

THE SOURCES OF MORALITY

WHAT is wrong with the world—or wrong, at least, with *our* world? That something is wrong seems beyond question. So many things in which we have had faith are no longer stable and reliable. Reading in an exceptionally fine book that came out recently, we found, right at the beginning, what seemed a likely answer to our questions. This first chapter is quite short, so that we are able to quote a substantial portion of it to repeat the persuasive suggestion of the writer, Alasdair MacIntyre. His book is *After Virtue—A Study in Moral Theory*, issued by the University of Notre Dame Press in 1981, also in London by Duckworth. It begins:

Imagine that the natural sciences were to suffer the effects of a catastrophe. A series of environmental disasters are blamed by the general public on the scientists. Widespread riots occur, laboratories are burnt down, physicists are lynched, books and instruments are destroyed. Finally a Know-Nothing political movement takes power and successfully abolishes science teaching, imprisoning and executing the remaining scientists. Later still there is a reaction against this destructive movement and enlightened people seek to revive science, although they have largely forgotten what it was. But all that they possess are fragments: a knowledge of experiments detached from any knowledge of the theoretical context which gave them significance; parts of theories unrelated either to the other bits and pieces of theory which they possess or to experiment, instruments whose use has been forgotten; half-chapters from books, single pages from articles, not always fully legible because torn and charred. None the less all these fragments are re-embodied in a set of practices which go under the revived names of physics, chemistry and biology. Adults argue with each other about the respective merits of relativity theory, evolutionary theory and phlogiston theory, although they possess only a very partial knowledge of each. Children learn by heart the surviving portions of the periodic table and recite as incantations some of the theorems of Euclid. Nobody, or almost nobody, realizes that what they are doing is not natural science in any proper sense at all. For

everything they do and say conforms to certain canons of consistency and coherence and those contexts which would be needed to make sense of what they are doing have been lost, perhaps irretrievably.

After a couple more paragraphs of elaboration of this deplorable condition, the author asks: "What is the point of constructing this imaginary world inhabited by fictitious pseudo-scientists . . .?" He explains:

The hypothesis which I wish to advance is that in the actual world which we inhabit the language of morality is in the same state of grave disorder as the language of natural science in the imaginary world which I have described. What we possess, if this view is true, are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed the simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have—very largely, if not entirely lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality.

Upon reflection, we decided that Mr. MacIntyre is absolutely right. We should note, however, that he is not denying the presence in human beings of a moral sense. We have it, and use it, after a fashion. It functions as a factor in virtually all our judgments of others, as though it were a secondary instinct or a primary intuition. When we see or read about injustice and feel outraged, our moral sense is responsible. We certainly want our children to be what we think of as good and decent people and may be permanently depressed should they not turn out that way. We are, inveterately, all of us, moralists. Yet it must be admitted, looking at the world and what nations, organizations and individuals do, that moral ideas are having little if any effect on human behavior. A glance at the daily paper is sufficient evidence of this. It seems just to conclude that while we do indeed have moral feelings and a few ideas of what constitutes

morality, we have no compelling theory which might help to make us regard moral injunctions as having, say, a force behind them like the forces of nature, which are inescapable. In short, our morals, on the theoretical level, seem no more than sentiments. This, as we understand him, is Mr. MacIntyre's contention, a situation which he wants to remedy.

How? To see how, one must read his book, which is too learned and scholarly for any sort of summary here. We can, however, repeat a little of his final conclusion in the last chapter, where he speaks of "the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness." He goes on:

If my account of our moral condition is correct, we ought also to conclude that for some time now we . . . have reached [a] turning point. What matters at this time is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have been governing us for some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes our predicament.

Two other writers have focused on the general problem of morality—E. F. Schumacher and Wendell Berry—although from different points of view. A classic statement by Schumacher occurs in his paper, "The Critical Question of Size," which appeared in *Resurgence* for May-June 1975. There he said:

One of our fundamental needs is to be able to act in accordance with our moral impulses. In a big organization our freedom to do so is inevitably severely restricted. Our primary duty is to stay within the rules and regulations, which, although contrived by human beings, are not themselves human beings. No matter how carefully drawn up, they lack the flexibility of the "human touch."

The bigger the organization, the less it is possible for any member of it to act freely as a moral being; the more frequent are the occasions when someone will say: "I am sorry, I know what I am doing is not quite right, but these are my instructions" or "these are the regulations I am paid to implement" or "I myself agree with you; perhaps you could take the matter to a higher level, or to your member of parliament."

As a result, big organizations often behave very badly, very immorally, very stupidly and inhumanely, not because the people inside them are any of these things but simply because the organization carries the load of bigness. The people inside them are criticized by people outside, and such criticism is of course justified and necessary, but it bears the wrong address. It is not the people of the organization but its size that is at fault. It is like blaming a car's exhaust on the driver; even an angel could not drive a car without fouling the air.

This is a situation of universal frustration: the people inside the organization are morally frustrated because they lack freedom of action, and the people outside are frustrated because, rare exceptions apart, their legitimate moral complaints find no positive response and all too often merely produce evasive, meaningless, blandly arrogant, or downright offensive replies.

Here, you could say, Schumacher has described a designer problem. Keeping organizations small, so that people can respond to their moral intelligence, is what is needed. But for the designer it is indeed a moral problem. In these circumstances, bigness should simply not be allowed. But our society has a long way to go to recognize and obey this rule. Our moral theory is weak and inoperative at our level of social complexity.

We go next to the reflections of Wendell Berry, in an essay, "Poetry and Place," in his book, *Standing by Words*. He says:

If some Christians make it an article of faith that it is good to kill heathens or Communists, they will sooner or later have corpses to show for it. If some Christians believe, as alleged, that God gave them the world to do with as they please, they will sooner or later have deserts and ruins in measurable proof. If some Christians really believe that pride, lust, envy, anger, covetousness, gluttony, and sloth are deadly

sins, then they will make improvements in government that will sooner or later be tangible and quantifiable.

That it is thus possible for an article of faith to be right or wrong according to worldly result suggests that we may be up against limits and necessities in our earthly experience as absolute as "the will of God" was ever taken to be, and that "the will of God" as expressed in moral law may therefore have the same standing as the laws of gravity and thermodynamics. In Dryden's day, perhaps, it was still possible to think of "love one another" as a rule contingent on faith. By our own day such evidence has accumulated as to suggest that it may be an absolute law: Love one another or die, individually and as a species.

If so, then the difference between that law and a physical law such as the law of gravity is only a difference in the proximity of cause to effect. If I step off the roof, I will fall *immediately*; if, in this age of nuclear weapons, toxic chemicals, rampant destruction of soil, etc., we do not love one another, we or our children will suffer for it *sometime*. It is a critical difference, for it explains why people who do not ever willingly step off a roof will fearlessly regard their neighbors as enemies or competitors or economic victims. The uncertainty of the term between offense and punishment under moral law licenses all our viciousness, foolishness, and pride. Though most of us know that it is moral law—which is finally apt to look suspiciously like natural law—that visits our sins upon our children (and other people's children), still, to the worst side of our nature, deferred justice is no justice; we will rape the land and oppress the poor, and leave starvation and bloody vengeance (we hope) to be "surprises or "acts of God" to a later generation.

Because moral justice tends not to be direct or immediate, obedience to moral law, whether or not we think it divine, becomes a matter of propriety: of asking who and where we think we are, and on whose behalf (if anyone's) we think we are acting.

This concluding paragraph by Berry shows the importance of moral *theory*—concerned with why we think right is right and wrong is wrong. We cannot have a moral theory without metaphysical conceptions of who and what we are and of an order which governs our being. Alasdair MacIntyre goes to Aristotle for help, but we think he might have found it simpler if he had

given attention to Eastern philosophy. He might have found in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and in Mahayana Buddhism the idea that we are all expressions of the one Self, units of self-conscious awareness with a common origin. It follows that we are parts of one another, expressions of a common identity. How, then, are we different, as we most certainly are? We are different by reason of the lenses through which we look, our instruments of perception. These lenses are what some have called souls, our avenues and powers of perception. While all have essentially the same powers, we use them differently according to our conception of the self and our idea of what is good. One in essence, we are differentiated by our motives, which vary widely, leading to moral judgments of one another. Great souls are those who have developed their instruments of perception to the point of true impartiality. They see things whole and are therefore in fundamental agreement, as may be seen in the work of Great Teachers. The differences in what have come down to us as their teachings are almost certainly differences in development and attitude of their followers, the source of partisanship and conflict.

What do we mean by "moral"? Moral understanding results from self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is awareness of one's distinctive being, as apart from all other beings. As a result of this sense of self, we have the power of choice. We can do one thing or another, depending upon which level of our being is the ruling principle in our behavior. We can act as bodies, with bodily motivations, or as a constellation of desires, with the compulsions of passion and appetite, or as minds, hungering to know and to maintain control over the forces of nature, or as spirits with a strong sense of our inner connection, even identity, with all the rest. Morality consists in behaving according to our best judgment and will inevitably reflect the level where we live most of the time. But moral ideas are derivations from a higher sense of order—the ethical sense, which is based upon the metaphysics we feel or articulate in philosophy. Morality is the

application of ethics. Moral theory, then, is hardly to be distinguished from ethical theory, at its source. When Berry speaks of the need for propriety, which will depend upon "who and where we think we are, and on whose behalf we are acting," he is proposing the need for ethical theory.

The simplest and best ethical theory we know of is the Buddhist teaching of the Law of Karma—which means the total accountability of every individual for what he does, at every level of his being. His present is always the product of his thought and actions in the past, his future the result of what he does now. A "savior" is one who teaches the law of Karma. He can do no more, and he must not do less. Why, having this teaching, do Buddhists, like other humans, do wrong and make mistakes? A Buddhist teacher would answer, "Because of the Heresy of Separateness." Because his interests appear to be different from the interests of others, he pursues them at the expense of others. This pursuit engenders habits, and habits in time shape character, beliefs, and finally one or another destiny. Yet from teaching and the batterings of self-made circumstance, one may learn the law of life, and then, by considered choice, the individual may from victim become volunteer, a *Bodhisattva*, one who turns away from earned nirvanic bliss to remain on earth as a teacher of humans, even a Buddha. This is an evolutionary doctrine—even a blade of grass, it is poetically said, may become a Buddha.

What are we, then? We are centers of consciousness with the power of choice—immortal monads (to borrow a term from Leibniz) which pass from life to life, learning and suffering until we overcome the heresy of separateness. This, at any rate, is an ethical theory of great appeal.

The problem has another aspect. The reader of Berry's illustration—the man who will never step off the roof but will "fearlessly regard" his neighbors "as enemies or competitors or economic

victims"—may decide that it would be a great improvement on the arrangements if we could really *see* ahead the moral consequences of all our acts, since then we would be as wary of doing something wrong as we are of stepping off the roof. We would like, in short, a morally sure thing. But if there is a moral law, it is not, in this sense, a sure thing. We are reduced, as Berry suggests, to a sense of "propriety." We must do what we think is right without being sure of any reward. That is the moral situation.

We want, in short, a moral life without risk. But it would then be no longer a moral life, in Plato's view. He held that the real decisions that the human being makes are decisions in which he has the alternative of dissent. Aristotle, who believed in apodictic instruction—two and two are four and you better believe it—wanted righteousness to become compulsive, so he began the development of the scientific method, which was intended to put all matters beyond debate. In our own time, this drive for certainty—material, mechanistic certainty—has very nearly abolished all moral theory, which is the reason for Mr. MacIntyre's book.

At the same time, we have this inner sense of there being right and wrong, good and evil, and of our having obligations in relation to what we do. We have the fact of moral ideas and intentions in our lives, but no sustainable theory to give them intellectual stamina. So our morals are weak, our moral determination flabby, our judgments mostly compromised by modern versions of the heresy of separateness.

In "Discipline and Hope," one of his *Recollected Essays* (North Point Press, 1981), Berry writes of this:

If the Golden Rule were generally observed among us, the economy would not last a week. We have made our false economy a false god, and it has made blasphemy of the truth. So I have met the economy in the road, and am expected to yield it right of way. But I will not get over. My reason is that I am a man, and have a better right to the ground than the economy. The economy is no god for me, for I

have had too close a look at its wheels. I have seen it at work in the strip mines and coal camps of Kentucky, and I know it has no moral limits. It has emptied the country of the independent and the abject. It has always sacrificed the small to the large, the personal to the impersonal, the good to the cheap. It has ridden its questionable triumphs over the bodies of small farmers and tradesmen and craftsmen. I see it, still driving my neighbors off their farms into the factories. I see it teaching my students to give themselves a price before they can give themselves a value. Its principle is to waste and destroy the living substance of the world and the birthright of posterity for a monetary profit that is the most flimsy and useless of human artifacts.

"You are tilting at windmills," a reader may say to Berry. He replies that yes, there is a sense in which he *is* tilting at windmills.

While we have been preoccupied by various ideological menaces, we have been invaded and nearly overrun by windmills. They are drawing the nourishment from our soil and the lifeblood out of our veins. Let us tilt against the windmills. Though we have not conquered them, if we do not keep going at them they will surely conquer us.

Berry, like MacIntyre, believes that we have lost or forgotten the basis of morality, which must now be restored. We need to restore the theory, MacIntyre says, and he is right. Berry says we need to remember that morality is what we do in the world, and he, too, is right. He says:

What we have forgotten is the origin of morality in fact and circumstance; we have forgotten that the nature of morality is essentially practical. Moderation and restraint, for example, are necessary, not because of any religious commandment or any creed or code, but because they are among the assurances of good health and a sufficiency of goods. Likewise, discipline is necessary if the necessary work is to be done; also if we are to know transport, transcendence joy. Loyalty, devotion, faith, self-denial are not ethereal virtues, but the concrete terms upon which the possibility of love is kept alive in the world. Morality is neither ethereal nor arbitrary; it is the definition of the penalties for violating human possibility. A person who violates human limits is punished or he prepares a punishment for his successors, not necessarily because of any divine or human law, but because he has transgressed the order of things. The order of things, of course, *is* a law—

and not a human one. A live and adequate morality is an accurate perception of the order of things, and of humanity's place in it. By clarifying the human limits, morality tells us what we risk when we forsake the human to behave like false gods or like animals.

REVIEW

THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES

FOR readers of Gandhian literature, the Englishwoman whom Gandhi renamed Mirabehn, associated with him for much of his life, remains only a shadowy presence, someone who was "along," but of whom the reader knows nothing and may have thought of as an unimportant oddity. But now, with publication in this country of *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, Mirabehn's story of her life, her presence is filled out into a strong-minded woman who lived as she believed she must and should, and on whom Gandhi came to rely in various ways. (The book was issued in 1984 by Great Ocean Publishers, Arlington, Virginia, in well-made paperback, and sells for \$9.95. It has more than 300 pages.)

Mirabehn was born to well-to-do parents in England in 1892. Her name was Madeleine Slade. Her father was an admiral in the British navy. She was raised as a child on a twenty-acre farm belonging to her mother's family, where she grew up among cows (which she milked) and horses (which she rode). She loved trees and other growing things and was happy with her family, especially her grandfather, feeling no need for other children to play with. She was pleased not to go to school, learning from tutors. In a way, almost from the cradle, she lived by common sense, being puzzled by what she was told of religion, learning to use carpenter's tools at an early age, and to care for the horses. London, where as a child she went shopping with her mother, had no motor cars in those days. They went in a hansom cab, which she enjoyed because of the horse. She was a wondering child and at five or six, she says, "my mind began to search in the region of the *unknowable* and was stricken with awe." She was shocked by the way people ended their prayers, "world without end—Amen" as though they had never thought about the meanings of the words.

People seemed to repeat these sorts of phrases quite glibly and I felt it was useless to say anything of

what troubled me. The church attitude about Heaven and Hell also worried me a lot. How could people be fixed up for eternity as the fruits of one short life, especially as no two people had the same opportunities for winning through? What about people who died young, and what about poor colored people, who, I heard, were all heathens? Obviously something was wrong. It was an impossible puzzle. I could not make it out, and would again seek escape in the happy life around me.

But there was something which every now and then wafted me far away. It would come at quiet moments, and always through the voice of Nature—the singing of a bird, the sound of the wind in the trees. Though this was the voice of the unknown, I felt no fear, only an infinite joy.

Her character was formed early, it seems—or she brought it with her to earth. She was an adolescent girl when the family acquired a player-piano attachment for their grand. A selection of classical pieces came with it and she played Beethoven's Sonata Opus 31, No. 2—again and again. She had found one of the great loves of her life. She tried to learn to play the piano, but never became good at it. But Beethoven's music took possession of her.

There are lots of photographs in the book. The thing you notice in the portrait of Madeleine Slade as a young woman, more than her handsomeness, is the quite evident strength of character which shows in her face. She had no conventional interests and when her father was sent to India by the navy the family went along, but Madeleine didn't like the dancing at elaborate social affairs and avoided it when she could. There was no relation to her later life in India in this assignment of her father's. Meanwhile, in 1914, the first world war began. Her comment was that while the physical effects of shooting and bombing were bad enough, "The hate propaganda maimed and killed the sanity of the mind."

That frightful hate machinery was now being put into action with amazing results. Before long the kindest and sweetest people on earth began talking as if the opponents were not human beings at all, but just so much vermin to be trampled underfoot. My heart sickened. I had, in the beginning, joined parties

of ladies who sat and prepared bandages, etc., but the kind of hate talk I had to listen to was so shocking that I could not bear it. I left off going altogether, and said that if I must do something, then let me go to the country and work on a farm from time to time, when there was pressure of work.

But what, after all, drew her to Gandhi? Actually, her deep affection for Beethoven. After the war German music was never played in London and to remedy this prejudice she organized concerts there to be given by a Scottish musician who played Beethoven. The idea worked. At the second concert the tickets were sold out and England recovered from the monotony of mediocre composers. She read *Jean-Christophe*, Romain Rolland's life of a German musician, based partly on Beethoven (Rolland taught the history of music at the Sorbonne), and got up her courage and went to see the famous novelist.

He advised me to travel, and spoke of Austria and other places. Then he mentioned India, not with any suggestion that my travels should take me there but in connection with a small book he said he had just written, and which was in the press, called *Mahatma Gandhi*. I looked blank.

"You have not heard about him?" he asked.

"No," I replied.

So he told me, and added: "He is another Christ."

Those words went deep, but I stored them away without thinking that they had any special significance for me personally.

But a few months later, in Naples, she saw the book in a shop window and bought a copy.

I started reading it that morning, and once having begun there was no stopping. In the middle of the day when I went out to a restaurant for lunch I took the little book with me, then back I went to my room, and by evening I had finished it.

Now I knew what that "something" was, the approach of which I had been feeling. I was to go to Mahatma Gandhi who served the cause of oppressed India through fearless truth and nonviolence. I did not weigh the pros and cons or try to reason *why* this

was the outcome of my prayers. The call was absolute, and that was all that mattered.

She reserved a berth on a liner for India, then realized that she wasn't really "ready" to go. She changed her booking for a year later and decided to undergo severe self-training in that interval of time, to fit herself to work with Gandhi. She learned spinning and hand-weaving, and studied the Indian language, Urdu. She read the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Rigveda*. She wrote to Gandhi, telling him of her decision and how she was getting ready. He wrote back saying that if, after the year, she was still resolved to come, "you will probably be right in coming to India." After the year was over he wrote to say that someone would meet her at the steamer and bring her to Sabarmati, where he was then working. She arrived in Bombay early in November, 1925, and was met by Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's secretary. When they reached the ashram, Gandhi simply said to her, "You shall be my daughter." And her Indian and Gandhian education began. She had been able to enter "the intimate heart of his daily life."

We shall not attempt, in the space we have left, to summarize what Mirabehn relates. She became very useful to Gandhi, by reason of her independent character and her background of farming and outdoor life. In time she took on projects that he had in mind, teaching sanitation and spinning to the villagers, carrying on the work of Sarvodaya. Here we shall speak only of a few highlights of their work together. Concerning Sabarmati, which had a miscellaneous population of some two hundred people, she says:

I began to realize that a laboratory for experimenting with theories for the betterment of the world must be comprised of such a cross-section, and not a carefully chosen selection of unusual people. I began to understand also another fundamental difference between Bapu and other spiritual leaders. Bapu would, on no account, accept anyone as a disciple, and flatly refused to be looked upon as a Guru. "The conception of Guru," he would say, "is so lofty that there is no one in these days competent to live up to the ideal. There may have been such super-

beings in the past, and even today there may be some purest Rishees (seers) existing in unknown caves in the Himalayas who are worthy of being accepted as Gurus, but this ancient conception of Guru and disciple is not for us ordinary mortals of this degenerate age. So seek God and look to Him alone as Guru, for He will never fail you if you seek Him with a true heart."

For Gandhi, God is Truth.

As it turned out, Gandhi's most difficult opponents were not the British. Hardest to overcome, for him, was the caste elitism of the Hindu religion, and Jinnah's determination to have India subdivided into two countries, one Hindu, the other Moslem. He worked away ceaselessly to erase untouchability, calling his magazine *Harijan*, his name for the scheduled castes, meaning "Children of God." He had conferences with Jinnah, all of them failures. Jinnah was the powerful leader of the Moslem League, and when it seemed that he would not get what he wanted from the British, he said that "we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it." The Moslems withdrew from discussions and began what Jinnah called "Direct Action." What he meant became evident in Bengal, where a Moslem, Suhrawardy, was premier and Calcutta was the scene.

Jinnah's pistol proved to be nothing more or less than the unleashing of hideous hooliganism. Never in history had such terrible communal riots burst forth, and the streets of Calcutta were soon strewn with dead and dying.

The Hindus, who were more numerous, then organized and retaliated, creating a veritable holocaust. It was this continued enmity between Hindus and Moslem's which very nearly broke Gandhi's heart. His last acts in India were toward putting an end to communal hatred, but India was partitioned and Gandhi did only what he could.

Mirabeen's book takes the reader into the everyday life of Gandhi as no other volume does.

COMMENTARY **SEEING THE UNITY**

IN this week's lead article, in the brief paragraph on page two which comes at the end of the long quotation from Wendell Berry, what is commonly a weak word is used in its strongest sense—a sense now marked obsolete in the unabridged Webster's Dictionary, which gives "propriety" the meaning of "peculiar, proper, or true nature, character, or condition." This meaning has been largely replaced by the idea of proprieties as "the customs and manners of polite society: conventionally correct behavior."

Berry, however, restores the old meaning, suggesting that our behavior should be guided by our sense of what is our true nature or character. This, obviously, calls for a measured conclusion about our nature. How are we constituted?

Why is this so important? Because, as Berry makes clear, in any situation we are able to react in at least two ways. There is a story of Plato that when a visitor came to his home, he found Plato standing in the hall with his arm upraised, but motionless. "What," asked his friend, who could make no sense of this frozen gesture, "are you doing?" Plato replied, "I am punishing an angry man." He explained to the visitor that he had raised his arm to strike a servant, but caught himself in time. Then, to burn into his memory that he should not strike someone in a subordinate position, in effect unable to defend himself, he remained in what became a strained and uncomfortable position for half an hour, so that he would be better able to remember, even when given provocation, the impropriety of striking another human being.

This little story instructs us in the fact that human nature is complex, and that the proper thing to do is to act from reflection, not impulse. This view is of a piece with the French proverb, "To understand all is to forgive all," the essential meaning of which is that when we grasp the motives of others for what they do, we become far

more patient with them. This, one could say, is the root character of being human: we are able to *understand*, although much of the time we fail to try to understand. Propriety means, for Berry, making a profound effort to understand. If we all did this as well as we could, there would probably be no wars and certainly much less injustice. Understanding leads us to recognize how much we are all alike, despite our differences—to see the unity behind differences.

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

SOME COMMUNICATIONS

A READER in Alaska who takes the *New York Times* copied out for us a letter to the editor. It reads as follows:

For 60 years I have been convinced that the Boy Scouts of America is an organization that has done much to enhance the lives of young people of this and other countries, but I am beginning to have second thoughts.

Recently, at the annual Scout Jamboree at Fort A. P. Hill in Virginia, the boys at the camp were invaded by a detachment of Green Berets, who staged a recruiting session in which the men described and demonstrated the joys of Army life.

One of the soldiers showed the youngsters how to tie knots, Army lasagna was served to demonstrate the excellence of Army food, and the boys were treated to a display of military activity that, according to the television announcer to whom I was listening, at no point even mentioned the matter of sudden death.

Now I wonder—is the Boy Scout organization to become a breeding ground for the militarization of America's youth?

How low (in age) can the military go in recruiting prepuberty boys? How wise are the Scout officials in permitting or encouraging the Army to stage such an exhibition for teenagers? What sort of hero image is to be developed among our young men? Will the Scout oath be revised in order to stress the need of killing as many of an enemy as possible?

Would I encourage my own grandson to affiliate with the Boy Scouts, knowing that he was going to be brain-washed like this? I wonder.

The same Alaskan reader also sent us the personal report of a West German journalist who now works with the Peace Movement in the United States. (His report appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter*.) What he says might make a useful source for a "social studies" program. He said:

Driving out and within 100 miles of my home in West Germany, I pass three nuclear missile sites.

The field manual of the American soldiers based at those sites tells them they have to fight aggressively and offensively, using conventional, chemical, and nuclear weapons. West Germany is the only country in the world with a nuclear density of four warheads for each square mile.

The Nazis talked about the extermination of the Jews nobody believed they would do it. But they tried. Today, the official NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) line talks about extermination, as well, only the phrase in today's nuclear world is "mutually assured destruction." The ovens are ready again, and, since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we know how well they work.

Struggling to understand how we could come to a situation so similar to the one Germans vowed never to come up against again, I think of my parents.

In 1944, when the war reached his town near the Polish border, my father was 12 years old. The job for his age bracket was to bury frozen corpses so that all the males 14 and older would be free for combat. Later, he fled west to reach the safer part of Germany. By the time the war ended my father was 13 and had already lost the last ounce of hope that there was anything good in humanity. "Learn how to survive." That was the lesson he learned from his youth. My mother learned her lesson when she was herded into a Russian truck with other captured women, and jumped to freedom.

His parents then worked with the Americans to help rebuild Germany. They were grateful to America, where "Care Packages" came from. The Russians sent no food packages to eastern Germany, which they had occupied. American politics came with American aid. In those days it was called "Peace and Democracy." But his parents "left it to those who were at the top to design the everyday life of democracy."

"When you have seen to what end politics can lead you " my father once told me, "you vote, but are not interested in politics any more." That widespread attitude made it easier to rearm Germany only ten years after the war ended. My father didn't oppose that development. Didn't Russian tanks crush every protest in East Berlin, in Hungary and Czechoslovakia? And who else but Americans could defend West Germany?

But what about the Holocaust? Could Germany simply forget about it? Not really, but they could not

think about it all the time either. . . . It took me long years of historical studies to understand how the nation of Mozart, Beethoven, and Goethe could turn into the Third Reich. It also took me a long time to understand how the relief and liberation my parents experienced at the beginning of the West German-American alliance could turn into a crude hostage situation. Knowing that all nuclear missiles in West Germany are under direct U.S. control, knowing the talk about "limited nuclear war" with West Germany as the battlefield, knowing that the points of total destruction are already marked on U.S. Army war plans, I can not call what West Germany is living in today anything but a hostage situation.

Yet the experience of this former West German journalist includes other things.

Meanwhile, I am a guest in the United States and I am grateful for the signs of hope I see. Being invited as a German to a Jewish seder is a sign of hope for real reconciliation—a sign found in the same country that manufactures the missiles stationed in West Germany. A friend of mine who teaches religion at a high school and refuses to pay war taxes is another sign of hope. The Americans I meet working in soup kitchens and shelters for the homeless are signs of hope because they tell me solidarity, justice, and peacefulness are still living qualities in this country.

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The impact of Abraham Maslow, a major founder of the humanistic psychology movement, continues to be felt. In a brief paper, "We Are All Art Educators," John Keel, for years professor of art education at San Francisco State College, says that Maslow saw the arts as "a significant means of what he called "self-actualization" and, as such, an important way of a general-educational process."

In *Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, a posthumous collection of his essays, he explored the nature of this process. He showed he was more interested in the operational aspects of "self-actualization" than in viewing this term as a grand abstraction.

Like most art educators I know, he was interested in "being values" such as "expressiveness," "beauty," "creativity," "good form," etc. He once wrote: "Self-actualizing people are, without one

single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of themselves."

Part of the process means expanding the use of the senses and the nervous system. "Self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption." "When in doubt," he has written, "be honest rather than not." He seemed to recognize, however, a place for maintaining the strength of an image at the expense of scientific accuracy.

On self-actualization:

Self-actualization means giving up defense mechanisms of cynicism, desacralization, and the holding back of our spirit. "Self-actualization means learning or being taught resacralizing. Resacralizing means being willing, once again, to see a person 'under the aspect of eternity,' as Spinoza says. . . . being able to see the sacred, the eternal, the symbolic."

Self-actualization is the facilitation of a process which has already begun. "We already have a start," Maslow insisted. "We already have capacities, talents, direction, missions, callings. The job is, if we are to take this model seriously, to be more fully, more actualizing, more realizing in fact what we are in potentiality."

FRONTIERS

The Word of Architectural Form

[A Hungarian reader, for many years a subscriber, who lives in Budapest, feeling that American readers have little idea of the constructive ferment proceeding in his country has sent us a brief outline of the contents of a pamphlet, *Hungarian Living Architecture*, he came across while visiting the Hungarian Fair of Architecture last summer. It was not he said, an expression of *samisdat*, or underground printing, but made up of fourteen questions, asked of young Hungarian architects, and their answers. Their thinking represents an activity they have carried on for the past twenty-two years. "I think," our correspondent says, "you will find it filled with fundamentally common desires and parallel thinking which goes far beyond architecture." We reproduce here a somewhat "Americanized" version of the English text he supplied.]

DURING the spring of 1980 a few students of architecture, accompanied by an older man of forty-five, Imre Makovecz, who practices vernacular architecture, made an excursion into the Visegrad mountains near Budapest. This resulted in calling their undertaking a Camp of Architects Afield, and in the following summer, in a desert quarry, the young participants wove a hive-shaped structure of slender tree-trunks and covered it with a skin of stones. In the next summer they made a dome-like bridge out of waste oak timber and covered it with soil. They also paved a road with stones weighing from 50 to 200 kgs each.

Then, calling their work "organic architecture," they formulated their questions and answers, took photographs, and made their pamphlet for display at the Architectural Fair. They expressed their ideas freely. Mr. Makovecz and his associates have shown by the buildings they erected that it is possible to create humane space for souls sojourning on earth, despite the various obstacles created by the spirit of the times. These young architects are opposed to dwelling compounds made of prefabricated elements, to hydroelectric power-stations alien to the environment. They design small settlements of

people in contrast with the forced concentration of many packed into small space. They do not regard housing as a branch of industry based on economic indexes, using design reduced to engineering, and they resist turning the landscape into a faceless image.

Hungary, they feel, has become the product of two largely negative processes, and official architecture reflects this contradictory blend. Hungary lies in Central Europe and is ground by the millstones of two ideologies, two systems of only half-truth. The West offers freedom and welfare, the East social justice. Western economic thinking compels senseless and unnecessary industrialization, while Eastern thinking suggests fanaticism and the claim that individuality is worthless. The Western drive for profit embeds us in materiality so that other areas of life are covered by a chaos of weeds. The fact is that the market economy, both East and West, drives underground life's real demands.

Adding market devices to ideology has not brought equilibrium, while the military measures have done no good. In the West we are lullabied into welfare, while power rules in the East. The result is confusion. We live East and look West; we live West and fear the East.

The confrontations between East and West produce the tragedies of life which can find no Middle. A victory by either side would bring death of a sort. The omnipotence of economic welfare is quite as frightening as the omnipotence of ideology. Dread of each other leads to a kind of duplicity—in short, the arms race. But even disarmament would leave us untouched if attitudes are unchanged. Our inertia would still exist.

Bravery—a creative virtue—has to be regained. True bravery would restore the Middle. It would enable us to ask essential questions. Without this bravery people will remain what they are: helpless, desolate, living in continuous uncertainty. We must then realize that parties and ideologies can never take us to the Middle. We must break out of the schizophrenic situation in

which the cleavage into East and West is requirement number one.

We must recognize why one-sided acceptance of either West or East is a danger to ourselves, and how both sides are afflicted. The rapid development of science, while opening the way to more knowledge of material processes, has also shut out knowledge of our spiritual origin. By dressing up science in the trappings of revolution, we have made it a fetish, and have disrupted the aeons-old order of nature. We have atrophied our delicate feelers to find our way out of a thick fog. We have developed techniques that enhance consumption but which cannot lift by even one inch the spiritual and moral level of consumers. To make ideas and policies sell better, we have undermined our capacity to think and decide. Excellence is measured by the measure of the material goods we have acquired.

In both East and West, the prevailing materialism justified by science has proved to be self-deception. It is ever more clear that science enables man to live in the objective world only, not in the world as a whole. Our highly honored science can drive us all into catastrophe. Marxism believes firmly that with science we can bludgeon nature, including ourselves. Is "the Fall" really a non-scientific myth?

Nosce te ipsum [know thyself] seems to have lost nothing of its indispensability—an idea palpably coming into its own in our country. Here, where young men from 24 to 28 are forced into a way of living they cannot be fond of, and where open words are not permitted, the natural reaction is to turn inward looking for spiritual depths, however isolated. With a sunken heart the young man is bound to think over everything that has been essential to him. A few will thus find basic laws of nature. If they subordinate themselves to such laws, they will find their own Middle and a few companions, and will begin to do organic thinking. And the Middle will begin to resurrect.

Why "organic"? Because it returns to nature. The thinking may also be called "substantialist" because it is willing to give place to the part within the whole. Organic-substantialist thinking rejects artificial structures. Actually, the blast of materialist thinking can ripen into an avenue which is a spiritual turnoff. Profit—and production-oriented thinking—will go on manipulating, distorting, intimidating, wherever it can. Its champions will try to conceal the path to the Middle by decorating our faceless environment. But this can hardly satisfy the human heart.

Meanwhile, organic-substantialist thinking and organic architecture are alive, if only on the periphery. It can point to good things: a spring house, here and there a dwelling, a library, perhaps a church, cellar clubs, wood-carving workshops, houses of education, community centers. Organicists are patient, tolerant people, happy if they are able to work and transmit.

Imre Makovecz has suggested that, in the Carpathian Basin, queer lights are glimmering through the soil. It is the inward brightness of mother earth, sun of the spirit driven underground. Its sparkle of light is transforming buildings of living Hungarian architecture, whose forms take the place of the open word.