

POLITICS, THE STATE, AND FREE MEN

IT is often maintained in these pages that the troubles of modern man are largely due to the preoccupation with politics—to the idea that the only "real" solutions are political solutions. It has been argued that this reliance on politics leads us into all sorts of self-defeating projects, since the tools of politics are not the tools we need to construct the kind of life, kind of world, that we want. It has been urged that the filling of the air with the sounds of political and ideological debate has made men deaf to the appeals of deeper longings. We have rejected, in principle and detail, the Aristotelian dictum that the obligations imposed by the State exhaust the nature of man.

Various observers have made such comments, but it is as though they had been muttering ancient platitudes. It is as though they had been proposing regular attendance at the place of worship (church, temple, mosque) of one's choice. It is as though these critics had been depositing bad quarters in Samuel Butler's Erewhonian Musical Banks. Obviously, something else should be tried.

What, then, are the issues, the values, of politics? What we believe about political good is no secret. Men want to be free. And the meaning of freedom does not require extended scholastic debate. Freedom means access to a range of alternative decisions which is limited by natural facts, not by ideological fiat. We don't mind accommodation to the laws of nature; you plant in the spring, not the fall; you heat your house—winter weather is not a threat to freedom. What we reject and resist is the idea of conforming to patterns of decision which seem to us to falsify the facts and necessities of existence in the world. Our political differences arise from differing readings of these facts and necessities.

Why do we value freedom? We value it because it enables us to use our time and strength for making something good. The good that hungry people want to make is food. The good that oppressed and exploited people want to make is revolution. The good that wise people want to make is wisdom. What do these various goods have in common? They have in common only the fact that a large part of their goodness, if not all of it, comes from its creation by men by themselves, through acts of freedom.

So freedom, we see, is a self-existent good. It is not derivative. It is *the* methodological principle of the fulfilled human life. You do not "explain" freedom, but use it to explain other goals or ends. You might, by metaphysical analysis, be able to throw further light on the meaning of freedom, but then you would have to make philosophical postulates which are not directly relevant in political inquiry, and the discussion might get lost. Even if we must sooner or later reach those postulates, metaphysical speculation may not be the best approach.

Since freedom is valued by men for widely differing ends—food, land, technological development, education, better schools, philosophic truth—depending upon their present situation, opportunities, deprivations, and hungers, serious political theory almost always rises to a fairly high level of generalization. It has to do this to reach a common denominator of ends. You can't have a social compact without a common denominator of ends.

The common denominator may have precise definition, or it may be extremely vague. In the United States, our common denominator is the right of all men to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In earlier, theocratic societies, the common denominator was access to the means of

salvation, or translation to the spiritual life. In the Marxist synthesis, it is a promise of the condition that will prevail after the State "withers away." The dictatorship of the proletariat is admittedly a transition phase of the Marxist program, and if the revolution has become stalled in the status of a power state, this is a separate problem. The common denominator is still a beckoning goal of stateless freedom.

The common denominator is the principle of integration for the political society. It is the assumption from which grow all the other assumptions of a political system. The hierarchy of all lesser and instrumental political ends is justified by reference to this assumption. Politics is rational in virtue of the logic of these relationships. When people can no longer *feel* the importance of the primary assumption, and therefore no longer *understand* the logic of these relationships, the underlying organicism of the social community has broken down, and its unity is now maintained only by the force of inertia and the compulsions of fear.

Working political systems, then, bog down when their rationale is no longer intuitively grasped by the people.

Take the political system of the United States. There are several levels of rationale back of the American system. There is Tom Paine's vision of a society intended to be a matrix of the full spectrum of human growth, a light and an example to all the world. Until recently, many Americans felt this vision in their hearts. There is the Crèvecoeur vision of "this American, this new man," so clearly spelled out and illuminated by Arthur M. Schlesinger in his 1942 address before the American Historical Association. (Printed in the *American Historical Review*, 48, 225-44.) As he put it:

In contrast to Europe, America has practically no misers and one consequence of the winning of Independence was the abolition of primogeniture and entail. Harriet Martineau was among those who concluded that "the eager pursuit of wealth does not

necessarily indicate a love of wealth for its own sake." The fact is that, for a people who recalled how hungry and ill-clad their ancestors had been through the centuries in the Old World, the chance to make money was like the sunlight at the end of a tunnel. It was the means of living a life of human dignity. In other words, for the great majority of Americans it was a symbol of idealism rather than materialism. Hence "this new man" had an instinctive sympathy for the underdog, and even persons of moderate wealth gratefully shared it with the less fortunate, helping to endow charities, schools, hospitals and art galleries and providing the wherewithal to nourish movements for humanitarian reform which might otherwise have died a-borning.

"Our ancestors," said James Russell Lowell, "sought a new country. What they found was a new condition of mind." Americans join in the belief that "they should enjoy freedom *from* government as well as freedom *under* government." Thoreau could think of no reason why a citizen should "ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator."

There is Walt Whitman's vision of America in "Democratic Vistas," and a quality of political philosophy in the speeches of Abraham Lincoln that can still bring a swelling to the throats of the American people.

Of late, the dominant rationale of the American political system has been undergoing some changes. There are plenty of technical reasons for these changes—the general prosperity of the nation, in contrast to the rest of the world; the complexity of the social and political relationships introduced by industrial progress; the economic power of the United States as a nation among other nations; the exhaustion of the Frontier and the filling up of the open spaces with multiplying population. All these phenomena of what we call the "mass society" are having their effect; but most of all, the rationale of our political system is being changed by the slowly prevailing concept of the United States as a military entity which must make its identity felt through its capacity to make other people *fear*. This last

factor accomplishes breakdown rather than change in our political rationale. We know perfectly well that nuclear war can not by the wildest stretch of the imagination contribute to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The American dream is stultified by this contradiction. Not the vision of a common denominator, but anger and fear, are the fuel of the public spirit, these days. Little men with only the capital of nostalgia to draw upon are posing as leaders. It is a time of clutching at straws.

Now we are saying, like all the others, that we'll be able to "pursue happiness" *after* we have put down the bad people in the world. Our common denominator has moved into the Greek Kalends, like the dreamy situation that will exist for good Communists after the state has "withered away." We have a "tomorrow" theory of the good life. Our political rationale no longer relates to what we want to use our freedom for. And since our material circumstances have radically changed, the challenges which satisfied our forefathers and gave them the feeling of being "free" have grown dull and uninteresting.

There is only one way to improve this situation. We need a new common denominator, or at least a better understanding of the old one.

Let us look some more at the idea of a common denominator. First of all, it has to be inclusive enough to apply to many different sorts of people and generalized enough to apply to many kinds of circumstances. The revolutionary denominator of political freedom is all right until after the revolution; but then you need a general theory of what freedom is for. Suppose it is an economic theory: you plan to make everybody healthy and well fed. This way you raise up a nation of acquisitive people who soon start fighting among themselves and who develop strange diseases from being too well fed. So you put in a clause about the search for truth or the pursuit of happiness or the quest for maturity.

But since truth and happiness and maturity are not political goods, but philosophic goods,

you can't implement them by political means. So you declare these ends and then leave them strictly alone. You get on to the practical preliminaries for which the political means are intended. In short, you get preoccupied with politics. You begin to define as real and good and true all the things you think can be accomplished with politics. You make the same fatal assumption that the Communists made: you set out to create by political means "a social order where the strife of class and race shall be no more, and where truth, goodness and beauty shall be the share of all." It won't work; not by political means. As Karl Popper has said:

. . . it must be one of the first principles of rational politics that *we cannot make heaven on earth*. The development of communism illustrates the terrible danger of the attempt. It has often been tried, but it has always led to the establishment of something much more like hell.

This, we might argue, is what must happen to any society which comes to rely almost wholly on political means to the good.

Well, if total reliance on politics leads to disaster, what is the proper use of the political means? For one answer to this question, we turn to a recent (Nov. 24, KPFK) broadcast by Hallock Hoffman, titled "The State as Teacher." The first duty of government, Mr. Hoffman said, is "to teach the people the substance of their common good." He continued:

The law, as all the classical scholars knew, is not merely an instrument to restrain those who would injure persons or property, although that is how most Americans seem to regard it. Law is a teacher. It is through law that we come to understand the common good; it is through law that we learn how to cooperate in our common interests.

I do not refer in calling law a teacher merely to the learning that takes place when, through the deliberations of our state legislature and its committees, we come to be informed about matters of general concern. Of course we learn, even in the acts necessary to pass the state budget, about the work of government and the needs of the people. But I mean more.

Gilson gives a good example. One hundred years ago it was common, and generally regarded as right, that employers hired children of nine or ten to work twelve to sixteen hours a day in their factories mines and mills. Through a process that involved much agitation and controversy, we as a people finally came to realize that child labor was harmful to us, and finally, over the resistance of many men who sincerely believed that they were speaking for the cause of justice, we enacted the laws that now make it a crime to employ children. The law on the books represents the developing conscience of the community. The law, first registering the changing consensus of the community and then becoming the teacher of succeeding generations, has taught us in the last hundred years that slavery is wrong, that women ought to be given the vote, that the graduated income tax is a social good, that workers have an inherent right to organize to protect their own interests, and many other great lessons. . . . The state is a teacher because it is the primary source of law. It is a teacher through its influence on public education, for it largely determines the substance of the courses that are taught and the text-books that are used. It is a teacher through example because, as the largest business and largest employer and largest resource manager it sets the minimum standards of efficiency and intelligence and fairness for the lesser associations within the state.

These are the good things the state or the government has taught, according to Mr. Hoffman. But, he says, it teaches bad lessons, too:

I have only to list the problems to show why I can charge governmental failure, and, behind that, the failure of the people. Smog, unemployment, public transportation, the conservation of the wilderness areas, the slums, the rising rate of juvenile delinquency, urban sprawl, the population explosion—all these names of problems call to mind the social consequences of refusing to think ahead, to plan for the future, and to take intelligent public action in time to prevent public suffering.

Mr. Hoffman continues the list of political failures in California, coming to this conclusion:

The state government in one way or another thus indirectly subsidizes most of the crime, stupidity, irrelevance and complication that takes place within the state. It never achieves this result intentionally, and it seeks in many ways to overcome the results

that it has participated in bringing about. It is trapped, like all the rest of us, in outworn ideas of what is going on and what will happen next. Like all the rest of us it ought to be thinking of the future and making plans to avoid the troubles it is heading for. Like all the rest of us, it is otherwise engaged.

Mr. Hoffman's final appeal:

The state government serves our present needs, as adequately as we, as citizens, will let it. But it does not teach us what we ought to know about the age we live in, and so, in this respect, it serves us badly. It will not change its attitude until we change our own. If even a few of us were to demand of our government that it supply us with the information and intelligence to permit us to achieve a political community dedicated to freedom and justice, it would reorganize itself to try to do so. I think it is time to begin.

In essence, what Mr. Hoffman seems to be saying here is that the law, the government, the political means, cannot be any better than "the changing consensus of the community." We look to the law, but the law, in effect, looks to us. The inadequacies of the law, of the government, are the inadequacies of the consensus of the community, generalized and raised to political authority, and on occasion rendered mindless. Mr. Hoffman supplies the illustration:

One quick example will have to serve for many. We hear a great deal in Los Angeles County about a potential water shortage. But why will there be a water shortage, in 1980, or 2000, or whenever it is supposed to come? Because, we are always told, by then the population of Los Angeles County will be nine million, or thirteen million. But why will the population be so large, when other areas of the state will still—at that same time—be virtually empty? The answer is that nothing can be done about the people who will be born here, and the other millions who will move in from elsewhere.

But something *is* being done about the population. It is *being encouraged* to come. The tax rates and the zoning laws and the programs for public transportation and the schemes for getting rich in real estate and all the rest are social enterprises that beg people and pay people to crowd into Los Angeles County. There is no reason why a maximum population density cannot be established—we do it all the time with zoning laws. There is no reason why

we could not change the tax rates to encourage people to settle elsewhere—the present tax rates have the effect of making them rush into the city, where the cost of public services goes up and must be met by state grants.

But this, people may say, *is* a political issue. We say it is *not* a political issue, because it involves matters which no one can argue and win an election with. These issues raise the question of basic values in human life. They have to do with the Pursuit of Happiness. The State cannot tell us what is happiness, nor how to get it. The State will not undeceive us of our illusions. All that the State can do is give our illusions the authority of law and thus impose upon us the endless problems which arise from the resulting conflicts.

How, then, can we hope for the State "to teach the people the substance of their common good"? If the State has wisdom, it is only the wisdom of the past. It is like one of those big computing machines that give out what you put into them. The wisdom of the State is silent on how to meet new needs, how to adapt to change, how to reduce its function or to lop off branches of State activity which are no longer needed and which get in the way.

The State is a technique for getting things done. It does not discriminate. It may, if men give the State its head, get horrible things done. It has some, but by no means all, of the efficiency of instinct, but every bit of the folly of instinct. And yet, as we say, we cannot "do without" the State.

Why not? The State has two great divisions in its memory bank. One division is filled with technical skills of administration, of knowledge of how to order the labors of many men. It knows how to build things that individuals and small groups cannot undertake. It can manage the construction of great bridges, waterways, and irrigation systems. It can institute traffic control and currency management. It can conserve and improve the forests, the land, and the health of the

people. It can institute gross protections of the people against disorder of various sorts.

The other division of the State's memory bank is filled with technically "moral" judgments based upon experience of what contributes to and what opposes the fulfillment of its other functions. It will control, punish, and otherwise hamstring people who seem to threaten the "smooth operation" of its established institutions. The morality of the State cannot be other than a measuring stick of what serves the functions of the State and what opposes them.

Now in any society, there are (1) those whose conceptions of reality, order, and the good are above or in advance of those which control the funded knowledge of the State; there are (2) those who are about even with the State in their knowledge, and (3) those who are definitely below this level. This is not an argument about whether we need the services of the State, but about *why* we need it, and for what ends.

For those whose perceptions are better than those consolidated in State operations, the State should be no more than a technical convenience, a tool that is serviceable for certain projects requiring massive strength. For those whose thinking approximates the level of the State's knowledge of "the substance of their common good," the State should be a kind of school from which they should be constantly encouraged to *graduate*. And to those who need to raise themselves to the level of the State's version of collectivist intelligence, the State should be explained as exactly what it is—the tool of human beings, devised for various services in behalf of the common good—until these people no longer need the guidance of the State's authority, and can, like the others, use it only as a convenience.

This is the "fear and trembling" theory of the State. It argues that the man who accepts from the political process the right to administer the authority of the State should do so in fear and trembling. He should be apologetic to the human beings he has on occasion to control or restrain.

He should explain to them directly, and indirectly through the schools and other avenues of public education, that the State's authority is a poor substitute for individual human intelligence, individual human decision, individual self-control; that when a man so reduces himself as to need the interference of the State in the conduct of his life, he shames the human race, obliging it to use the crude tools of the law in self-protection. It does this, not because the State has wisdom, but because *he* has not, and there is nothing else to do.

By this means the State would indeed become able "to teach the people the substance of their common good." It would teach them to learn how to live without the aid of the State, in all relationships in which the "convenience" and "tool" aspect of the State has no important role. It would thus enable the State to be a *good* State—a State with a proper stature and function in behalf of free human beings. The definition of the good State would then be the same as the definition of a good administrator—one who works himself out of a job.

This view of the State, of the processes of government, of politics, is closely related to a compensating view of the nature of man. It is a view which denies to the State the spurious sovereignty it has acquired during the centuries since the Reformation created a power vacuum in the moral life of the West. It restores the authority over human life to the human beings who live that life, but it makes due acknowledgement of the fallibilities and imperfections of existing human nature. It announces as the role of politics the application of the techniques of management, but withdraws from politics the claim of moral authority. The only moral authority possessed by politics is the authority to *deny* itself moral authority. Only man has moral authority. Only man has moral intelligence. Only man can change himself for the better. And men who change themselves *are* "the

changing consensus of the community," which determines the quality of the State.

REVIEW

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

A BOOK on the abandonment of war, made up of quotations from many of the most distinguished thinkers and writers of the age, which has for the texts of its introduction statements by the heads of the two most powerful nations in the world, is a book that deserves reading. *Instead of Violence*, however, an anti-war anthology edited by Arthur and Lila Weinberg (Grossman, New York, 1963; \$7.50) deserves more than reading; it deserves owning; and those who possess this fine volume may come to recognize, as they find themselves unable to put it down, that the editors have placed between two covers the best of the spirit of the age. While the quotations are not all from contemporaries—there is a section of extracts from "Before Guns" (sixth century B.C. to 1400 A.D.)—what grows on the reader of *Instead of Violence* is the strongest possible feeling that war and violence are anachronisms in the twentieth century, and that the states and governments which continue to use violence may soon be anachronisms, too.

The content of the book rises in a wave of moral and intellectual conviction; it has not one but many climaxes of high decision to reject war absolutely; and if the burning intensity of writers whose chief emotion is concern and compassion for their fellows can be taken as the type of the forward spirit of mankind, we have here a volume of authentic prophecy.

The strength of this movement for peace and against war cannot be denied; nor, if ideas do indeed have power, can it be successfully opposed. It can be ignored, of course, but only by those who cannot or will not see, and then only until it becomes manifest that they have been left far behind by the current of history. "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world," wrote Victor Hugo, "and that is an idea whose time has come." And Thomas Paine, at the dawn of Hugo's century, had said: "An army of

principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. It will succeed where diplomatic management would fail; neither the Rhine, the Channel, nor the ocean can arrest its progress; it will march on the horizon of the world, and it will conquer."

The contributors to *Instead of Violence* are of the breed of Paine and Hugo. They believe that the qualities of mind and spirit are the essence of being human, and that where humanity survives and prospers, it will be because of the triumph of these qualities, and for no other reason. An "obscure" essay on War by Emerson—"obscure" because it does not appear in either series of his lectures, nor in some of the volumes labeled "complete works"—strikes the keynote of this view, and a portion of the selection in *Instead of Violence* may serve, here, to invite the reader to further explorations. In 1838, Emerson said in a lecture delivered in Boston:

. . . it is a lesson which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances. We have all grown up in the sight of frigates and navy yards, of armed forts and islands, of arsenals and militia. The reference to any foreign register will inform us of the number of thousand or million men that are now under arms. in the vast colonial system of the British Empire, of Russia, Austria, and France; and one is scared to find at what a cost the peace of the globe is kept. This vast apparatus of artillery, of fleets, of stone bastions and trenches and embankments; this incessant patrolling of sentinels; this waving of national flags; this reveille and evening gun; this martial music and endless playing of marches and singing of military and naval songs seem to us to constitute an imposing actual, which will not yield in centuries to the feeble, deprecatory voices of a handful of friends of peace.

Thus always we are daunted by the appearances; not seeing that their whole value lies at bottom in the state of mind. It is really a thought that built this portentous war establishment and a thought shall also melt it away. Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or their state of thought. . . . We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or

books or cannon or churches. The standing army, the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt; how low his hope lies. . . .

It follows of course that the least change in the man will change his circumstances; the least enlargement of his ideas the least mitigation of his feelings in respect to other men, if for example, he could be inspired with a tender kindness to the souls of men, and should come to feel that every man was another self with whom he might come to join, as left hand works with right. Every degree of the ascendancy of this feeling would cause the most striking changes of external things: the tents would be struck; the men-of-war would rot ashore; the arms rust, the cannon would become streetposts, the pikes a fisher's harpoon; the marching regiment would be a caravan of emigrants, *peaceful* pioneers at the fountains of the Wabash and the Missouri. And so it must and will be: bayonet and sword must first retreat a little from their ostentatious prominence; then quite hide themselves, as the sheriff's halter does now, inviting the attendance only of relations and friends; and then, lastly, will be transferred to the museums of the curious, as poisoning and torturing tools are at this day.

The problem, of course, is to get agreement with Emerson that what he expounds is a law of nature. On any theory, however, he recites certain facts. We *do* surround ourselves with whatever we believe to be real and valuable; and what we no longer value we let die and fall away. The question, then, is the direction of our thinking about what is real and good. *Instead of Violence* is a gauge of the direction, volume, and velocity of modern thought concerning war.

Who, in this volume, writes for peace? In the section devoted to expressions since the atom bomb appear Lillian Smith, passionate and perceptive novelist of the agony of the American South; Rajendra Prasad, late President of India; Danilo Dolci, Gandhian do-it-yourself social reformer of modern Italy; Bertrand Russell, the most distinguished intellectual of our time; Albert Luthuli, leader of the African National Congress; Robert Pickus, an author of *Speak Truth to*

Power, and founder of Turn Toward Peace; Martin Luther King, Negro Civil Rights leader; Jerome D. Frank, Johns Hopkins psychiatrist; Erich Fromm, major contributor to the humanization of modern psychology; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize recipient and public-spirited scientist for peace; Albert Schweitzer, who needs no identification; A. J. Muste, lifelong pacifist and radical political commentator; Martin Buber, Jewish thinker who has extended modern man's intellectual and moral horizons; Vinoba Bhave, architect of Indian land reform and Gandhian leader; Norbert Wiener, who acts on the idea of the responsibility of individual scientists to protect the world from nuclear ruin; Albert Camus, who has chiseled the reality of man's moral life out of the stubborn rock of existential fact; Albert Einstein, whose devotion to peace was as great as his longing to understand the structure of the physical world.

Statements made during the period before the second great war of the twentieth century are from Guglielmo Ferrero, an Italian historian whose intensities of thought should be more widely recognized; Dr. Evan Thomas, distinguished researcher in medicine, whose sense of being human made him a conscientious objector to both wars; Henry Miller, whose art and insight gave the reply to war that the creative spirit must give; Harry Emerson Fosdick, who would not "prostitute the ministry of Jesus Christ to the sanction and support of war"; Richard Gregg, author of the Gandhian classic, *The Power of Nonviolence*; and Milton Mayer, whose mastery of two idioms—of the Great Books of Western man, and of the contemporary moralist—give his writing both life and power.

The focus on World War I brings the words of Scott Nearing, Gandhi, Max Eastman, John Haynes Holmes, Roger Baldwin, Randolph Bourne, Hermann Hesse, Norman Angell, Norman Thomas, Gene Debs, Roderick Seidenberg, and Sigmund Freud. There are selections which give background on the history of the peace movement

since 1815, including passages by Tolstoy, Spencer, Thoreau, William James, Emerson, Carlyle, and Havelock Ellis; and a group of quotations, from Menno Simons to Immanuel Kant, which reflect the development of Protestant Christian pacifism.

Deep-grained in contemporary perceptions of the wrong and futility of war is the recognition that without justice there will be no peace. But the gaining of justice without violence calls for a new kind of thinking by social revolutionaries. It follows that concepts of the social order, of the nature of the human community, of the means of bringing about changes in social and economic relationships, have become more important than any traditional thinking about politics and revolution. New ideas are developing concerning the very fabric of cultural life, and they are arising in the peace movement, where the need for innovation is the matrix of social invention.

Out of these recognitions of the stupendous folly and insanity of war, then, are coming visions of a new kind of life for a new kind of man. What becomes evident is the fact that the intransigence of the pacifist and war-resister is but a single facet of his thinking—the part that can only reply "No!" to the invitation to kill. This is but the small peak of the iceberg exhibited above the surface. Beneath is a body of coherent philosophy and social doctrine which rises from living premises concerning the nature and potentiality of human beings. The burden of this book is the contention that no other philosophy will serve the needs of the human race, and that the decision to adopt it cannot be much longer delayed.

COMMENTARY
THE BITTER WITH THE SWEET

SINCE the Tucson area of Arizona is now the happy host of a \$400 million-plus Titan-2 missile project, the local papers have been mixing qualms with their hosannas of economic joy. After all, being the center of such goings-on, while enriching to the populace, will also turn Tucson into a prime target in nuclear war, and the local residents don't seem to realize what a strain this could put on their inadequate "shelter" facilities. Shocked expressions by the Tucson Civil Defense authorities move Joseph Wood Krutch, who lives in the region, to some musings.

In the *Winter American Scholar*, Mr. Krutch picks for quotation the following passage from his current reading in anthropology:

Some years ago, bad children shot the insulators off Cape Cod's power line, and life on the Cape well-nigh went down in confusion to the grave. Few had water; pumps stopped. None could get gasoline (no pumps); it was just as well, for those who drove had no traffic lights to keep them from destroying each other. . . . Food was eaten raw in houses with electric ranges, the babies got the colic unless mothers warmed the milk at police stations, which had generators. The police also saved the population from Neolithic perils to health by storing vaccines when drugstore refrigerators stopped. But near Hyannis the cows went all the way back to the Paleolithic; the mechanical milkers would not work and the cows, nearing the bursting point, lowed piteously while the neighborhood stood around in total ignorance of how to milk a cow by hand.

"If," Mr. Krutch asks, "some bad boys with a twenty-two can reduce a community to that state, how could life go on after an enemy had dumped hundreds of super-super bombs from Maine to California?" Ergo, Mr. Krutch has no shelter, will build none. And since, he points out, conditions *after* a nuclear bombing will restrict survival to the ruggedest types, only the young and sturdy should be accommodated with shelters of any sort. "Most of us," he thinks, "had better die quickly," and he suggests that "shelters be designed to house only a small fraction of the existing

population and that those over thirty-five be excluded from them."

If you think this tasteless defeatism, what token of constructive action would you propose? On the ethical principle of babies first, learning how to milk cows by hand?

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

MATTER FOR REFLECTION (II)

WHEN we are asked, as happens occasionally, "Why all this talk about metaphysics?", the answer is that the "non-dimensional" aspect of human nature, in child or man, may be that upon which all bright hopes for either the individual or society must depend.

Our recent quotations from Frederick Mayer's *Man, Morals, and Education* (MANAS, Oct. 30, 1963) may be appropriately extended on this point. In the conclusion of that volume, Dr. Mayer writes that "metaphysics has certain positive functions in philosophy; it illuminates our poetic quest, for, consciously or unconsciously, the concept of reality is basic to philosophic speculation." He continues:

Like Faust we want to understand the essence of the universe even if this is an impossibility. Naturalism in religion is an inadequate perspective. Beyond naturalism lies the perennial attraction of mysticism. Mysticism is simply an attempt to find a principle of oneness in the universe and to overcome the fragmentary status of our own egos. In the mystical perspective East and West meet in a common quest and a common pilgrimage.

With this background for deliberation on the mystical aspects of human nature, we turn to a fascinating correlation of the ages and stages of men with the symbolic deities of Hindu mythology—by way of Henry A. Murray's "Vicissitudes of Creativity" (printed in *Creativity and Its Cultivation*, edited by Harold H. Anderson, Harper, 1959). Discussing "the imagery of the mythology of freedom," Dr. Murray speaks of "spiritual adolescence":

Under the best conditions in the phase of spiritual childhood—as in the Western thirteenth century, let us say—there is relative homogeneity, unity, order, conservation, and homeostasis on the ideational, cultural level: Vishnu is predominant. But in the phase of spiritual adolescence—reaching its first peak, say, at the time of the French Revolution—everything is different: authority is denied,

decomposed, reduced; there may be deicide and regicide, justified by the glorification of uncorrupted human nature, human reason, and the *vox populi*, the fraternal peer group; or there may be greater insistence on freedom of personal thought, speech and decision, the idealization of individuality, resulting in ever-greater heterogeneity, division, disunity, disorder. The time comes when "the center cannot hold, things fall apart": Siva is predominant. This is the era of egocentrism, competitions of egocentrism, nihilism, and teen-age terrorisms, largely due to the fact that the spiritually adolescent parents have not given their offspring the needed experience and steady discipline of the phase of spiritual childhood at its best. In short, adolescents are not prepared for the responsibilities of individuality and temperate rebellion and in a state of chaos become susceptible to the dictatorial leadership and machinations of a Moloch, who brings them back as physiological adults to a secularized phase of spiritual childhood under the cloud of an inflexible and infallible doctrine.

Today, however, there are evidences, here and there, that people are approaching, with more knowledge and more insight than has been heretofore available, the phase of spiritual manhood and womanhood, the era of Brahma, with its mythology of creativity, fundamentally derived from that period of life when a man and woman participate in the formation of a dyad, of a home, of offspring, and of a new family culture. This spiritual phase, this symbolism, might be exemplified, it seems to me, on all levels: an embracement and reunion of the opposites: man and nature, male and female, conscious and unconscious, superego and id, reason and passion, rational and irrational, science and art, enjoyable means and enjoyable ends, upper class and lower class, West and East. Instead of thesis and antithesis, we may achieve synthesis at the center: creation for creation—let us say, *creativism*—rather than creation for a giant suicidal murder. It is in view of this barely possible ideal that I have subtitled this essay: *the fortunate change of creativity*.

These paragraphs by Dr. Murray, we think, are especially suggestive in relation to our previous discussions on "Education in Religion" (See "Definitions": MANAS, Oct. 23, 1963.) If religion may indeed be given a creative meaning, it must be by considering it as a language and an activity, rather than as a set of particular beliefs.

FRONTIERS

"Fate or Free Will"—as of 1964

THIS classic question, which claimed so much zestful attention during the age of medieval scholasticism, is a ghost that refuses to be laid. While the philosophers and the psychologists of the twentieth century have tended to agree that formal debate under this heading is unproductive, it is often admitted that *something* important is buried in the traditional "fate and free will" argument, which has bearing on every ontological proposition.

In December, 1962, the journal, *Philosophy Forum* (issued by the University of the Pacific), published a symposium on "The Self in Philosophy." Prof. Alburey Castell, of the University of Oregon, launched the discourse, citing two contemporary psychologists to illustrate absolute rejection of "free will":

SKINNER: Man's capacity to choose, and our right to hold him responsible for his choice, are not conspicuous in the portrait provided by science. We once believed that man was free to express himself, to inquire into nature, to seek salvation in his own way. He could initiate action. But science insists that action is initiated by forces impinging upon the individual.

WILLIAMS: The whole of what exists is constituted of physical matter. Its constituents are among the subject matter of physics. A mind is matter. A hero's aspiration is composed of the same sort of elements as a piece of slate. This involves "reducing" both the aspiration and the slate to components which are simpler than they, and "inferior" to them.

The foregoing, Prof. Castell proposes, is "a view of human behavior" which says: "Man is a machine, and his behavior is mechanical. You can designate this way of theorizing as mechanistic, meaning that human behavior is mechanical. You can call it materialism, meaning that human behavior is the behavior of matter. You can call it naturalism, meaning that human behavior is a natural process. You can call it scientism, meaning that it is the outcome of applying to human behavior the presuppositions of natural

science. You can call it the 'process' view, meaning that in the understanding of human behavior process is a more fundamental category than activity." Castell then proceeds with a similarly unqualified rejection of this proposition:

However you name it, the view is a weed in the garden of man's effort to understand himself. It should therefore be rooted out. It is, in my judgment, contrary to the spirit which pervades, or ought to pervade, a liberal education. People in history or religion or literature or art or government or economics or law or education, as well as in philosophy, have a stake in rooting it out. More than any other single view it makes nonsense of our efforts to deepen and extend man's understanding of himself.

Why should a professor of philosophy be concerned with "rooting out" this view of the nature of man? Presumably, because such arbitrary determinism, by implication, tends to make all philosophy ridiculous. But while the philosophers protest, psychologists continue to develop the techniques of "behavioral engineering." Prof. B. F. Skinner's *Walden II* has been the focus of a great deal of argument about this trend. And what Prof. Skinner and his allies say is often, we must admit, extremely interesting, even though we also agree with Alfred North Whitehead that "scientists animated by the purpose of proving that they are purposeless constitute an interesting subject for study."

Let us now turn to the reflections of Carl Rogers, a man who is very hard to pin down in terms of the usual alignments of opinion. In "The Concept of the Fully Functioning Person" (*Psychotherapy* for August, 1963), Dr. Rogers speaks of the relevance to the therapist of "the dilemma between the subjective and the objective, between freedom and determinism." He offers a fresh perspective in the following terms:

We could say that in the optimum of therapy the person rightfully experiences the most complete and absolute freedom. He wills or chooses to follow the course of action which is the most economical vector in relation to all the internal and external stimuli, because it is that behavior which will be most deeply satisfying. But this is the same course of action

which from another vantage point may be said to be determined by all the factors in the existential situation. Let us contrast this with the picture of the person who is defensively organized. He wills or chooses to follow a given course of action, but finds that he cannot behave in the fashion that he chooses. He is determined by the factors in the existential situation, but these factors include his defensiveness, his denial or distortion of some of the relevant data. Hence it is certain that his behavior will be less than fully satisfying. His behavior is determined, but he is not free to make an effective choice. The fully functioning person, on the other hand, not only experiences, but utilizes, the most absolute freedom when he spontaneously, freely, and voluntarily chooses and wills that which is also absolutely determined.

I am quite aware that this is not a new idea to the philosopher, but it has been refreshing to come upon it from a totally unexpected angle, in analyzing a concept in personality theory.

The view that action must always be "initiated by forces impinging upon the individual" means, actually, that no man ever *really* "initiates" anything, and the proponents of this contention expect, they say, to encounter resistance. But why do they *expect* this reaction? It seems to us that both the expectation and the certainty of its fulfillment require examination. For one thing, the rejection of a completely physical determinism may be based on the conviction voiced by Rogers when he says that "the basic nature of the human being, when functioning freely, is constructive and trustworthy." Dr. Rogers concludes:

When we are able to free the individual from defensiveness, so that he is open to the wide range of his own needs, as well as the wide range of environmental and social demands, his reactions may be trusted to be positive, forward-moving, constructive.

I have little sympathy with the rather prevalent concept that man is basically irrational, and that his impulses, if not controlled, would lead to destruction of others and self. Man's behavior is exquisitely rational, moving with subtle and ordered complexity toward the goals his organism is endeavoring to achieve. The tragedy for most of us is that our defenses keep us from being aware of this rationality, so that consciously we are moving in one direction,

while organismically we are moving in another. But in our hypothetical person there would be no such barriers, and he would be a participant in the rationality of his organism.

Here, of course, we could go all the way back to Buddha's psychology, which points out that most men are indeed captive—that they run along "tracks," but that the enlightened human being is "trackless." He is captive only until he makes himself free. This liberation cannot be achieved by any schema of education, however, even though it were designed by the Buddha himself. Freedom, on the Buddha's view—like immortality—must be won.