolutionary feelings of responsibility. These are, so to speak, a specific response to the general failure of the society at large to exhibit sufficient responsibility for the common welfare. Revolutionary theories of responsibility are born from the intolerable pain of large numbers of people. You do not need to know what in fact an individual is, in order to know that he suffers, and to feel that he ought not to suffer. The revolutionary sense of responsibility declares: We must define the society in which individuals will not suffer, or will suffer less—and establish it by whatever means are required. Of course, the revolutionaries also have affirmative doctrine. Marx attempted to carry forward into history the broad ethical views of the Renaissance Man. It is difficult to improve upon Dwight Macdonald's brief analysis (in *The Root Is Man*) of the Marxist revolutionary movement and the contradictions which it finally disclosed:

Marxism is not simply, or even primarily, an interpretation of history. It is a guide to political action. The worst fate that can befall a philosophy of action is for it to become ambiguous. This is what happened to Marxism. Its ambiguity stems from the fact that Marx's ethical aims have not been realized—quite the contrary!—while the historical process by which he thought they would be realized has to a large extent worked out as he predicted it would. It is possible to reach opposite conclusions, on the basis of Marxism, about Soviet Russia, depending upon whether one emphasizes Marx's ethical values or his idea of the historical process. Since Marx himself made the process significant rather than the values, the Stalinists would seem to have a somewhat better claim to be the "real" Marxists than their more ethically-minded opponents. But the point is not which is "really" the Marxist view, the point is that each view may be maintained, on the basis of Marx's thought, with a good deal of reason. There is an ambiguity here, fatal to a philosophy conceived as a basis of action, which was not apparent during Marx's

lifetime, when history seemed to be going his way, but which is all too clear now that history is going contrary to socialist values.

Marx's vision of the good society was essentially the same as that of the anarchists, the Utopian socialists, and the great eighteenth-century liberals—also as that of those today whom I call "Radicals." The same theme runs through his writings from beginning to end. The *Communist Manifesto* (1848): "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." *Capital*, Vol. I (1867): "a society in which the full and free development of every individual becomes the ruling principle. . . . production by freely associated men." The *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) gives us the most explicit and famous formulation:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor, from a means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life, after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizons of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe upon its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

The political seal of this future society would be the elimination of all forms of coercion, i.e., the withering away of the State. Some critics of Marx, in particular certain anarchists whose sectarian intemperance matches that of certain Marxists, make him out an ideological apologist for the State. There is indeed a potential towards Statism in Marxism, but it lies not in Marx's values, but . . . in his "historical" method of thinking about those values. From the splendid polemic against Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* in 1844 to the Gotha Critique thirty years later, Marx consistently criticized Statism from the standpoint of human liberation. As a moralist, Marx viewed the individual as the End and society as the Means.

So much for Marx's ethical aims. I think it needs no demonstration that such a society is farther off today than it was in Marx's time.

Now what is implicit, here, and later made explicit by Macdonald, is that individual responsibility is conceived as something that must be subordinated to the historical process

(revolutionary political action), *in order that*, at some later date, the proper expression of individuality may become possible. It should be noted, also, as Macdonald points out, that the revolutionary conception of the good society did not differ materially from the ideal of other men who envisioned high social objectives. That ideal was something that would have to be created by the activities of men, and realized in the future. *Then* there would be scope for truly human activities by free individuals.

What were the means by which this ideal was to be brought about? Basically, the means were two: On the one hand was the political means, either revolutionary or reformist and legislative, through which justice would be accomplished; the other means was Science, which would liberate men from toil, poverty, disease, and provide leisure for the pursuit of civilizing and refining cultural goals.

In general, you could say that the realization of the revolutionary ideal got tangled up and lost in the political process that was supposed to achieve it. Scientific socialism did not set men free. It created a monolithic State of terroristic authority and frightening power, and if in some cases the power of the State is relaxed in favor of individual freedom, this seems more a result of less doctrinaire and opportunistic views on the part of socialist governments than it is a fulfillment of Marx's dream. At the same time, the dream of individual responsibility and fulfillment in societies which did not attempt the socialist experiment—not, at least, as a totalitarian *tour de force*—has hung up in the technological process. Hard technological doctrine in behalf of human progress has many characteristics in common with hard Stalinist doctrine. Both give only the briefest of nods to the basic ethical vision which forms their only moral ground, while concentrating on the *means* which, according to the doctrine, will some day set men free to express their "individuality."

There is a sense in which both political and technological ideas of responsibility rely for their

authority on an anticipated "scientific progress." The moral inspiration of the eighteenth century sprang from an intuitive realization of what we call the Dignity of Man, and Science was to be the means for creating the conditions under which that dignity could be fulfilled. The realization was to be *historical*—a climactic achievement of human evolution conceived as a collective enterprise in the practical application of human intelligence. The term used to suffuse all aspects of this dream with emotional excitement was Progress.

Now a principal although certainly unintended effect of all this high confidence in Progress was to reduce still further the already weakened sense of individual responsibility for creating the good life. Human energies—both individual and public—were all going into the improvement of external arrangements. The good life was something that would be secreted under conditions of the ideal circumstances. In time, any one who spoke against this view was regarded as old-fashioned, and, if he persisted, reactionary. It was easy to connect an advocacy of "personal morality" with the old promise of other-world rewards for the docile and well-behaved poor. "Social" became the magic word which bore the significant feeling-tone of right beliefs and proper definition of human obligations. And since the traditional (religious) morality had been restrictive rather than affirmative, anyway, the new spirit seemed a liberation rather than a loss. The popular (if partly erroneous) reading of Freud confirmed the general view that the individual is an off-print of his environment, product of psychological mechanisms which he had no part in devising, so that the sense of guilt was again an inheritance from the superstitious past. Obedience to the pleasure-principle became the new doctrine of individual responsibility—a view which had much in common with the enthusiasm for a scientifically arranged material Utopia. On the side of social reform and legislative change, the secret of success was held to lie in the power of organization. A great deal of moral emotion went into the slogan of the labor movement—*Organize*.

Power, on grounds such as these, became the operative synonym of the Good. The moral role of the individual was now almost entirely to function as some organizationally controlled part of a group. The *esprit de corps* of the enterprise was obtained from the idea of Progress, the philosophical sanction came from the authority of Science, and the ideal was the Brave New World of a social and technological Utopia.

These, then, are the several and combined historical reasons and forces which have opposed any serious inquiry about the responsibilities of individuals. They don't have any, except those which are determined by the prevailing idea of "social" or "national" objectives. Since the Good is a collective reality, and only a collective reality, there is no need to pursue this inquiry. We already know what the individual is—he is a part of the group. Never mind those old philosophical questions, which nobody can answer, anyhow.

Nonetheless, the old philosophical questions are being revived. They are coming to the fore once again, as the result of various historical causes and psychological confrontations. They are coming nakedly, without any of the traditional theological or metaphysical forms of address, although perceptive individuals are quick to notice the family resemblance between the stark, existential wondering of the present and the mystical explorations of the ancients within the protective matrices of the high religions. These questions are coming because the feeling of a new kind of pain is overt in the psychological life of modern man. The questions are insistent, because they express profound desperation, but they are also marked by extreme caution, and a particular kind of anxiety. The men who are asking them want no easy answers. They don't want to be persuaded of plausible solutions. They have the terrible impartiality of the slowly returning strength of men who have been betrayed, and who at last understand something of what happened to them.

What shall they do for theory, for doctrine? If they could, they would do without it entirely. They are hardly to be blamed for this. They are resolved to be very tough, not to let the logical faculties of their minds spin theories of ends which increasingly demand first questionable then immoral means. They will not go nor will they lead others into emotional swamps. Yet, at the same time, they have minds with logical faculties, and they have feelings and deep enthusiasms. It is impossible not to use these instruments of human thought and action. The ultimate question: What is truth? is before us once again.

The issue, as it presents itself, is functional to the quality of being human, not conceptual in relation to statements "about" human beings. It consists in the question of how to preserve the essential qualities of being human in the means men choose to gain their ends. This *may* mean, it is already recognized, a radical redefinition of ends. The probability of this requirement has been seen with unmistakable clarity by a number of pioneer thinkers. It is the basic conclusion of Dwight Macdonald's testament of the new radicalism, *The Root Is Man*. It is clear in the writings of all Existentialist thinkers, especially in Sartre's recent revision of Marxist thought, and is an idea which runs throughout Camus' *The Rebel*. It is the implicit view behind all the serious work being done today on the springs of "creativity" in human beings, and is an inescapable if not the central insight of the humanistic psychologists. Put simply, the proposition is: Human ends must be continuously present in all human means. The values of life are values for here and now—either that, or never.

This proposition works certain transformations in all significant human thinking. For example, it recovers for values not only the present but the past. In an important sense it brings down the curtain on what Ortega called "scientific Utopianism." The meaning of this expression becomes plain when we reflect on the habitual modern view that "real" human life did

not begin until about the time of Galileo. For if what we call "progress" is to be the result of the expansion of knowledge through application of the scientific method, then the people who lived before this method became the tool of progress were not quite human in the modern sense. They didn't have a chance for any "real" living. Their pangs, their hopes, their struggles were somehow irrelevant to the true march of mankind toward an ideal society. If we look for significance in those distant times, it is for anticipations of "science." The mood is something like the explanations given by Christian writers of occasional parallels in early pagan thought with Christian doctrine: these were prophetic suggestions of the fuller truth that was yet to come, which brought a dim, preliminary light to a darkened world not yet Christian.

But if the true qualities of human beings are separated from the claims and promises of Progress, then all those expressions of human beings which represent how a man shaped his life, and how he reacted to his times and its challenges, assume a timeless significance, regardless of the relation of these attitudes and actions to what we term Progress. Indeed, the independence of the man from the criteria of external progress may turn out to be an important index of his humanity.

It is not that this general view, which we may term *existential*, is contemptuous of all the good things and broad benefits that the idea of progress is meant to represent, but rather that the displacement of existential values by so-called "progressive" objectives is held to by a fatal aberration which progressively dehumanizes mankind.

Another consequence of this great change in the idea of being human is the restoration of the arts as vehicles of truth. In a culture dominated by the idea of scientific progress as the controlling conception of the Good, or of the means to reach it, the artist becomes a kind of decorator or embellisher of the "real" world. He is a high-class entertainer, one of the various employees of the people who are doing the real work and finding

out the real truth about what must be done next. But today, the artist is discovering himself and being discovered by others as a kind of secular priest. He has some kind of a grip on existential reality. He knows something all men are beginning to hunger to know. He has found a way to get out of the trap of the historical process and of the vulgarized conception of Progress.

And so the question arises: What shall we read? The latest Smithsonian Institution Report or a new anthology of verse? A paper on peacetime applications of nuclear energy or the latest book by Viktor Frankl? We can read both of course, and many people will, but the haunting question remains: In what kind of reading should a man place his faith—in texts where everything is nailed down as sure-thing facts, or the books which claim that nothing humanly worth knowing can be nailed down, and which raise multiplying questions?

What about a nice, judicious mixture prepared for us by a Wisdom-of-the-Month jury of savants who understand such matters? It won't work, of course. You read facts as spectator and consumer, and you read perceptive wonderings about value as individual decision-maker and hungering heart. The task of combining fact and value is a private one. It is the great alchemical experiment each man must perform for himself. Reconciling ourselves to the obligation and necessity of this experiment is the great, do-it-yourself project of the age. Teachers are people who undertake to perform some aspect of the experiment in public, hoping that their efforts will infect others with a desire to try the same thing. But making the balance of fact and value is an individual creative act. It cannot be done by one human being for another. This is the chief responsibility of the individual, and from it all his other responsibilities grow.

## *REVIEW*

### **"STREETCORNER RESEARCH"**

THIS interesting volume by Ralph Schwitzgebel, subtitled "An Experimental Approach to the Juvenile Delinquent" (Harvard University Press, 1964), is primarily the account of one psychologist's success in enlisting the help of delinquents in gathering documentary material. He began by hiring juveniles with reform school or prison records to describe their own lives—including both the environmental circumstances and their characteristic attitudes. By this means Mr. Schwitzgebel introduced his "employees" to the notion of dispassionate inquiry. In some cases a marked change of attitude could be immediately noted; a matter-of-fact breaching of the typical wall between the world of the youth and the world of respectable adult authority had occurred.

Mr. Schwitzgebel acknowledges in his preface his debt to the work of Dr. C. W. Slack, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology at Harvard. Dr. Slack had often expressed himself with great conviction to the effect that delinquents might be powerfully influenced by the simple expedient of paying them for their cooperation. This uncomplicated viewpoint may be compared to a work by Herbert Streaun, produced in 1959, "The Use of the Patient as Consultant." Streaun had demonstrated that many "unreachable" youthful patients are willing to lower the barriers to communication when their own advice and opinions are asked regarding "what would be good for them." The various MANAS discussions of Synanon Foundation have called attention to the implications of Synanon's dramatic showing—that a knowledgeable addict seeking reorientation can be a better therapist for other addicts than a remote authority possessing an impressive reputation in the psychological sciences. The question posed by this discovery is a simple one: Who is the best qualified psychologist?

It is particularly interesting to note Mr. Schwitzgebel's observations concerning the

possibility of classifying delinquents according to individual philosophy. The founders of Streetcorner Research (a name suggested by the boys themselves) became convinced that all mentally alert youngsters do choose and formulate—however fragmentarily—the values their actions are intended to express:

It is indeed surprising that so many well organized delinquency programs fail to consider even briefly the philosophical rationale for their existence. It is perhaps for this reason that they often fail to design genuinely meaningful experiments.

Psychology, in its eagerness to establish itself as a discipline separate from philosophy, was almost "rebellious" in its claim to operate independently of ethical and moral issues. The evidence to the contrary, that therapists do indeed change their patients' ethical values in the direction of their own values, although reluctantly admitted by some therapists, is now quite clear (Murray, 1956; Frank, 1961; Reid, 1962). The patient seen by a Freudian analyst is very likely to acquire a Freudian view of the world; a client seen by a Rogerian counselor is likely to gain a Rogerian perspective (De Grazia, 1962). The commitment of therapists to particular ethical values may be illustrated by the goal of therapy as set forth by Harold Kelman, Dean of the American Institute of Psychoanalysis (1962, p.124): "The main aim of future therapy may well be to promote wider and deeper here-now experiencing, guided by a theory of man which makes more possible the emergence of human spontaneity which is the charm of the child, the morality of a saint, the rigor of a scholar, the intuition of an artist and the maturity of a child-like adult." The moral imperatives here are clear, and the many philosophical issues which might be raised are apparent.

The theoretical orientation of our staff involves both an examination of the psychological processes of behavior change in an individual case and at the same time a consideration of the person's philosophical perspectives. In a sense, both process and content are simultaneously considered. We are finding it increasingly valuable to classify delinquents along a philosophical dimension as well as a psychological dimension as primarily concerned about immediate physical pleasure (hedonism), or power over others (Chamberlain), or independence from social values (Nietzsche), or the absurdity of existence (nihilism).

A particularly impressive case study—which proved surprising to the researchers—was provided by a twenty-nine-year-old inmate of a corrective institution. This man, convicted of three armed robberies and numerous other offenses, had been prompted, in part, by a well formulated doctrine supporting his deliberate hostility toward the social *status quo*. A reader of Nietzsche and Machiavelli, he chose from these sources the ingredients of a philosophy to justify his career. Explaining his views, he said:

As with the medieval serfs, does the same hold true today. With the most iron determination on our part and no shrinking back from anything, everyone amongst us must hold the view that we (the true philosophers) have been determined to fight the Christian religion to its very death—a life and death struggle. A long period of religion has not done us any good. With a manly bearing, we are the better men. On the opposite side, they are the weaker . . . In starting and waging campaigns it is not right that matters, but success. Close your hearts to pity! Act brutally! Two billion people must obtain what is their right. The stronger man is right. Be harsh and remorseless! Be steeled against all signs of compassion! Whoever has pondered over this world order knows that its meaning lies in the success of the best by means of force.

The psychologist, of course, sees many other dimensions in Machiavelli and Nietzsche—in the latter some powerful affirmations of the need for non-egocentric "self-actualization." An increasing number of philosophically inclined men in psychology seek to articulate the differences between egocentrism and the "spiritual" dimensions of life. As Erich Fromm writes in his latest book, *The Heart of Man*:

The question whether man is wolf or sheep is only a special formulation of a question which, in its wider and more general aspects, has been one of the most basic problems of Western theological and philosophical thought: Is man basically evil and corrupt, or is he basically good and perfectible?

We cannot expect that the teaching of humanist philosophy and anthropology will cause all philosophical and religious differences to disappear. We could not even want this, since the establishment of one system claiming to be the "orthodox" one

might lead to another source of narcissistic regression. But even allowing for all existing differences, there is a common humanist creed and experience. The creed is that each individual carries all of humanity within himself, that the "human condition" is one and the same for all men, in spite of unavoidable differences in intelligence, talents, height, and color. This humanist experience consists in feeling that nothing human is alien to one, that "I am you," that one can understand another human being because both share the same elements of human existence. This humanist experience is fully possible only if we enlarge our sphere of awareness. Our own awareness is usually confined to what the society of which we are members permits us to be aware. Those human experiences which do not fit into this picture are repressed. Hence our consciousness represents mainly our own society and culture, while our unconscious represents the universal man in each of us. The broadening of self-awareness, transcending consciousness and illuminating the sphere of the social unconscious, will enable man to experience in himself all of humanity; he will experience the fact that he is a sinner and a saint, a child and an adult, a sane and an insane person, a man of the past and one of the future—that he carries within himself that which mankind has been and that which it will be.

A true renaissance of our humanist tradition undertaken by all religious, political, and philosophical systems claiming to represent humanism would, I believe, result in considerable progress toward the most important "new frontier" that exists today—man's development into a completely human being.

The point is that if we minimize the capacity of juvenile delinquents and other offenders to philosophize, however badly, we neglect the possibility that many of them may respond to the opportunity for refining and elevating their present personal creeds. Such projects as those undertaken by the staff of "Streetcorner Research," or by people motivated by the conviction that the patient can become a "consultant" in his own therapy, break down some barriers and may encourage embryonic philosophical communication.

## *COMMENTARY*

### A QUESTION OF METHOD

BECAUSE so much of human effort, these days, goes into struggles against circumstantial denials of freedom and institutional discouragements to individual decision, repetition of the injunction to "think for oneself" sometimes makes it sound like a rubricized panacea. It may indeed be a panacea, but it is not an easy one to apply. Psychological and moral independence is not in circumstances at all, although some circumstances are more hospitable to it than others. No individual who has fought his way to some personal self-reliance makes the mistake of over-simplifying the project.

Human beings are born into psycho-philosophical molds as well as socio-economic situations. The determinisms of mind and feelings are not less constraining than external influences, and their operation is subtler by far. It is as much of a temptation to seek the One True Faith as it is to resolve to settle all problems with the One True Social System.

The simplest way of meeting this in intellectual terms is to say: Good; that means we need an Open Faith, just as we need an Open Society. But what is an "open" faith?

We soon sense the necessity to go beyond grandiloquent first principles. The complexities in education and social relationships, when we set out to preserve openness of mind, inevitably call for the development of techniques which, if not closely watched, turn out to suppress the ideal. Sometimes a whole generation goes by before the loss is discovered. You have only to read critical histories of education, or philosophy, or social theory, to recognize this. So, when you talk about "freedom," a protective instinct makes you wary of too much definition or detailed plans. The illustrative anecdote, the limited example, the instructive case history seem more useful, less dangerous, than systematic procedures which abstract and then synthesize a "program."

The contest, basically, is between our moral impatience and our integrity of mind. Resolution lies in that intangible essence which the ancients, and now some moderns, speak of as self-knowledge. Yet self-knowledge is probably the most difficult thing in the world to conceptualize. Hence the endless resort to paradox. Hence the value of the non-definitive but suggestive allusion, the poetic hint. Plotinus, in his time, probably did as well as anyone in offering an intellectually structured guide, while the evocations of great scriptures give strange promise of a diamond-hard, rectilinear course behind the obscure curves and gracious evolutions of high religious tradition.

This is the area, one suspects, where there is inseparable identity between knowing and doing—which can be mapped only in an idiom that is both universal and unique. The communicable approaches, therefore, would be marked by intuitively recognizable degrees of participation in the ideal—and doubtless ineffable—Truth.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

### CONSIDERATIONS ON DELINQUENCY

[These notes concerning "maladjusted" children and young people are by a teacher and social worker with many years of experience in nursery and special school education. One reason for the discrepancy between the high hopes which laymen place in psychotherapy and the results of applying therapy to children in need of help is, perhaps, more than circumstantial. Selma Fraiberg, in *The Magic Years*, speaks of a societal "value vacuum" in her attempt to account for the malaise suffered by children who have not had sufficient identification with any adult to provide the ground for a "normal" neurosis: "We have more reason to fear the hollow man than the poor neurotic who is tormented by his own conscience. As long as man is capable of moral conflicts—even if they lead to neurosis—there is hope for him. But what shall we do with a man who has no attachments? Who can breathe humanity into his emptiness? It can be argued that the real threat to humanity does not lie in neurosis but in the disease of the ego, the diseases of isolation, detachment and emotional sterility." The bearing of this comment on what follows will soon become apparent.]

THE number of children in need of psychotherapy is said to be alarmingly high and many of them are from middle and high income families. On a television program for the Child Guidance Foundation, Robert Young said that it is estimated that more than a million American children are emotionally ill. Reliable statistics are difficult to obtain, but popular knowledge among public school teachers, police officers, the juvenile court officials, and newspapermen confirms a number that is alarming. Neurosis and delinquency are a national problem not only in America but in other countries.

During the 1950's it was hopefully felt that psychotherapy with its educational insights could give us the answers to this problem. Large sums of money were spent on research and treatment. It was soon found that treatment is inevitably slow and expensive; research even more so. At a cost of \$200,000 a study of eight delinquent boys

showed that their early home life was the cause of their delinquency. At a cost of over one million dollars society learned that being held by mother is a boon which helps little babies to grow into healthy children, judging by studies made on monkeys. The National Institute of Mental Health controls the spending of huge Federal funds for research on delinquency and neurosis. To date, the combined treatment efforts of all governmental and private agencies has not even been a finger in the dyke against mounting waves of misbehaving children.

Psychoanalysis, as a mode of treatment of delinquency and neurosis, enjoys a prestige that has attracted a large following of persons able to pay for treatment. But wishful thinking on the part of American laymen that psychiatry can be a cure for delinquency is greater than among the therapists. For one thing the therapists know that any major city has more persons needing treatment than could be cared for by all the psychiatrists in the entire country. Additional therapists cannot be trained in time to catch up with the rising rates of crime and neurosis.

Psychiatrists and the non-medically trained psychoanalysts, as consultants to child welfare agencies, extend their services to large groups. Psychiatric social work, which has developed into a reputable profession, uses psychiatric consultant leadership. Lack of enough members of this new profession prevents services from being extended to all in need. The expense of this service is high. Treatment of an adolescent costs over \$600 per month in the San Francisco Protestant Orphanage and in other residential centers. Where is the money to come from for extending such services? Who is to be chosen for this special treatment? There is also the problem of getting children and parents to agree to taking treatment. Some persons consider psychiatric treatment to be punishment.

Detection of personality traits that lead to delinquency should be made as early as possible, preferably before the child enters kindergarten.

Nursery schools are places where neurosis can be detected quite early, and can also be "treated" through group play. But specialists attached to the schools can not give enough treatment to assure very spectacular results. One reason is that age two is late for treating serious emotional disturbance due to poor care in the first two years of life. Another is that good teachers—the ones who function well with children—are separated from the therapists attached to the school by a wide status gap, not easily bridged. Those who care for the children daily are likely to have difficulty absorbing the theories of those who prescribe treatment. This is a basic problem in all child-care—there are those who theoretically know best how it should be done, and there are others who do the actual work. Therapy via nursery schools, while highly desirable, is not easy to provide.

Few colleges train for nursery education, as women entering education prefer the superior status and pay of the secondary and elementary schools. The nursery school movement is split into many factions, based on educational theories, and only the child-care-center nursery school now gets tax money in substantial amounts.

Extension of public school services for treatment of delinquents and predelinquents raises the question of school's primary function. The schools are hard pressed to do their basic minimum job, and they do not want the job of treatment or prevention of delinquency, though they are forced to try to educate delinquents until they can be expelled from school. Furthermore, age 6 is too late to "cure" many kinds of neurosis and delinquency in the school setting.

As for treatment centers attached to courts, they are set up to deal only with the seriously disturbed or delinquent child over whom they have custody. Meanwhile, institutions are overcrowded, paroles are unwisely granted to make space for those waiting on court order to get in. California is building two 90 million dollar

centers to house juvenile delinquents committed by the courts.

Children can be placed in private boarding homes when in need of protective care away from home situations that are destructive. These foster homes can be licensed at reasonable cost, but adequate supervision of them is expensive. After the experience of the last ten years, during which time foster-home care has been the favored solution of child welfare agencies, it appears that boarding-home care is rarely satisfactory for disturbed children, and often contributes to further deterioration of the character of the foster child.

Effort is now being made by some social agencies to develop foster care in homes where the foster mother is to be given a professional status by some kind of label that distinguishes her from women who normally board children in their homes. The new foster mother is to be paid a salary for her work, comparable to that she might get by working outside the home. This plan would no doubt produce thousands of applicants: how many would be suitable for doing a constructive job remains to be seen. These homes are to be supervised by case workers and so the cost of such care will be very high.

A plan to have predelinquent children cared for in resident centers where the main "therapy" is benevolent care rather than individual psychotherapy, is not on the list of approved plans, except for the youth conservation corps idea, which is not applicable to young children. However, a new kind of 24-hour group care of children is now being successfully demonstrated in the Soviet Union and in Israel, but not in America.

Neurosis of children over age 4 is a most serious problem facing the U.S.A. today. Dr. Lawrence Kubie, an outstanding psychiatrist, says that adults must rid themselves of the "self-deluding pretense that any economic system (whether capitalist or socialist) has solved these problems or that religious influences are solving them." (*Today's Child*, March, 1963.) To think that the current volume of neurosis and

delinquency is only a product of the cold war is erroneous. The cold war is in part due to the emotional delinquencies in the generations that let it come to pass. Psychoanalysis has documented the evidence that delinquency always stems from experiences in the earliest years of life, when children are under the care of their parents.

Should concerted efforts for world disarmament eventually end the cold war, plans for conversion of industry from production for war to production for peace could be worked out. A conversion of the delinquents' behavior into cooperative, constructive channels, however, would be much more difficult. What can be called superficially grounded delinquency due to lack of jobs could be diminished, but the deeply-set patterns of neurotic delinquency stemming from trauma in childhood will not disappear with changed economic conditions; such juveniles need special treatment.

Powerful elements in society preserve the authoritarian family structure, the very institution responsible for neurosis and delinquency, whether or not the family is "broken." Punishment is also administered by teachers who fail to enjoy their work and have too many failing pupils. But the real responsibility falls on all of us because of our failure to see that the adult-child battle in the home, under "adjustment" to status quo, child-rearing *mores*, is another manifestation of the same stasis which allows war to persist as the main function of government.

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San Francisco

## *FRONTIERS*

### The Human Presence

FOR all the impersonal evils in the world—and worse, the sententious hypocrisies which insist that these evils are necessary (it is plain, for example, that defenders of American policy in Vietnam are not concerned at all with the rights or wishes of the Vietnamese people, but only with self-interested vindication of the stance of the United States)—things are happening, today, in which we may find encouragement. It is clear, for one thing, that we know better. A substantial case can be made for the view that war is a nervous habit of modern nations—one they can't seem to break. And you could say that the apparatus by which wars are carried on is the least susceptible of all to the influence of moral intelligence. So it is not unreasonable to propose that the great, sprawling identity we name a nation can "know better," even when it is at its very worst.

If this is called cold comfort, it can be replied that cold comfort is better than none. A scintilla of evidence that the country knows better about Vietnam is provided in Lawrence Lipton's column in the Los Angeles *Free Press* for Sept. 3, in which he says:

. . . keep your eye on the peace moves that are now being made by the Administration in secret. The Administration is embarrassed by the widespread anti-war demonstrations, especially by draft-age youngsters, and the Pentagon is enraged—if anything so impersonal and computerized as the Pentagon can be enraged. . . .

Another sign that we "know better" is the founding a little over a year ago by Art Kunkin, and the continued survival, of the *Free Press* itself, a weekly newspaper which was conceived after the model of New York's (Greenwich) *Village Voice*. While we don't know much about the circulation of the *Free Press*—except that it must be growing—it can be said that no other paper in the area gave comparable coverage to the facts and meanings of the recent riots in the Watts section of Los Angeles. The *Free Press* reader

had some chance of understanding what really happened, with a little insight into why it happened. (*Free Press* subscription, \$5.00; address, 8226 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles 46.)

There are other, perhaps deeper, reasons for encouragement in a new kind of moral consensus among the literate, thoughtful, and concerned. Coming over such people is a full realization of the tragic failure of Western civilization to live up to its proclaimed ideals, together with perception that the changes needed to correct this situation must affect human attitudes in the depths of their origins, rather than tinker with external arrangements. At the same time, no one can see this need without crying out for better external arrangements, also. But the important thing is the recognition that no "arrangements" of lasting value can be made without basic changes in the attitudes of man toward man. This is the implicit meaning of Bayard Rustin's address last March at the Consultation of religious leaders, sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, concerned with Peace on Earth and the Moral Implications of Technology. At the conclusion of his talk, he said:

in times of confusion we have got to face the fact that that which is practical—realpolitik—has never worked, and that it is precisely in these periods where the historical concomitants are building so rapidly that that which appears to be utopian is in fact *the* way out. The essential political fact of our time is the oneness of man, and any practical realpolitik method of defending oneself which violates that is the most unreal thing on earth. . . . The great contribution of the Negro people in this country—and I am not fooled—I know that most of them are in nonviolence for reasons far removed from why [Martin Luther] King and I are in it—they are in it because they see this as the only practicable way; it is strategic nonviolence. Nevertheless, even here the moral impact is magnificent.

But every project we have ever set up we have set up to reveal truth, not to win minor victories but to know, as Dr. King must know today, that a funeral procession goes on even though the state police are standing by with the objective of making if they can a

riot out of the situation. Knowing one may lose, one must still proceed, and the reason one must proceed, even though one has to set up a strategy which may be 'no win,' is precisely that no other possibility exists, except to develop tactics of nonviolence. But they must be associated with and dedicated to concrete and specific efforts to bring justice, because peace proceeds not from a vacuum, or not merely from prayer or not merely from the attitudes of humans to be decent people, but from the reflections of these attitudes built firmly into institutions which eternally broaden not the cycle of revenge but the area of justice.

There is a sense in which this is the age of the homecoming of the "spiritually displaced." What we are able to see today may be only the beginning, but all great changes must have beginnings, and this one has great promise. Speaking as such a person, Howard B. Radest, executive director of the American Humanist Union, said in a recent address:

The anarchic mood and the anarchic event seems the rule. Our experience is filled with the wild and the vicious. It is, to my mind, no accident, therefore, that politics, economics, and culture in our day are accented by the un-free, by slavery. The basic movements of our time are totalitarian movements. And we run to embrace them, putting aside our burden and gladly taking our chains which are also our defense.

Before the wild anarchy of twentieth-century life, the faith and hope of yesterday are indeed helpless. Theirs is a pastoral, pre-scientific tongue addressed to a small-scale universe and confident of an ordered, directed cosmos. In a deep—and regrettable—sense, they are discredited by history, and with them faith and hope are discredited in the eyes of many. Consider: we are a Christian-Jewish humanistic civilization . . . and it was we who engaged in genocide and who now are about to rationalize humanicide . . . it was we who invented and justified total war. It is our civilization (not some distant barbarism) that boasts the ability to twist and destroy the inside of a man's mind—we, the inheritors of yesterday's faith and hope. The mind must stumble before this prospect, this massive contradiction between pretension and action, this vast space between apparent moral judgment and event. . . . Man is trying to run away from responsibility, from his fellow man, from himself. Our literature and art are filled with the frenzied, diseased alcoholism of

escape. We have no trust and no loyalty. We become suspicious, fearful, cowardly. Left uncured and continued too long, this makes us incapable of acting humanly and humanely. Thus the need in all aspects of our being.

What need is this? For faith and hope, Mr. Radest answers, and for him this means seeking in the roots of our common humanity for commitment to the good and to one another.

Beneath the shell of our slick, chromium-plated and death-dealing civilization there are many men who speak this unambiguous language of non-sectarian aspiration. To hear them, however, you have to seek them out. To find hope for oneself, it is necessary to admit that great changes, great growths, begin with tiny germ cells. And faith is found and made strong by becoming such a cell in the embryo of the future. There are dozens of papers, hundreds of groups, and countless individuals who cherish such dreams and, are finding strength in one another from realizing that they are not alone.