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Libraries, small presses, paperbacks, homemade books and laud reading among lovers are some of the many signs of a new minority culture of bookish people that is now coming into existence. Something that resembles the monastic withdrawal from the world into ”house of the book” (a Jewish concept) may be considered a hopedfor direction of a welcome exodus from the schools.

For all these reasons, withdrawal from the school and detachment from the educational model of mediation ought to be welcomed as signs of social health. In the schoolbred and now almost unavoidable twotier society and a world of increasing unemployment, the option for such a withdrawal could be more readily available for those of the labeled majority than for those of the certified and busy few. But hardly anybody is seriously reflecting on the conditions which could favor this route. Educational research in the US swallows more money than biology and chemistry taken together. Yet none of it is focused on the transformation of the status of the dropout from that of an escapee who must be caught and brought back into the fold into that of the world wise, reasonable person. I do not plead for some new form of institutionalized haven. I think of niches, free spaces, squatters arrangements, spiritual tents which some of us might be capable to offer, not for ”the dropout in general” but each of us for a small ”list” of others who, through the experience of mutual obedience have become able to renounce integration in the ”system.”

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true dropout. And I know of no better way to turn the dropout into a refusnik who enjoys his avoidance of school that would have interfered with his time, his enthusiasm, and his freedom to read.

Viewed from the outside school classifies people, browbeats them to accept bureaucratic judgments on their own abilities, prepares them for a world that will never more be, trains their ability to fake, but above all, school has ceased to be the right place to become a bookish man. Bookish reading, which was the new spirituality of the time education was born, has become a very special vocation for the few, who need something else than schools to indulge in this leisure.

George Steiner has made this point in a short talk given to the ast International Convention of Publishers. In this talk he argues as follows: "Bookish" reading is not the only way of approaching the written word. Bookish reading depends on a combination of special circumstances, which have existed for barely 400 years and now have disappeared. To read in this classical way, the book had to be accessible at home for rereading in silence. Today few people have homes, fewer have bookcases, and 85% of American students claim they cannot study unless they have music plugged into their ears. Silent and sustained attention is constantly chewed up by programmed noises flickering through the interstices of consciousness. Book culture also demanded stable companions, something like coffee shops and other echochambers, such as periodicals for writers and readers. Above all, book culture was dependent on a canon of texts and modes. Today the book is contested by competing media. The screen dissolves the text. The picture and its caption triumph. The culture of bookishness is under attack by movies and TV, democratic, populist protest and the noise, speed, informationdensity and specialization that prevail. A school that wants to be for all and to prepare for the world that exists cannot be the appropriate framework for the few with a vocation to classical reading.

but a most objectionable creation of false expectations. The epoch of the identification of work with employment, and of employment with the expectation of secure salaries has come to an end. The idea according to which each one ought to earn a salary and live within the means that his income provides came into existence a century and a half ago. The dropout is in an exceptionally favorable position to recognize that by 1988 it is foolish. When pressed, economists still say that the salarysystem is needed because there is no more efficient way to legitimize the unequal distribution of society's wealth. The dropout turns into a rational refusnik when, in spite of his teachers, he recognizes this simple fact: schools have lost their claim to be needed for man-power qualification. For the minority whom they privilege, learning would have happened better on the job, and required less nettransfers of public wealth to the climber. And for the majority certificates, at best are weak stakes in a joblottery. The job market is disappearing.

When I try to get teachers to look at their turf from the outside, I never attempt to discuss history. Typical teachers firmly believe that even cats educate kittens, and that parents "teach" their children to walk. But I sometimes succeed to make even teachers understand that, by now, schools socialize the majority into the acceptance of inferiority and that, by now, schooling provides few competencies that, a twenty years hence, their pupils will be grateful to have received. However on one point most teachers are adamant, no matter how I try: school systems, for them are a necessary condition to create a literate populace. I am told that the sole purpose of making society literate justifies all the nonsense and evil and damage wreaked by the system. The fewer nontextbooks my pedagogical interlocutor has read in the course of the last ten years, the more firmly he or she will fantasize on the teacher's bookish mission. With very few exceptions, on this point children are under no illusion. If they have become bookish, they have done it on their own. I know of no more delightful task than reading with a

David Ramage. I am your guest and I thank you for your hospitality. For this one evening you have, once again, appointed me to speak in a chapel, in downtown Chicago, with my back to the crux nuda, Calvin's naked cross.

Last year I spoke here on the transmogrification of hospitality into hospitalization. This year you asked me to speak about schools. "Prompt and sincerely," I "take my heart into my hand" and speak on the transformation of the old ideal of trusting obedience into institutionalized education.

I want to speak about education, conscious that I do so in a Chapel in the midst of Chicago's Loop rather than in a University aula. I want to look at the present educational system through the spectacles of Holy Writ [ICR 1,14,1] rather than from the viewpoint of sociology, anthropology, economics or philosophy. in this experiential perspective which is part of the disciplina crucis [ICR 3,18,4) "we are not our own, but God's" [ICR 3,7,1), and can thus recognize the present school system as one manifestation of a mystery of evil.

Education in the perspective of the dropout:

In the privileged perspective which comes natural to the reader of the Gospel Story, the socalled crisis in the Chicago Public school System does not appear as a local problem, but as a very clear indication of a worldwide phenomenon: societies which continue their commitment to, compulsory, universal schooling insists on a frustrating and ever more insidious enterprise of multiplying dropouts and cripples. From the point of view which I take, faith in schooling can no longer be innocent.

Half of all the children who enter Chicago's public school system drop out before they can graduate from high school. Worldwide, three quarters of all children who register in first

grade never reach the grade that the law of their country defines as a minimum. The institution held up as sacred creates and legitimates a world where the great majority is stigmatized as a dropout while only the minority graduate from those institutions which certify them as belonging to a superrace which has the duty to govern.

This insidious function of schooling has been obvious for a couple of decades. Periodically it attracts attention, as currently in Illinois. But it is consistently discussed from the point of view of the dogcatchers, be they schoolboards, PTAs or departments of education, and not from the point of view of those who left. This is so, in spite of the fact that many a student whom his wouldbe caretakers defined as a dropout, has long ago redefined himself as a successful avoider of a crippling and useless educational career.

This new self consciousness of the truant fits into an emerging cultural pattern in modern states in the late eighties. In poor countries modernized governments have recently suffered a catastrophic cavein of legitimacy for a very simple reason: the poor majorities have understood faster and clearer than the government's experts that the development goals in terms of health, education, sanitation, transportation or housing have been stupidly defined, and cannot become benefits for the majority. Two-thirds of all voters in Mexico just voted for a candidate from whom they expect no help whatsoever, but whose dignity they admire. In the US more and more people discover that the freedom to drop out from any of our modern systems is sacred to them. More than half the citizens of the world's proudest democracy did not find it worth while to vote in this week's elections. Living wills to escape from the control by physicians and bioethicists have become standard procedure. More and more Americans consider it reasonable and virtuous to evade being diagnosed, cured, educated, socialized, informed, entertained, housed, counseled, certified, promoted, or protected according to the

view. The dropout discovers the privilege, the privilege of the outsider, who has effectively done away with a social reality which ordinary citizens as well as their professional guardians cannot imagine wishing away. The first step in the liberation of the dropout is the insight that he is in the majority both among contemporaries and among the dead.

When asked to remember the past people my age quickly become aware how unschooled the great majorities were at the beginning of this century, not just in Mexico but even in then highly industrialized countries. No one in his or her right mind could then have shed crocodile tears about a majority of Chicago poor children not getting a high school diploma. A small anecdote will stress this point. Twenty years ago, when I wrote the essays that were gathered in Deschooling Society I learned with surprise that the New York Sanitation Department was discriminating against trashcollectors without a high school diploma. I used this information to argue that the democratic machine used degrees to exclude Puerto Ricans from well paying jobs. When my book was translated into German, my editor, without consultation, just took out this sentence. When I complained, he justified himself. According to him, every normal German reader would have blamed me for inventing an impossible allegation. Things have changed. Just last month my 18 year old godson was refused the job of a driver in the sanitation department of a Mexican (and not an American or German!) provincial town on the grounds that he lacked a high school diploma.

Driving a sanitation truck has obviously no relationship to twelve years of class attendance. Vincente, my godson, knows this. He knows perfectly well that most people his age in Mexico will not spend their lifetime as regular employees. He knows this without having to listen to the director general of the World Labor Organization who declared that belief in the possibility of a future of full employment - in rich countries or in poor countries - was no more an excusable illusion,

tion of an agency: School, for homo educandus, is analogous to Church for the Christian. According to this reformed view of human nature, salvation still comes through the book, though that book is no more just a bible. The new book must be read in a new bookish way, and this kind of reading calls for long ceremonies that are performed in the classrooms.

To operate this new church a new clergy of teachers came into existence that feeds on the new needs defined by the new view on human nature. The new power of the new clergy required a justification. It was based on the dogma that proclaims bookish literacy as something that is necessary for salvation. The three R's remained a sufficient legitimization of compulsory schooling until the time of my grandparents. Then, in the course of this, our century, a new reason for universal and compulsory education was discovered. School was recognized as a necessary for work. Democratic socialization, bookish culture, and manpower training came to be compounded as rationale for the existence of the, by now, transnational church. Historians who study education usually tell us what teachers did then, and later and what they were credited to be doing. The result is a historiography that assumes that education knows no beginning and therefore will never end. Ordinary educational history castrates the dropout: it brands him as a deficient human being, who through his own fault or that of society, lacks something that all human beings have always needed: instruction.

To transform the dropout into a proud refusnik the inverse approach to the history of education must be taken. To see more clearly, we would have to focus not on the histories of the educational clergy, its dogmas, and its liturgies but on the history of that particular way of life which takes for granted the existence of an educational system. As soon we thus shift our attention from the bureaucratic agency to the way of life within which this agency exists the past acquires a completely different character. The extraordinary novelty of our current mental dependence on the existence of "education" comes into

needs imputed to them by their professional guardians. The successful avoidance of clientage to disabling professions becomes a major aspect of the American ethos.

I want to call your attention to the experience of successful avoidance of imputed needs and their professional management. This ethos of avoidance is founded in the American ideal of the selfmade man. It consists in the enjoyment of the liberty to refuse compliance, to drop out and forego one's rightful share of costly service. I choose this neglected subject because I believe that the poor deserve special consideration when they act in this way.

The great majority of all Chicago children who leave school before they graduate are Black or Hispanic, and slumbred. By the time they drop out they have been badly mangled in soul and body. Understandably they refuse further care after intensive remedial programs have forced them to acknowledge their incompetence to succeed within the system and to make it into society at large by those routes which their teachers approve of. For the rest of their lives a school record will dog them relentlessly. But these dropouts, in another way are also privileged: In school they have learned to fake almost anything, and to see the school system for what it really is: a worldwide soulshredder that junks the majority and hardens an elite to govern it. They recognize the schoolsystem as an evil, no matter how good or evil, effective or pleasant some schools might be for their pupils, and all schools, occasionally, for some kids. The reflective dropout learns to laugh about the pious platitudes praising modern education, when the enterprise which organizes it is by its very nature an instrument which compounds their truancy with psychological, social and economic discriminations.

American pluralism has a beautiful but limited tradition. Its enormous variety of educational, medical and ecclesial systems witness to it. But this pluralism has limits. Only in the domain of religion is the constitutional protection of the nonchurched

atheist taken seriously. This society is gravely threatened unless we recognize without envy sublimated into grudge that dropouts of any description might be closer to Huck Finn than the church or the schoolgoers. I will now first explain why I want to speak about the dropout in the context of Christian salvation and then why, at this time in history, the schooldropout has even worldly wisdom on his side. I want to motivate Christians, who can claim a privileged understanding of evil to become leaders on behalf of the civil liberties of the Chicago dropout.

Schindler's List:

Last Saturday I arrived in Chicago by night coach at 3 AM. During the day I got my library card, a desk at McCormack and a box of granola and by evening was in a state of exhaustion. The friend with whom I had dinner suggested that I accompany him to a weekly book discussion. I resisted until he told me that the book under discussion was Schindler's List.

The author of this remarkable book is Thomas Keneally, an Australian police reporter. It was first published in London in 1982 as a novel and given the title Schindler's Arc. Simon and Schuster brought out the same book in New York as nonfiction and gave it a new title: Schindler's List. The book tells the story of 1700 people who survived Hitler's War and refer to themselves as "Schindler's Jews." Thirty years after the events, a few dozens of these people gave interviews to the Australian. From their stories he pieced together the figure of a barely credible man, the one man who had saved them all, a certain Oskar Schindler. Schindler had been born into the GermanCatholic minority Czechoslovakia, the so-called Sudeten Germans. They were generally known for their intense support of Hitler's expansionism. With some money in his pocket, this Schindler came to Cracow in the wake the German army. In this Polish

the history of education as the history of a new way to salvation, which was proposed by John Amos Comenius, and other reformers - be they Protestant or Jesuit - during the late 16th century. According to this new idea about the nature of man everyone must be taught everything that is important for him in the course of his life. Man – well before the Enlightenment - was redefined by his new pedagogical caretakers as a being that which, after birth by his own mother, must be reborn through the agency of "Alma" Mater, a new "holy" mother, the School. During the next couple of centuries the new path to salvation became first a road for the privileged and then an unavoidable superhighway paved tightly with good intentions. All learning came to be perceived as a curriculum, a course or run. Learning henceforth was seen as an outcome of teaching by professional teachers, parents, or the milieu. By the 19th century a person who knew something for which no agent could be identified was defined by the American masturbatory fantasy as a "self-taught." Close by, this story of the educational enterprise looks like the development of our current systems. But if the same story were told to a Brahmin or a bonze or one of my 12th century abbots, they would want to know how it was possible that in western Europe, and nowhere else, such a unique view of man and his relationship to society could have come into being. The story would have to be told as the secularization of the Church. That incomparable something, which we take for granted as the school system, cannot be understood unless it is seen as the perverse ecumenical byproduct of reformationtime Christian squabbling.

"Education" as an institution assumes that each one is born as an individual into a contractual society that must be understood before it is lived. According to this construct no one can become part of this kind of society except through some grace provided to him under the guise of education. This education is something for which he must work. But this education is also something that he cannot get except through the media-

to stress the separation of powers between State and Church. Jesus, by his example, shows his apostles that in a just cause weapons are needed, and that two might be enough. But even among these people, who do not look at the educational system with the eyes of the anarchist who recognizes the mystery of evil, but with the eyes of the worldly wise, there is an increasing number who now reject schools, or even the educational enterprise as such. These new critics have lost faith in the identification of man as homo of the species educandus.

When I speak of new critics I am not referring here to the gripers and busybodies that clog PTAs. Nor am I concerned with the pious reformers who valiantly tinker with curricula, teachers' salaries, parent involvement, teaching methods, or educational research. And finally I am not speaking of the much more radical critics who organize free schools, education by TV and computers, home-education, or the new supermarkets that offer courses in everything from cactus growing to effective dating. These people, as different as they are, are and remain fundamentally, believers in homo educandus and heroes who sacrifice themselves at the altar on which they have enshrined this illusion about "children" - be these their own or those of others. They believe that "learning" happens in a sphere of existence that can be managed apart from the rest of existence.

This last type of people are true refusniks, for reasons which are as different as the personal experience of a Black Hispanic with his English teacher, and the insight to which a historian of mothertongues has been led after many years of study. What makes them allies is their ability radically to question the educational enterprise and not just its methods, theories or organizational forms. They question the established view of human nature as that of homo educandus rather than the techniques by which the educational needs imputed to them are being satisfied. The learned among these refusniks recognize

town he quickly set up a factory, and staffed it with the slave labor that was assigned to him by the SS. Schindler began to make quite a bit of money. As he prospered, all around him the machinery for the mass exterminations was prepared and set in motion.

At this point Schindler became the protector of the Jews that had been parked with him as laborers while the ovens were being built for their disposal. He began to watch over his Jewish chattel with a zeal which went far beyond any economic rationality. In the midst of informers, propaganda, police terror, and Naziparty meetings he acted as the cavalier keeper of his productive prisoners. He used uncanny wit, bundles of money, jovial charm, liquor, juicy blondes, and blackmail to bribe, bend, and intimidate the armed bureaucrats: his Jews were the only contingent whose working papers were constantly renewed, whose "selection" to the death camps were constantly rescinded. He took mad risks in the face of hunters for spies or disloyals where Aryan sympathizers of Jews or Poles were even more cruelly persecuted than Semites. And he was not satisfied with saving the men. He even ventured to rescue their women. By bluffing SSmen he had the women returned from Auschwitz and placed under his protection.

The man who did all this was, as we say, no saint. In the midst of hunger and murder and typhoid fever around him, he lived it up. Every one of his Jews remembers his partying and wenching. When Schindler saw that the Russian army was coming, and that his "list" - his assigned contingent of Jews - was threatened by the Soviets and not only by the Nazis, he resettled his factory further back in his native Sudetenland. Up to the last moment this playboy proprietor of a prison camp bought blackmarket food to feed slaves and kept the SS at bay. All that is certain.

By the time Keneally pieced together this story, Schindler was long dead. He had lived with a Jewish woman, failed in a

couple of small business ventures in post-war Europe and went broke on a farm in South America. The genius of high-level risks did not seem to fit the prosaic demands of peacetime.The book is written as a series of understatements. It is full of dates and faces and clearly etched circumstances that have been preserved in the memory of the survivors. Keneally tells them in a dry voice: trivia come next to gratuitous cruelty, pitiable sentimental moments are narrated by the same policereporter who tells about incidents of unexplainable courage. This is how his informants lived these daily anxieties, and how they tell them forty years later - something taken for granted, something they remember, without getting upset or excited.

This is what gives its power and makes it pertinent to what I want to discuss. Each detail is clear, each event believable, each circumstance imaginable for the reader. Not only a crust shared among people who are desperately hungry, but also the sadistic deceptions to heighten the anguish of victims in a cattle car on the way to the selection ramp. Not only the triviality of bureaucratic evil, but Schindler's playful daring. Believable details, however, are not enough to make sense. All these remembrances remain like the stones of a mosaic when seen close up. They do not coalesce to form an intelligible picture. The outline and shape of the holocaust remain more opaque than ever. And so does the personality of the Savior (the rescuer?) who whores and corrupts the SS while risking his skin for his workers.

This then was the book which was under discussion in an elegant suburban Jewish home. I sat in an armchair in the drawing room struggled against sleep, and listened to people, none of whom had been in Europe at that time. Why did Schindler do what he did? What gave him the stamina? The motivation? Did he act out of moral outrage? Or did he enjoy the gamble, deriving immense pleasure by outwitting the bureaucratic monster? Had this little German somehow fallen in love with Jewishness? Or, rather, was it guilt that drove him?

So I try to look as Paul would have done. This view reveals the worldwide educational system as an excuse. An excuse for Paul is one of those powers that owe its existence and triumph to spiritual, demonic forces. You asked me to speak about this system as a challenge. Since its bad management, financing, organization, staffing and results are presently widely publicized, the Chicago School System is seen as a challenge by those who want to improve it. This is the challenge perceived by PTAs, teachers unions, bureaucrats and a large number of people with radically innovative educational ideas. It is however not the challenge which I wanted to address. I wanted to call your attention to the challenge which this system presents for those who recognize the very educational enterprise, as currently conceived, as an established evil.

For those among us who believe the Gospel message, this stance is a straight consequence of obedience. We recognize that the educational system is the outgrowth of an ideology, according to which God's sons and daughters are born constitutionally defective in such a way that a bureaucratic agency must be established which is empowered to mediate between them and the reality which they are to live. We know that this enterprise constitutes the establishment of spiritual power, in front of which our obedience demands that we act as refusniks, to use the technical term coined by Ramage.

We know that each one of us, by his pursuit of personal powerlessness, poverty and marginality is called to invite young people to divest themselves from belief and entrenchment in this morass. But there are many more people inside and outside the Churches, who do not read the Gospel as I just did. They have not heard the voice of an anarchist Christ, do not feel called to obey him. They are inspired by Christ the sublime moralist, the great lover, the humble servant, the revolutionary who could not but end up on the Cross. For them, Jesus refuses to negotiate with the devil, whom he exposes as the father of lies. Jesus pays his taxes to Caesar

take in the other as a radical surprise, I do something else. I bow, bend over towards the total otherness of someone. But I renounce searching for bridges between the other and me, recognizing that a gulf separates us. Leaning into this chasm makes me aware of the depth of my loneliness, and able to bear it in the light of the substantial likeness between the other and myself. All that reaches me is the other in his word, which I accept on faith. But, by the strength of this word I now can trust myself to walk on the surface, without being engulfed by institutional power. You certainly remember how Peter, just walked out on the waves of the Lake of Genesareth on the Word of his Lord. As soon as he doubted, he began to go under.

This kind of obedience is the substance of the Gospel - the institutional power to teach is its counterfoil. Obedience is a loving response to an embodiment of a loving word. What we today call educational "systems" are the embodiment of the enemy, of power. The rejection of power, in Greek the an-archy, of Jesus troubles the world of power, because he totally submits to it without ever being part of it. Even his submission is one of love. This is a new kind of relationship, which Paul has well explained in Romans chapter 12. The new law demands love, even the love of our enemies, whom we love without being overcome by evil. We overcome evil by our love to the point of subjecting ourselves to the utmost of evils, namely authorities. This is the context in which Paul writes, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." Jesus has given the example for all times by submitting to Herod, Annas, Kaiphas, Pilate. Paul's sentence is constantly used to seduce Christians in the name of the Bible to integrate into systems. In fact, it says that submission to authorities is the supreme form of the "love of enemies" through which Jesus became our Savior.

David Ramage.You have asked me to adress this assembly on Education as a Challenge. So I chose to say something about the educational system to understand what occurs in Chicago Schools. You asked me to speak about this subset in a chapel.

All these hypotheses were discussed while I teetered on the divide between reason and dream. And, I had come to Chicago to speak about schools, not camps. My theme was educational crippling, not Nazi murder. But I found myself unable to distinguish between Oskar Schindler in his factory in Crakow and Doc Thomas McDonald in Chicago's Goudy Elementary, where he is the principal. I know Doc as indirectly as Shindler, I know him only from the Chicago Tribune, but I cannot forget him. And for some weeks now I have asked myself: Why does he stay on the job? What gives him the courage?

The hostess turned to me, not noticing that I was drifting of f, and I betrayed myself. I should have said "camps"; instead I said "schools." I hope nobody noticed. I mumbled something, got up, excused myself went home, and fell asleep with the clippings from the Tribune.

MacDonald You surely know the series to which I refer. It appeared in the Trib early this summer reporting on the state of the public schools. By conventional standards they may be the nation's worst. Certainly, children who attend them are placed at a greater risk to body and soul than children of any school district in Brussels or Bombay, Kiev or Mexico. Paradoxically slum schools in Chicago are many times more expensive and, yet, more destructive than their foreign counterparts.

I have shown these articles to foreign colleagues. Most recognized the high quality of the reporters' work, and most were as bewildered as the readers of Schindler's List. You really must be a tired, beat down inner city resident of Chicago or Detroit or NY to live with the fact that these schools are taken for granted by millions of people as a daily, trivial reality. What use to raise one's voice? Each separate item is believable: rape and crack brooms flying through the classroom and spies in the toilets and terroristic counseling and sodabottles as the principal equipment in the physics lab. But, unless you have experienced them, lived in them, these details do not come together to form the frame for an imaginable human condition. The obses-

sion of our society which forces slum children to attend slum schools is a senseless cruelty which, together with the heroism of a very few marvelous teachers exceeds the psychic amplitude of my colleagues.

Let me read the passage from the Trib which had intruded upon my daydream in the drawing room last Saturday: (I quote) "Principal McDonald reaches up to smooth a shock of white hair that has spilled onto his forehead. He notices the smudge of blood on his hand. Then he lunges, eyes flashing. 'Give me that pipe!' Circling him in the secondfloor hallway are two preteen students, Arnary Bibs, who is armed with a long, unraveled piece of cardboard tubing, and Morris Elliston, who is swinging a stubby piece of copper pipe… 'Shut up,' says Maurice… McDonald grabs the pipe."

By confessing to my daydream, I know that I cannot but call for rebuttal. I know what I do. In a sense there is no way of comparing the class of historical events that go under the name of Hiroshima, Pol Pot Cambodia, Armenian Massacre, Nazi Holocaust, ABCstocks, or human geneline engineering on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the treatment meted out to people in our schoolrooms, hospital wards, slums, or welfare. But, in another sense, both kinds of horrors are manifestations of the same epochal spirit . We need the courage and the discipline of heart and mind to let these two classes of phenomena interpret each other. Consequences that are implicit in the ideology of the industrial mode of existence, and which by now are taken for granted, were simply not tolerated in 1940 except under the Nazi regime. The use of modern science and technology for the purpose of separating people into masters and slaves was then impossible except under the flags of Hitler or Hirohito. Under a different name this separation is now considered as an inevitable outcome of an educational system, which is part and parcel of the only social reality my contemporaries are able to conceive, which compounds majority status with the sense of failure. One thing which makes the Schindlers of

us. For decades I have puzzled over this passage. Why did Jesus want armed company? Then Jaques Ellul in a recent book that I am reading called my attention to the context, the following statement: "…so that the prophecy be fulfilled, and I be counted among the bandits." That explains it: two swords are not enough to defend a small troupe of rabbis and are certainly insufficient to organize an uprising. But they are more than enough to brand you as an outlaw.

When, during the same night, the templeguards come to arrest him, Peter draws the sword, bungles the thrust, and cuts off the ear of a certain Malchus. Jesus glues it back and reprimands Peter. Not for missing but for attacking. He wants to submit to the Roman court, not because He recognizes its jurisdiction, but to show up the injustice of the best law courts of the time. Paul understood this. The established order of power is evil not because it is bad, but because it is a spiritual, demonic establishment in this world. The Kingdom of God is its opposite. Christ Jesus triumphs over the establishment, and does so by no half measures; his victory is achieved by submitting to the death on the cross.

This is the story that anyone can piece together from the Gospel. Its details are clean and unforgettable. Its essential outline is imitable, that is what the lives of the saints are about. But the person of Christ never comes together. Salvation is not offered through the power of his doctrine, but through trust in his person.

Modern English has lost the word for this kind of trust. The biblical word for it is obedience. Obedience in the biblical sense means unobstructed listening, unconditional readiness to hear, untrammeled disposition to be surprised. It has nothing to do with what we call obedience today, something that always implies submission, and ever so faintly connotes the relationship between ourselves and our dogs. When I submit my heart, my mind, my body come to be below the other. When I listen unconditionally, respectfully, courageously with the readiness to

You know His answer: ”Give me a coin – tell me whose profile is on it!.” Of course they answer ”Caesar’s.”

The drachma is a weight of silver marked with Caesar’s effigy.

A Roman coin was no impersonal silver dollar; there was none of that ”trust in God” or adornment with a presidential portrait. A denarius was a piece of precious metal branded, as it were, like a heifer, with the sign of the personal owner. Not the Treasury, but Caesar coins and owns the currency. Only if this characteristic of Roman currency is understood, one grasps the analogy between the answer to the devil who tempted Him with power and to the Herodians who tempt Him with money. His response is clear: abandon all that which has been branded by Caesar; but then, enjoy the knowledge that everything, everything else is God’s, and therefore is to be used by you.

The message is so simple: Jesus jokes about Caesar. He shrugs off his control. And not only at that one instance… Remember the occasion at the Lake of Capharnaum, when Peter is asked to pay a twopenny tax. Jesus sends him to throw a line into the lake and pick the coin he needs from the mouth of the first fish that bites. Oriental stories up to the time of Thousand Nights and One Night are full of beggars who catch the fish that has swallowed a piece of gold. His gesture is that of a clown; it shows that this miracle is not meant to prove him omnipotent but indifferent to matters of money. Who wants power submits to the Devil and who wants denarri submits to the Caesar.

This dropout from power and money is also a conscientious objector to force. Yet, just as he wants to be counted among the weak and the poor he also wants to be marginal, and be counted among the criminal. Listen to this. He spends his last night in a garden, on the mountain of olives. On the way he says to the company, ”Now, let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one… And they said, look Lord, here are two swords. And He said to them: It is enough” That is what Luke (22:37) tells

the world alike is this: they expect nothing from an evil system in which they have made their career but the chance to make its total victims feel that they can beat it.

Mc Donald runs a ”gravity school,” a sink for the school system’s dredges and wastes. He takes anything that walks in and assigns it to disciplinarians, psychowards. To ”let Maurice jab the copper pipe at his behind” is part of the ”endurance test” to which he exposes himself in his struggle for these kids. In the Trib articles McDonald came through to me as a distant relative of Schindler. But here as there, when you move away from the mosaic fragments, the personality just does not come together. You cannot but ask about the Chicago principal the very same questions my hosts had asked about the Nazi industrialist. Is it compassion that keeps him on the job? A cynical sense of duty? A dare-devil? A dragon fighter who takes on the Schoolboard instead of the Wehrmacht? Or is he driven by Oedipal guilt?

Behavior in extremis:

In relation to persons in extreme situations I believe that this kind of questioning is beside the point, indiscreet and useless. They have smelled out the radical evil of power, and by facing it, they have ceased to be understandable by ordinary standards. An attitude that in the forties was exceptional and fostered by Nazism, has now become an ordinary calling for the decent man.

Human experience and behavior in extremis has been studied by Robert Jay Lifton. He first looked at survivors in Hiroshima and discovered something, which for lack of a better word, he called “survivor’s guilt.” He recognized that the Hibakusha, the people who have gone through hell on earth, could never again recognize the innocence of the human condition. After the Hibakusha Lifton studied another group of survivors: physicians who had been in charge of experiments and

executions in Auschwitz. What he found striking about several dozen of these men, whom he interviewed three decades after the facts, was the opposite. These people were practically indistinguishable from other physicians practicing in the later seventies. During the war they had been engaged as bureaucrats with special science related competence and from nine to five had engaged in mass murder. They had trained orderlies to inject the poison into the appropriate ventricle of the heart, and certified the death from asphyxiation of one load after another in the ovens. And after hours, even during the war, they had been tender fathers and devoted husbands. By accepting power within the Nazi machine, they had acquired the ability to "double." I hear that Lifton is now studying the same doublingability which American surgeons acquire by accepting power in the hospital system. From nine to five they engage in exquisitely professional torture, and after hours they lead peacemarches. Both victimization by power and its exercise determine a kind of behavior that is not this-worldly. Most of the time, this unfathomable behavior in extremis has been studied when it is destructive. The opposite kind of behavior in extremis is just as unfathomable, and usually much more hidden. Under the name of heroic sanctity it has been studied by ascetical theology before this discipline went psychoanalytic. Only in the mirror of sanctity it is possible to grasp the mystery of evil. One could go on forever to discuss the systemic destructiveness of industrial age service systems: as Hannah Arendt has well understood, bureaucrats only manifest the trivial aspect of their evil. To understand that this evil is nontrivial, deeply human and demonic, you must look at it in the mirror of its "Schindlers."

The Savior:

For me, Schindlers and McDonalds and their brand of anarchists have something about them that makes them "Christlike." More than any of them, Jesus was an anarchist savior. That's what the Gospels tell us.

Just before He started out on His public life, Jesus went to the desert. He fasted, and after 40 days he was hungry. At this point the diabolos, appeared to tempt Him. First he asked Him to turn stone into bread, then to prove himself in a magic flight, and finally the devil, diabolos, "divider," offered Him power. Listen carefully to the words of this last of the three temptations: (Luke 4,6:) "I give you all power and glory, because I have received them and I give them to those whom I choose. Adore me and the power will be yours." It is astonishing what the devil says: I have all power, it has been given to me, and I am the one to hand it on - submit, and it is yours. Jesus of course does not submit, and sends the devilcumpower to Hell. Not for a moment, however, does Jesus contradict the devil. He does not question that the devil holds all power, nor that this power has been given to him, nor that he, the devil, gives it to whom he pleases. This is a point which is easily overlooked. By his silence Jesus recognizes power that is established as "devil" and defines Himself as The Powerless. He who cannot accept this view on power cannot look at establishments through the spectacle of the Gospel. This is what clergy and churches often have difficulty doing. They are so strongly motivated by the image of church as a "helping institution" that they are constantly motivated to hold power, share in it or, at least, influence it.

Churches also have their problems with a Jesus whose only economics are jokes. A savior undermines the foundations of any social doctrine of the Church. But that is what He does, whenever He is faced with money matters. According to Mark 12:13 there was a group of Herodians who wanted to catch Him in His own words. They ask "Must we pay tribute to Caesar?"