

MAN is not a creature of instinct. In that regard, he differs in a revolutionary way from every other living creature. He is not born with instincts, like those of the birds and bees, which fit him for survival, to say nothing of gaining lasting satisfactions or happiness.

Therefore, he must learn from the accumulated wisdom of his fellows most of the ways of acting that enable him to survive, and he must get much of this knowledge and numberless skills and habits in infancy and childhood.

Yet, all his life, he needs the help of his fellows in learning how to cope with his ever-changing world. As the saying goes, "Fools learn by experience, wise men learn by the experience of others." Or, "Experience keeps a dear

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[costly] school, but fools will learn in no other."

In short, man is *not* "naturally good." Each new individual must *learn* good conduct. It is not in-born or given to us by others.

Like all living things, normal humans have an urge to survive and multiply. Humans have also an urge to live better — more abundantly, more wisely, securely, with less pain and discomfort, and enjoying more satisfactions of in-increasing variety.

Therefore, man finds some conduct "good," depending on whether it brings him more satisfactions than dissatisfactions; and he has an inborn desire to do that which he believes will give him the greatest net total of satisfactions. In this sense, he is "naturally good." That is, life gives to him a desire to live better.

But desire for satisfactions is very different from knowledge and

ability to get them. I repeat, good conduct, whether knowledge or practice of it, is never given to humans at birth, and we cannot get it by gift after birth.

Therefore, man must LEARN good conduct. And he must learn it in a lifetime that he will find is all too short for learning all he wants and needs for a good life.

Learning Is Hard Work

Now this learning process takes hard *work* on the part of both learners and mentors — parents, playmates, co-workers, employers, friends, hired teachers, and even casual acquaintances. It is work because the effort must continue far beyond the point of immediate enjoyment. In other words, it cannot remain on the level of play — that is, activity indulged in for its own sake or for immediate pleasures.

Because such work is irksome, learning involves stress, strain, pressures. These give rise to tedium, discomfort, fatigue — eye-strain, backaches, headaches, stomach aches, giving up parties and other entertainments and forms of escapism.

These discomforts, in turn, give rise to complaints and protests, and search for escape, especially on the part of the immature who have most to learn (including immature parents, teachers, employ-

ers, and others who seek to instruct). For it is too often forgotten that good manners, good morals, and even good mental hygiene often require great restraint in expressions of displeasure and reactions to discomfort—Sigmund Freud and his disciples to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Student Protests Will Never Cease

It should not surprise us, therefore, that earliest writings record the complaints, even the despair, of parents, teachers, and philosophers about the bad manners, laziness, uncouth dress, and general worthlessness of the youth of their times. And sometimes the subsequent history of the state or nation showed that there was more than usual justification for these complaints, as, perhaps, in the time of Socrates and Plato.

We know little about the feelings of the young of past eras — their aspirations, their complaints about the shortcomings of parents and teachers, and their protests against the pressures for conformity to the standards set by their elders. They could rarely afford, as young people now can afford, the means of recording their opinions.

But we do have enough evidence in the words of the writers in the past to be assured that not all of the young accepted correction and

study assignments with due meekness. Some, no doubt, were quite docile (a word that means “teachable”); others were drop-outs; and in between these extremes we would find every degree of docility or intractability, of industry or sloth.

And often, then as now, protests probably brought about changes, both good and bad, in the methods and courses of instruction. (In the third and fourth centuries, the State-supported schools in Imperial Rome degenerated in ways now to be observed in tax-supported schools and universities in the United States and other countries.)

This “generation gap,” therefore, has always been and must always be. It is the gap between, on the one hand, those with more experience and wisdom, and on the other hand, the as-yet untutored, who are more or less able and willing to learn. Even in the animal world we find evidence of an uncomfortable generation gap when a mother bear or lion cuffs a heedless, slow, reckless, or too obstreperous cub.

In humans, because the gap is so very great and getting ever wider, it takes strenuous effort, I repeat, to close this ever-present “generation gap” in every home, school, club, gang, golf links, bridge party, bowling alley, tennis

court, football field, and workshop. And the effort must be a strenuous one on both sides of the gap, as individuals strive to close it.

Learning Requires Good Manners — and So Does Teaching

Efforts to close the gaps in learning then, take patience, persistence, willingness to forgive and forget blunders, effort to understand one another’s words, aims, and problems.

The work also requires good manners, which are means of showing consideration for others, interest in their feelings and opinions, gratitude, appreciation, and desire for cooperation.

Finally, learning requires improving morals, which include good manners and much more—honesty and honor, dependability, truthfulness with courtesy and with relevance, frankness without malice, industry in countless lines of activity, and continuing concern for the long-run, indirect results of one’s words and deeds.

Good manners, of course, shade into good morals. Why this is so, and why knowing, mature persons show so much sensitivity and concern in regard to what we may think of as “mere” manners become clearer when we realize what “good manners” are. In essence, they are ways of letting other people know that we care about them.

They are ways of showing consideration for their feelings, interests, and opinions, ways of showing friendliness and a desire for cooperation.

We demonstrate them in appropriate facial expressions, such as a friendly smile of greeting or a look of concern when a friend tells of his misfortune. Good manners may be a tone of voice showing warmth, interest, sympathy, and friendliness. They appear in our choice of words and gestures; in personal cleanliness and sanitary habits; in dress and hair styles which are distinctive in ways which other people consider to be "in good taste"; and in forms of conduct too numerous to mention, from holding open a door for another person to stopping a car at crosswalks for pedestrians.

Good manners also include self-restraint in all of these respects — avoiding flat, complaining tones of voice; avoiding words and gestures that annoy, insult, depress, or denigrate others; avoiding public displays of strong emotions; and avoiding actions which other persons consider annoying (e.g., noisy parties) or obscene.

Progress in Manners and Morals

Some "good manners" are tribal or national customs, rather than universal: for example, kinds of eating utensils and ways of using

them, ways of eating or drinking, dress and hair styles, and modes of greeting.

Yet it is nonetheless necessary for members of these tribes and nations, and for their guests, to learn and follow these local customs if they wish to show respect for the residents' opinions and to win the friendliness and cooperation they need to survive and to avoid unpleasantness among those groups.

Many young people today, having discovered that what is considered good manners differs greatly from place to place, have unwisely concluded that good manners may become largely matters of individual choice. They may even think that they help to bring about this freer and happier day by flouting local conventions and customs.

This is another factor aggravating the "generation gap," one that English tutors recognized centuries ago in preparing their students for foreign travel by warning them, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

True, manners and customs are changing everywhere — we hope for the better. There is evidence, I believe, that certain elements in good manners are going to become more universally accepted and necessary for coping with life's problems — for example,

higher levels of personal cleanliness and neatness, a pleasant smile, a friendly greeting, a warm voice, avoiding excesses in public displays of emotion, refraining from littering streets and public places, avoiding air pollution with tobacco smoke (some airplanes now segregate smokers), temperance and sobriety in all things, due attention to fashion and "style," and expressions of gratitude for favors and kindnesses.

A Never-Ending Struggle for Self-Improvement

Similarly, certain forms of conduct which we call "moral" because they are even more important for long-run welfare — or are believed to be so — will remain valid as long as humans want something they don't have or something better than they now have and gain the wisdom necessary to achieve their goals.

For, in order to get more or in some way to better ourselves, we must have more honesty, more dependability, more truthfulness, more regard for the feelings and aspirations of other persons, and more willingness to invest time and energy for long-run gains. And we must have this moral progress everywhere if we are to have continuing progress anywhere — in Soviet Russia and mainland China, for example, as

well as in the United States and Canada.

These gains will not come merely by wishing or hoping for them.

They will come only as more and more individuals, everywhere, learn to look further ahead, understand more fully the results of their conduct, and show more patient determination in their struggles for self-improvement and in discharge of the obligations necessary to win and keep the needed cooperation of their fellows.

This involves widening the "generation gap" between adult and infant or child, between mentor and student, as well as the gap between mature and immature adults. To close this widening gap, as individuals in each generation must do, we must release the instructional procedures from the cramping confines of bureaucratic control.

And perhaps even before this release may take place, we must somehow gain far more general recognition and acceptance of the responsibility of each individual of every age and occupation for dedicated effort in life-long education in the broadest sense of that much-abused word.

A Retreat from Learning

Unfortunately, age does not always bring wisdom. Neither do academic degrees and titles. A

teacher schooled in ancient myths may be a blind leader of the blind. The historian who is ignorant of economics, for example, is likely to be a poor guide to an understanding of history; an economist who knows little history may endorse policies which repeated trials in the past have proven disastrous. A teacher of philosophy may so enjoy baiting his students by playing the role of "devil's advocate" that he promotes confusion and distrust of reason rather than a desire for truth or love of wisdom.

Teachers lacking in courage and scruples often pander to their student's prejudices, indolence, and desire to escape the burdens of responsibility. Demagogy is as rife in many classrooms as in political assemblies.

In particular, the modern established schools are doing to education what established churches do to religion. The Founding Fathers of this country sought to outlaw "established" (religion, that is, the use of tax funds to support religious efforts. They had found by experience — what experience has demonstrated again and again in other lands — that tax support sapped the clergy of enthusiasm, initiative, and responsibility, so that the American people had lost much of their former interest and faith in religion.

State-Established Schools

Now schools and universities supported by taxes and populated by conscripted students are displaying the same defects, for the same reasons, that were evident in the established churches. Instead of helping to close the perennial generation gap, tax-supported educators and their graduates too often operate to widen it. Because they believe that parents and students cannot be individually responsible for education, they develop a chronic skepticism of freedom and individual responsibility in every field of human endeavor.

Therefore, they fail to develop in their students a sense of personal responsibility. Instead, they teach that "society," or "government," of "the establishment" is responsible for both the individual's problems and the solutions. They inculcate distrust and scorn for the achievements of free men and inspire a nihilistic urge to sabotage and destroy what free men have achieved. Thus, too often, they make the immaturity of their students a chronic condition.

Truly, as many observers are now pointing out, this creates a gap, not so much between generations, as between the builders and the destroyers of civilization.

This teaching of irresponsibility

and subversion of free institutions is a betrayal of trust by those who profess superior knowledge and wisdom. It is not new in world history, but we have been experiencing in recent decades a viru-

lent recrudescence of this "treason of the intellectuals," worldwide.

We must recognize and expose this retreat from learning for what it is if human progress is to continue. 

Artificial Distinctions

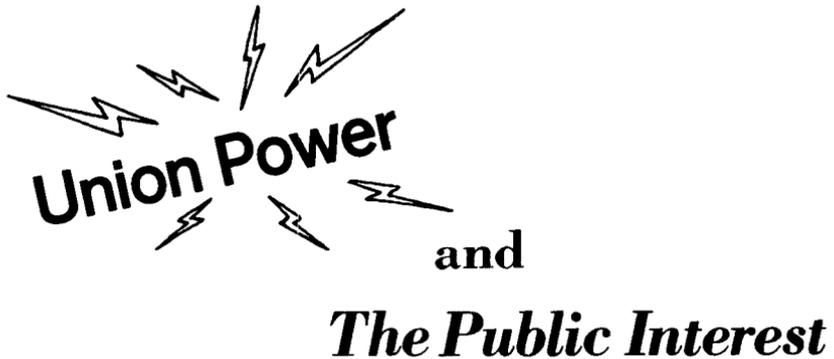
IT IS to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society – the farmers, mechanics, and laborers – who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing. In the act before me there seems to be a wide and unnecessary departure from these just principles.

IDEAS ON



LIBERTY

FROM ANDREW JACKSON'S Veto of the Charter of the Bank of the United States, July 10, 1832.



Union Power
and
The Public Interest

At most of the recent Mont Pelerin Society conferences a battle royal has taken place between the Friedmanites, who insist that inflation is a purely monetary phenomenon, and the wage-push critics, who discover the prime villain in the monopolistic labor union. The two sides rather miss each others' points. Obviously Milton Friedman and Enoch Powell are right when they say that there could be no inflation without an increase in the money supply. Since it is government that controls the currency, the villains come clear: the politicians and the bosses of the Federal Reserve are to blame for their profligate public spending and their pusillanimous refusal to ride herd on the availability of credit.

But the wage-push is there, too: wages are a cost, and costs must be recovered in prices. If the monopolistic labor union can extort a beyond-productivity wage increase, the same politico who lacks the nerve to veto high public spending will hardly have the fortitude to tell the unions that they must accept a penalty in joblessness for pricing themselves out of the market. Friedman and the wage-pushite actually have the same Statist villain, but each persists in emphasizing a different activity of that villain. Friedman says the politico shouldn't go hog-wild on inflationary welfare state spending in the first place. The wage-pushite would agree that welfareism is bad. But he insists that