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ANOTHER WORLD VIEW

THE monotony of exposés and reports of corruption in political office is now so familiar that the reader begins to expect little else from the newspapers and the commentators in magazines. Instead of ongoing human affairs, there is this steady diet of manipulations, deceptions, and the abuse of power, as though there were nowhere in the country any gardens to cultivate, any useful work to be done. No nourishment is offered by any of these reports, and while the public interest is said to require a press that is a tireless watchdog, looking behind every door and under every rock, little attention is given to the resulting low conception of the political process and the accompanying estimate of human nature. It is not that facts should be suppressed, but that an understanding of them depends upon a framework of contrasting moral realities which supply the basis for judgment.

Fortunately, the chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, Sam J. Ervin, is doing what he can to supply this framework, and the choice instruction he provides in constitutional law and the rights of man has probably never had so large an audience. In these days of "image politics" and managed press relations, to hear such a man on the moral roots of American political life is a salutary experience. But in his role of educator, as distinguished from that of investigator, Senator Ervin must compete with a vast ignorance and indifference. The principles he champions came into practice, some of them, hundreds of years ago, through the first-hand experience of self-government by smaller communities of people. The *meaning* of principles grows only from their use, and is forgotten when this usage is delegated to others, or when it becomes remote and complex.

The remedy, then, for the moral decline in public life lies in the restoration of community. The ill of which Watergate is but a single, if complicated, symptom lies in the deep structure of modern society, and changes on the surface, at the political level, can hardly bring into being the radically different focus of interests involved in enduring reform.

One essential of basic reform is a high and ennobling conception of human possibility. This was once supplied by the great epics of ancient oral literature which were the foundation of popular education. The young were nurtured by traditions filled with accounts of men with godlike powers, and of events in which divinities mingled with mortals and magical arts played a part in human affairs. Interestingly, while the supernormal powers of ancient heroes have been one reason they are now regarded as merely mythical figures, a sudden revival of belief in "magic" shows that the idea of wonder-working is by no means incredible. But the modern version of magic is wholly lacking in epic dimensions. The revival is at a trivial, mocking, sensational level. Recently, for example, a metropolitan newspaper ran an illustrated feature repeating the claims of a manufacturer who asserts that his small, cardboard pyramids have the power to sharpen dull razor blades, mummify dead cats, and restore the flavor of rancid coffee. And everyone has noticed the now hackneyed reports of witches, wizards, and pseudo-occultists who have caught the public fancy. All such journalism cheapens the idea of the unknown, making serious investigation of not-yet-discovered laws of nature an extremely difficult and unpopular undertaking.

After all, there was a time when magic was held to be a science, and quite possibly only ignorant and vulgar imitators gave it a bad name, causing scholars to suppose it nothing but superstition. Lynn Thorndike, for one, in his *History of Magic and Experimental Science*,

reproaches Pliny for "failing to recognize magic as a primitive social product and regarding it as a degeneration from ancient science rather than science as a comparatively modern development from it." Thorndike shows that early Greek philosophers, notably Empedocles and the Pythagoreans, took magic seriously. It is of interest that such men, in particular Pythagoras, embodied qualities which seem peculiarly lacking in the present. Pythagoras devoted himself to the practice of social and moral responsibility, and his contemporaries believed he understood hidden laws of nature. The Delphic Oracle told his father, Mnesarchus, that he would have "a son who would surpass all who had ever lived in beauty and wisdom, and that he would be of the greatest benefit to the human race in everything pertaining to human achievements." For Pythagoras' teacher, Mnesarchus chose Pherecydes, accounted one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, founder of an Orphic community, and the first teacher among the Greeks of metempsychosis and immortality of the soul. He also had the reputation of a wonderworker.

Pythagoras had three biographers, Porphyry and Iamblichus, both Neoplatonists, and Diogenes Laertius, the principal ancient historian of Greek philosophy. Modern authorities rely on these sources only with reluctance, since the accounts seem to them not only fanciful but also copied from unreliable materials. Articles in encyclopedias seem based mostly on the version provided by John Burnet in *Early Greek Philosophy,* and Burnet gives every appearance of making up his mind about Pythagoras on the basis of how well he conformed to a sensibly British way of life and thought.

The Neoplatonists (who might also be called Neopythagoreans), Burnet says, added "fantastic myths" to the life of Pythagoras, endowing him with miraculous powers. Burnet apparently preferred historians of the Aristotelian school, who report Pythagoras as simply a moralist and a statesman. But even here there are inconsistencies, since a work by Aristotle tells of ."striking miracles" by Pythagoras. For such reasons, Burnet claims that the extensive Eastern travels attributed to Pythagoras were "apocryphal," and he questions his visit to Egypt, where, according to Iamblichus, the Greek sage studied in the sanctuaries for twenty-two years.

The life of Pythagoras thus becomes a matter of reader's choice. If you accept modern authorities, you doubt much that is said about him by the later philosophers who tried to follow his example and to spread his teachings. The offense of these ancient thinkers and chroniclers seems to be mainly that they did not believe as we do and often used symbolic modes of discourse.

What did Pythagoras accomplish, even by modern accounting? Well, he was the Western world's first utopian, if community-building with an eye to general moral reform is a utopian objective. He was the first teacher of arithmetic and geometry. You could call him the founder of modern astronomy, since the Pythagoreans "were the first to conceive the earth as a globe, self-supported in empty space, revolving with other planets round a central luminary." Copernicus got the idea for his heliocentric theory from reading the work of Pythagorean mathematicians. Pythagoras declared the kinship of all living things and advocated a vegetarian diet. He developed a complex numerical symbolism and proposed that number lay at the foundation of all that exists. Repeating the doctrines of the Orphic Mysteries, Pythagoras regarded embodied existence as an imprisonment of the soul, this life being a time of purification. Each soul had lived before and would live again, and the best employment in life was in raising the moral level of the community where one was born. In his account of the school Pythagoras established at Krotona, Myers (in his *History of Greece*) called it "a sort of moral reform league, characterized by certain ascetic tendencies, and which exerted a wide and important influence upon the political affairs and thought of the times." Commenting on the

Golden Verses of Pythagoras, Fabre d'Olivet, an eighteenth-century Pythagorean, wrote:

> For Pythagoras admitted many successive existences and maintained that the present, which strikes us, and the future which menaces us, are only the expression of the past which has been our work in anterior times. He said that the greater part of men lose, in returning to life, the remembrance of these past existences; but that, concerning himself, he had, by a particular favor of the gods, preserved the memory of them. Thus according to his doctrine, the fatal Necessity, of which man unceasingly complains, has been created by himself through the use of his will; he traverses, in proportion as he advances in time, the road that he has already traced for himself; and according as he has modified it by good or evil, as he sows so to speak, his virtues or his vices, he will find it again more smooth or laborious, when the time will come to traverse it anew.

Pythagoras believed that the germ of divinity is in every man, by reason of his highest principle, the "matter-moving *nous,"* and that human beings fall prey to the deceptions and illusions of material existence only through the susceptibilities of the *psyche* or merely human soul. Man is thus the architect of his own destiny, his life being the unique development of the contest between his will, which is joined to the moral perceptions of *nous,* and the circumstances shaped by Nemesis, which are of his own prior making. This teaching, d'Olivet maintains, was wholly untainted by the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. Conceptions of fatalism are traced by d'Olivet to this theological idea of the "fall," and he remarks that "before the establishment of Christianity and the admission of original sin as fundamental dogma of religion, no founder of sect, no celebrated philosopher had positively denied the free will, nor had taught ostensibly that man may be necessarily determined to Evil or Good and predestined from all time to vice or virtue, to wickedness or eternal happiness."

Pythagoras is honored today mainly for his achievements in mathematics and astronomy. He showed that it was possible to combine arithmetic with geometry, now counted as a great discovery, and he initiated the scientific study of music. Modern thinkers who regard mathematics as the key to all cosmic structures and processes are called "neo-Pythagoreans," since it was Pythagoras who first proposed this method of scientific investigation, although he also made number the foundation of ethics and metaphysics. This latter side of Pythagoras receives little attention, since it is thought to blur the splendor of his "real" contribution. His activity as a moral reformer has been briefly noted while his spiritual ideas are neglected, somewhat in the fashion that Isaac Newton's interest in astrology and alchemy was passed by or suppressed by chroniclers of science who wanted their greatest hero to be unblemished by "mystical" tendencies. As a result, the bulk of the space given to Pythagoras in modern accounts is devoted to his geometry. The tradition of his having studied in India as well as with the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Jews, and the Arabians is discounted as "the tendency of a later age to connect the beginnings of Greek speculation with the hoary religions and priesthoods of the East." The virtual identity of many Pythagorean ideas with the philosophical teachings of the Hindus is apparently not regarded as evidence concerning the sources of Greek philosophy. However, the eleventh edition of the *Britannica* provides this summary of the establishment of the Pythagorean School:

> The historically important part of his career begins with his migration to Crotona, one of the Dorian colonies in the south of Italy, about the year 529. According to tradition, he was driven from Samos by the tyranny of Polycrates. At Crotona Pythagoras speedily became the center of a widespread religious organization, which seems to have resembled a religious brotherhood or an association for the moral reformation of society much more than a philosophical school. Pythagoras appears, indeed, in all the accounts more as a moral reformer than as a speculative thinker or scientific teacher; and the doctrine of the school which is most clearly traceable to Pythagoras himself is the ethico-mystical doctrine of transmigration. The Pythagorean brotherhood had its rise in the waves of religious revival which swept over Hellas in the 6th century B.C., and it had much in common with the Orphic communities which sought by rites and abstinences to

> purify the believer's soul and enable it to escape from "the wheel of birth." Its aims were undoubtedly those of a religious order rather than a political league. But a private religious organization of this description had no place in the traditions of Greek life, and could only maintain itself by establishing "the rule of the saints" on a political basis. The Pythagoreans appear to have established their supremacy for a time over a considerable portion of Magna Graecia, but this entanglement with politics led in the end to the dismemberment and suppression of the society.

It is worthy of note that the discovery of irrational magnitudes is ascribed to Pythagoras, along with various of the propositions now known to us through Euclid. The Quadrivium of medieval education—the four-fold way to knowledge, according to Boetius and the later scholastic philosophers—resulted from the division of mathematics by the Pythagoreans into Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music, and Geometry. You could say that Pythagoras provided the curriculum of higher education for considerably more than two thousand years. The Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—were the means of understanding and communicating the knowledge provided by the Quadrivium.

As a reason for this excursion into the remote past—to nearly 600 B.C. when Pythagoras was born on the island of Samos—we suggested the uninspiring quality of present-day reading and studies. It is time, in other words, to look elsewhere for our understanding of man and his nature. The blocks to an appreciation of antiquity—such as the ancient belief in magic—may not have the importance we have allowed them to assume. All sorts of things now happen that we are unable to explain. Since there is no value in pointless mystification we do not in these pages explore the possible identity or origin of flying saucers, but there are other phenomena that deserve attention by reason of their frequency and for what they suggest concerning the potentialities of human beings.

Take for example the exploits attributed to Uri Geller, a former Israeli paratrooper. An article in the *Phoenix Gazette* for June 9 described his abilities:

> He [Geller] was studied for three months, starting in November, 1972, at California's Stanford Research Institute, a think tank which does highly classified work for the U.S. military. The scientists there say that Geller scored 100 per cent success in reading figures concealed in opaque envelopes, detecting hidden objects in aluminum cans, and moving a laboratory balance without touching it.

The writer of this report, Allen Spraggett, told how Geller bent a seven-inch steel spike simply by stroking it gently. The spike was held by Jack Paar on one of his television shows. The twenty-seven-year-old Israeli did the same thing with a two-inch nail held by Spraggett, and bent a key held by a man unknown to Geller. Spraggett describes other "experiments":

> At his instructions I left the room and made a drawing of my choice (I drew a tree) on a piece of paper, which I then placed in an envelope and put in my pocket. A few minutes later, without touching the envelope or its contents, Geller drew an almost exact replica of my drawing. . . .

Geller says he is able to do these things because of "power which flows through him from some outside force." He doesn't add anything to this explanation. Neither do the scientists who have had Geller under observation.

What does one say about a thing like this? What can you *do* with it? Concerning the attitude of investigating scientists, it could be observed that they are about as reluctant to authenticate the reality of such achievements as the Roman Church is to endorse contemporary miracles or to canonize modern candidates for sainthood. There have been many frauds offered to a believing world, no doubt of that. But there have also been many unexplained wonders, happenings of the sort Charles Fort catalogued in *The Book of the Damned.* It is wholesome and chastening for skeptics to read an old history of magic—say, Joseph Ennemoser's or William Howitt's—to see how much evidence of extraordinary happenings has been ignored or suppressed in the past.

Why have the scientists been so indifferent to psychical phenomena? If you go back as far as David Hume, you find him denying the possibility of miracles—which was reasonable enough; but what about happenings which occur by reason of unknown laws? Presented with the phenomena of Spiritualism, Thomas Huxley, the great champion of Evolution, said he "had no time for such an inquiry." In the twentieth century, a leading psychologist, Joseph Jastrow, writing about telepathy in 1938, said: "In the minds of psychologists who accept a comprehensive view of their responsibilities, it is the *general objections* to ESP [extrasensory perception] that weigh most heavily." To sum up the prevailing scientific attitude Jastrow quoted a contemporary:

> ESP is so contrary to the general scientific world picture, that to accept the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. I am unwilling to give up the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired in the Western world during the last 300 years, on the basis of a few anecdotes and a few badly reported experiments.

While present-day scientists are somewhat more accepting of the "fact" of ESP, they are by no means ready to consider the possibility that knowing more about this faculty or power may require a fundamentally different view of nature—a view which looks to mind and intelligence as primary factors of cause, in nature as well as in psychological events. In the *Scientific Monthly* for last December, Gunther Stent argued that since we cannot fit the phenomena of ESP into the world as we know it through physical science, these strange happenings, even if "real," are of no use to us and should be left alone. They are "premature" discoveries, he says.

But this outlook can be adopted only in continued neglect of the psychological and moral impoverishment of the modern world. What if the Pythagoreans and Platonists were *right?* These men were no fools, but the most accomplished and learned men of their age, and the decisive shapers of human thought and inquiry for thousands of years. What if their world of "immanent justice" was a better world than ours? What if they understood better than we do the high potentialities of human development, and the moral obligations of being human? Even if we are unable, from brief study of what they taught, to supply skeptics with overwhelming evidence of exactly how various psychological mysteries can be explained, it may still be to our advantage to look seriously at their conception of both nature and man, and to adopt, as a working hypothesis, the antique idea of moral law. It seems quite evident, from the contemporary situation, that we do not know even the ABC's of decent behavior and orderly conduct of human affairs, and it is at least possible, or even likely, that we lack the foundation for simple primary education in these crucial areas of life. What *good* is impressive manipulative power which is wholly without moral vision? A civilization so emptied of the qualities of responsibility, honesty, dignity, and mutual trust needs to make a new beginning. Pythagoras seems a man worth inquiring about, since he combined qualities we respect with others of which we know little or nothing.

REVIEW
PAULO FREIRE

AFTER some reading in *Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator* (Publications in Continuing Education, Syracuse University, 1972, $4.00), an Occasional Paper edited by Stanley Grabowski, it seemed evident that attention to this book ought to involve notice of Freire's best known work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Herder and Herder, 1972, $2.95) . Freire has become a key influence in much of today's radical thinking about education. Ivan Illich, for example, speaks of Freire as his teacher, and the critical and appreciative papers in the book from Syracuse University reflect the impact of this Brazilian educator throughout the United States.

What does Freire stand for? For answer we turn to an essay in the Occasional Paper by Jack London (University of California, Berkeley):

> The import of Paulo Freire is that he seeks to develop an educational theory which operates upon a theory of radical social change through the medium of an imaginative literacy program devoted to the raising of the level of the oppressed and disadvantaged, initially in Brazil and later in Chile, and subsequently in other newly developing countries. My judgment is that Freire's approach to education and social change has important implications for transforming our own adult education programming from a middle-class operation to an approach that will also serve the marginal groups in our country. The elites, the advantaged, and the powerful who control our society by imposing a "culture of silence" upon the masses of people use paternalistic education, schooling, the mass media, and myths to dominate decision-making to preserve the status quo.

In a foreword to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull briefly describes Freire's origins and background:

> Born in 1921 in Recife, the center of one of the most extreme situations of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World, he was soon forced to experience that reality directly. As the economic crisis in 1929 in the United States began to affect Brazil, the precarious stability of Freire's middle-class family gave way and he found himself sharing the plight of the "wretched of the earth." This had a profound influence on his life as he came to know the gnawing pangs of hunger and fell behind in school because of the listlessness it produced; it also led him to make a vow, at age eleven, to dedicate his life to the struggle against hunger, so that other children would not have to know the agony he was then experiencing.
>
> His early sharing of the life of the poor also led him to the discovery of what he describes as the "culture of silence" of the dispossessed. He came to realize that their ignorance and lethargy were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social, and political domination—and of the paternalism—of which they were victims. Rather than being encouraged and equipped to know and respond to the concrete realities of their world, they were kept "submerged" in a situation in which such critical awareness and response were practically impossible. And it became clear to him that the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence.

What is to be done, according to Freire?

He believes that the central task of life for all humans is further humanization. The worst effect of oppression is the tendency of the oppressed to lose their self-respect, their sense of being able to understand their own lives and *to* help themselves. They come to think of themselves as "only" peasants, as inevitably "ignorant," as helpless without the paternalism of their oppressors. A technical "literacy" added to such opinions is no liberation, in Freire's view, but only a reinforcement of the weaknesses of the oppressed. In Freire's method, the gaining of literacy is inseparably connected with the restoration of human dignity and self-respect, so that the level of consciousness of the people is raised to a higher level. This is a step-by-step process, carried on by the adult educator who works *with* the people, who refuses to get "ahead" of their grasp of their own circumstances, who learns how to help them by entering into their lives and sharing their thought processes until they are able to see for themselves the contradictions in their own beliefs.

As they gain in understanding, their confidence grows, and then they become able to act in ways that before were impossible for them. This process Freire calls "conscientization." The growth and the progress must always belong to the people—to manipulate them, whether for political purposes or by the indoctrinating sort of education, is inevitably a fresh form of oppression. Everything depends upon the people reaching a higher level of awareness; nothing important can be done *for* the people, and if, Freire says, "the people cannot be trusted, there is no reason for liberation." One begins to see here a parallel with Gandhi in this complete refusal to treat the people as impotent and unable to learn to save themselves. There is notice in the Occasional Paper of a thoughtful comparison of Freire with both Tolstoy and Gandhi.

Another parallel with Gandhi may be seen in a passage at the beginning of Freire's book:

> Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human. This distortion occurs within history; but it is not an historical vocation. Indeed, to admit of dehumanization as an historical vocation would lead either to cynicism or total despair. The struggle for humanization, for the emancipation of labor, for the overcoming of alienation, for the affirmation of men as persons would be meaningless. This struggle is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is *not* a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed.
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> Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather the restorers of the humanity of both.

Paternalistic efforts to aid the oppressed cannot succeed, since such attempts nearly always present the oppressors as models for the oppressed to emulate. But the oppressors are false models, and the oppressed must free themselves of this influence, which would only declare that the claims of the oppressors to superiority are "right." The worst thing that can happen to the oppressed is for them to adopt the rationalizations of the oppressors and to seek betterment of their condition in these, the oppressor's, terms.

A difficulty that will be experienced by most readers of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* results from the fact that it is written almost entirely in terms of generalizations and abstractions. Freire gives hardly more than three or four actual illustrations of what he is talking about. This does not make the book weak, but only obscure. Freire is not weak because the generalizations are filled with concrete meaning for *him*, but the book is about conditions which are not common to the lives of most of his readers in the United States. For this reason much effort is needed to give the book vital content.

Another source of the power in Freire's work is in the grandeur of his affirmations. He has no fear of words like "truth" and "love." Education is for him turning passive believers into problem-solvers, and this means dialogue between a teacher, who learns from the taught, and the taught, who are also teachers of their teacher. Dialogue is thus central to his method, for through dialogue comes the discovery of contradiction, followed by penetration to the reality of a situation. This means the unfolding capacity to understand this reality and then "name" it. Freire says:

> Because dialogue is an encounter among men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some men name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one man by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is a conquest of the world for the liberation of men.

Then Freire adds:

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for men. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. I am more and more convinced that true revolutionaries must perceive the revolution, because of its creating and liberating nature, as an act of love. For me, the revolution, which is not possible without a theory of revolution—and therefore science—is not irreconcilable with love. On the contrary: the revolution is made by men to achieve their humanization. What, indeed, is the deeper motive which moves men to become revolutionaries, but the dehumanization of man? The distortion imposed on the word "love" by the capitalist world cannot prevent the revolution from being essentially loving in character, nor can it prevent the revolutionaries from affirming their love of life.

Because of such passages Freire has been accused by some of his critics of being ambiguous on the subject of violence, and it is true enough that he makes no visible attempt to reconcile the violence of the revolution with the love he requires it to express. This is an undeveloped side of his thinking; but in noticing this it is necessary to recognize also the enormous difference between his ideas, taken as a whole, and the doctrinaire views of many revolutionary thinkers of past generations. More important than such omissions or contradictions is the basic theme of his approach:

> I cannot think *for others* or *without others,* nor can others think *for me.* Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas—not consuming those of others—must constitute that process. . . . The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for men to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades. Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate.

Finally, then, Freire gets his power from the fact that he keeps faith with the people from beginning to end. There is no education or liberation which they do not understand for themselves and, in time, create for themselves. Freire's writing is an endless elaboration of this one, central idea.

COMMENTARY
ON PREPAREDNESS

AN element of rhetoric enters into the charge, made in this week's "Children," that the public schools of the country left an entire generation of young men unprepared to deal with the issues of the draft. It may be permissible rhetoric, but it's still rhetoric. After all, the public schools are an arm of the government. Can they be expected to instruct teenagers impartially in the pros and cons of a war to which the government is committed?

Gandhi was more realistic. He said that the government should have nothing to do with education. He advocated not only separation of Church and State, but also separation of School and State. So, instead of blaming the schools for a quite predictable failure, we might, as Gandhi once did, take some instruction from Thoreau, who said:

> It is impossible to give the soldier a good education, without making him a deserter. His natural foe is the government that drills him. What would any philanthropist, who felt an interest in these men's welfare, naturally do, but first of all teach them so to respect themselves, that they could not be hired for this work, whatever might be the consequences to this government or that. . . .

Thoreau was a prepared young man, and at the same time the most famous dropout in American history. Yet, oddly enough, he worked all his life on making certain definitions—of a good man, a good citizen, and a good government. That was his preparation, and it might do for others until they have definitions of their own. He wrote in *Civil Disobedience:*

> Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?—in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think we should be men first, and subjects afterward. . . .
>
> Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.

All these questions, like seeds, can be planted early in the education of the young. The rest could be left to nature—to, that is, the "higher and independent power" in all individuals. With the help of a few such seeds they could prepare themselves.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE UNPREPARED YOUNG

TWO books in random association provide material for this week's discussion. We came by these books by accident and read them at the same time by accident. One is *American Education Today,* a collection of essays that appeared in the *Saturday Review* (long before its new publishers pushed the *SR* over the brink into an identity crisis), issued by McGraw-Hill. The thirty odd chapters or essays are nearly all competently written, and some of them even sage in content. They look at education as a general problem. The first part, for example, has essays intended to answer the question, What are we trying to accomplish? There is a section on educational "philosophies," one on "current issues," and others on "institutions" and the education of teachers. They give statistics and broad views.

Such "over-all" survey books keep coming out, and if you sample them, say, every five years, you are likely to get the impression that nothing really happens as a result of their being read. You might even decide that these books serve no real purpose, even though they give the readers a feeling of being "informed." The fact remains that people don't agree in any significant way on what education is for, how it should proceed, and what it should accomplish. They don't agree on the nature of either the child or the human being, and they don't agree on the meaning of human life. It is quite natural, therefore, that such question tend to be ignored and that the problems continue.

The other book we've been reading, *If This Be Treason,* by Franklin Stevens (Wyden, 1970), is filled with practical issues that the education of the young does nothing to prepare them for. This book is about eleven male eighteen-year-olds who found themselves totally unable to enter the armed services when their numbers came up. Each of these young men "coped" as well as he could. The book tells what they did, mostly in their own words. They weren't *ready* for this ordeal; their parents were even less ready; and the country was least ready of all. A footnote at the end of the book says:

> The Oakland induction center, which processes draftees for all of Northern California, reports that *fully fifty per cent* of all young men ordered to report failed to show up and of those that did show up, another eleven per cent refused pointblank to be inducted.

One of the young men in this book, who went to Canada, had this to say:

> Almost every kid in this country is either a draft evader, a potential draft evader, or a failed draft evader. I've never met one guy, not one, who wanted to go, or even went willingly. And most guys I know tried desperately to stay out by one means or another or refused to go. And this is occurring all over the country, particularly among the educated classes who are supposed to lead the country in the future. All these God knows how many thousands of guys refuse to support their country's policies, they won't serve. Does the country acknowledge that this means something? Does it acknowledge that this phenomenon says something about the country and its policies? Not a chance. The government turns its head, it pretends it doesn't mean a thing, just as it pretends the antiwar protests don't mean a thing—except as what the government calls an expression of the right to dissent and be ignored.

Several of the young men—or boys—didn't decide to be conscientious objectors until the full enormity of killing villagers in Vietnam got very close to them. Then, often, they were not sure they really *were* conscientious objectors—they knew only that they couldn't be a part of the killing machine. It was hard for them to believe that anyone would try to force them to do this. So they didn't start figuring out what to do until the last minute.

One of them, a natural scholar wrapped up in his studies, was confronted by the issue when he was twenty-two, freshly graduated from the university:

> "I sat down in my room and began to fill out that conscientious objector form, and it began to set my teeth on edge too. It suddenly struck me that I

> was asking permission from the government to refrain from killing people for no good reason, or rather for an immoral reason, that of American aggression against another country and people. I was asking for permission to follow my own conscience, my own feelings about what I should do and shouldn't do. And the worst part about this was not that the government grants such permission grudgingly or not at all, but that it feels it has the right to grant it or withhold it at all."

Since he was a late-decider, his application for C. O. classification was rejected, so he went to Canada, found welcome there, and is now in process of becoming a Canadian citizen.

Some of the chapters are about elaborate careers in draft evasion. The men who took this course felt dirtied by it. Integrity has peculiar facets. One of this group wouldn't pretend to be a war objector because he didn't believe he was one, but he was able to win a psychiatric 4-F by misrepresenting his state of mind. After he got settled with a wife and an instructorship to support his graduate student program, he told Mr. Stevens:

> "This," he waves his hand about the apartment, including Elaine, "is what I got for lying. For cheating. If I had told them the truth, and obeyed the law, then I'd either be in Vietnam or in jail.
>
> "In other words, my country presented me with a set of alternatives, to kill, to go to jail or to be dishonest. The fact that I chose dishonesty says as much about my country as it does about me. Because, dammit, I shouldn't have been presented with three almost equally unpalatable alternatives.
>
> "I feel it wasn't I who let my country down, my country let me down. So under those circumstances, the hell with it. I don't feel I have any obligation to abide by my country's law, or so-called ethics.
>
> "It seems to me there's something really wrong with both the ethics, and the law."

Eighteen is about the time when a lot of young men are ready to go to college. Their lives are before them. Then came the draft and its horrors. One of the boys Stevens writes about, Craig, didn't decide to be a C.O. until his sophomore year at college. It wasn't until then that he really began to think about things. Stevens says:

> What Craig began to think about was that there was something deeply, terribly wrong about what was happening in Vietnam. Not thinking about it in political terms at all, not at first, but in terms of slaughter, suffering, destruction. Watching TV every evening in the recreation room of his residence house; the burning villages, faces contorted in agony of terror and incomprehension, the endless prone bodies of the wounded made stiff by bandages, the napalm from helicopters, seas of flame engulfing running figures, the expressionless corpses of children. And then the calm, well-tailored, too-earnest statements of politicians and generals; "to stem the tide of Communist aggression," "a commitment from which we cannot withdraw with honor," "aid to our friends in their fight for freedom," which simply aren't enough for him, which don't justify, if anything can justify, this horror.

Then he got a letter from his older brother, who had been in the army for a year, and in combat in Vietnam. His brother wrote that he had been made into a "killing machine." This was a boy who had once vomited when he killed a rabbit. Now, he told his brother, he had "shot down women, kids, women holding little kids in their arms, and I did it without a thought." His brother was lying wounded when he wrote this. A month later a tropical fungus got into his wound. It reached his brain and he died. That was when Craig decided to become a conscientious objector. But his mother and father were so horrified that he never filled out the forms.

He managed to stay out of the army by going to divinity school. The seminary understood his motives and didn't mind. After all, they said, the church is a "refuge," too. For five years he ducked the army, then found that his life had been reshaped by what he did:

> "I made my mistake in the very beginning, when I decided not to become a C.O., and to play along with the system. I allowed myself to be manipulated, to be directed, and to have the control of my life taken out of my hands, just as I would have, in a more extreme set of circumstances, if I had gone into the military.

"This thing of channeling is rotten all through. It keeps kids in college who don't want to be in college, and aren't getting anything out of college, or at least could be getting more out of something else. It sends people into these 'social service' projects who don't want to be in them, who do them badly and without talent, and who keep bad projects going without criticism just because they're deferments.

"Basically, what's wrong with channeling is the same thing that's wrong with conscription. It doesn't allow you to make a choice based on your own ideas, your own feelings, your own morality. It just demands, and forces on you, blind obedience, blind service. And worst of all, it does so in terms that can trick you into thinking that you ARE making a meaningful choice, or even that you're manipulating the system to your own ends, when it's actually manipulating you. . . .

"If I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't make the mistake of playing along with the system. . . . You can't play along with a rotten system without becoming infected with some of that decay yourself."

It seems fair to say that public education which leaves the young unprepared for such terrible dilemmas and pressures must have been ignoring its responsibilities for generations. The maturity and independence gained by some of these young men were reached in spite of whatever education they had.

FRONTIERS

Literature on Latin America

THE ignorance of the people of the United States concerning the history, affairs, and culture of the Latin American countries is notorious. Years ago, an editor of MANAS, hoping to repair this deficiency, asked a distinguished Latin American expert which periodicals would be good to read for this purpose. "There aren't any," he replied, and suggested a French newspaper as giving the best coverage. Well, the French paper was helpful, but almost exclusively political, and translations were a problem, so that after a year the subscription was dropped. Meanwhile, MANAS has tried to give at least token attention to books and articles about South America, although with the growing realization that a similar ignorance probably applies to many other parts of the world. The best explanation seemed to be the one given some years ago by Arthur Toynbee, who said that "Americans"—meaning the inhabitants of the United States—"tend to think of the rest of the human race as being potential immigrants whose business it is to learn how to live the American way of life, and the first step toward this, as Americans see it, is to learn the English language."

Then, some months ago, we saw a notice of a new magazine—*Latin America Review of Books*—so we sent to England for a copy. We prepared ourselves to be overwhelmed by scholarly expertise, and that, of course, is what happened. Literally *hundreds* of current books have attention in this review, which is edited by Colin Harding and Christopher Roper. Number One of this quarterly is dated Spring 1973. It has 224 pages. The publisher is Latin America Review of Books, Ltd., 69 Cannon Street, London EC4, and 84 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds. (Price £1.25.) Along with a lot of other things the editors say in their introductory article:

> If more-or-less liberal academics from the United States seem to come in for most of the punishment, that is because they dominate the field by sheer volume of their output, defining and circumscribing the field of knowledge on Latin America (as elsewhere) as far as English-speakers are concerned. The result is that, in much of the United States academic writing on Latin America, the adverse effect of North American dominance is not even considered. In case of social scientists, they frequently ignore economic variables altogether, presumably for fear of being accused of mechanistic economic determination by their colleagues.

This comment is tempered by the admission that the "most uncompromising attacks on United States attitudes are made by North American writers."

The approach of the *Review* is critical and vigorous. For example, in an article dealing with three books on aspects of the Mexican Revolution, Barry Carr, who teaches history in Australia, says:

> Far from being a shining example for the rest of Latin America, and in sharp contrast with the generally accepted picture, Mexico has fallen way behind most other countries of the continent in terms of income equality and in the provision of government social services. As in the days of Porfirio Diaz, income inequality is still a function of the pattern of land ownership. In spite of the very real achievements of the agrarian land reform [accomplished by Lázaro Cárdenas], half of Mexico's cultivators in 1960 worked less than 12% of the landholdings. Just as low taxation rates have stimulated industrialisation, so government discrimination in the provision of credit and irrigation in favour of private agriculture has contributed to the problem of the landless labourers and impoverished *minifundios.* Rarely . . . has a government tailored its policies so closely and consistently to rewarding the activities of the private sector.

Teresa Hayter begins a review of three books on "aid" with this paragraph:

> The question of "aid" is riddled with illusions. Presumably because so many who study it are men of goodwill, who have a tendency to ascribe similar characteristics to others, and, in particular, to the governments of imperialist countries. But governments perform services for the classes they represent; the capitalist class in the case of the industrialised countries of the West. In so far as this

> class has any interest in underdeveloped countries, it is that these countries should continue to be exploitable, a rich field for the extraction of surplus value, and its transference to the metropolis. The capitalists of the industrialised countries support or tolerate aid only if they consider that it helps to perpetuate capitalism in underdeveloped countries, and thus their opportunities for making profits.

An article by Gary MacEoin describes several books on the emergence of radical Catholic and Protestant Christianity in Latin America—a movement inspired by Pope John. The theme is that any church with a future in Latin America must identify with the dispossessed masses, and put an end to its role as a servant and supporter of the political state. The account provides this interesting information:

> The break with tradition of the radicals is not limited to the content of their message. Equally striking is their tactical alliance with progressive Protestants. The importance of Protestantism in Latin America is much greater than is generally realised. Statistics show that 90% of the people are baptised Catholics, leaving only 10% as Protestants. However, some 80% of Latin Americans—for sociocultural and economic reasons—are only marginally reached by the church institutions; the other, decision-making, 20% has proportionately far more Protestants than Catholics.

Other reviews deal with recent books on Cuba, on Puerto Rico, where an intellectual revolt against American cultural imperialism is developing, and on Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. There is a study of Peronism in Argentina and three articles on Brazil. Richard Gott tells how he selects the titles for the Pelican Latin American Library, of which he is the editor. This series began publishing in 1971. There are also many short reviews.

The coverage planned by the editors is broad. They expect to consider Chicano studies published in the United States, and to give attention to minority publishers in this country.