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THE QUEST FOR PARA-RELIGION

A QUALITY of hungering affirmation and religio-philosophical search is seeping into the thought of the time. It is as though men are tiring of the uniqueness of being "modern," of being unable to feel a bond with the aspirations of those who lived before the scientific revolution and the eighteenth-century politicalization of the idea of the self. It is as though a point has been reached in the progressive externalization of the ideas of fact and truth where there is simply not enough substance left within ourselves to support a sense of individual being, and a new and quite different declaration of meaning must be made.

To get some perspective on the historical developments that have brought us to this juncture, a passage from Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Macmillan, 1963) should be of use. After a long review intended to show that, over centuries, the inward meaning of religion was exchanged for a description of patterns of belief, Dr. Smith summarizes:

> The concept "religion," then, in the West has evolved. Its evolution has included a long-range development that we may term a process of reification: mentally making religion into a thing, gradually coming to conceive it as an objective, systematic entity. In this development one factor has been the rise into Western consciousness in relatively recent times of several so conceived entities, constituting a series: the religions of the world.

However:

> . . . a religious understanding of the world does not necessarily imply that there is a generic religious truth or a religious system that can be externalized into an observable pattern theoretically abstractible from persons who live it. This is to look for essences; to Platonize one's own faith and to Aristotelianize other peoples'.

Dr. Smith concludes:

> . . . in the course of this present inquiry the adjective "religious" has been retained in use while the noun is rejected. This has to do with a contention that living religiously is an attribute of persons. The attribute arises not because these persons participate in some entity called *religion*, but because they participate in what I have called transcendence. . . .
>
> All man's history is becoming self-conscious; including his religious history. It is also becoming more unified, for good or ill. How man will work out the unification on the religious plane is as yet far from clear. What is clear is that responsibility for this too is becoming his.

Elsewhere, this author says: "In any case, it is not entirely foolish to suggest that the rise of the concept 'religion' is in some ways correlated with a decline in the practice of religion itself." Dr. Smith's Taoist insight is characteristic of the growing awareness of the present and is a pervasive ingredient of the new affirmation. It represents a kind of "second-degree" objectification, by means of which we recognize the dehumanizing effects of both institutional (externalized) religion and institutional (objectifying) science on human beings.

This represents a problem of considerable subtlety. To experience the recognition declared by Dr. Smith—and increasingly, by others, today—is to gain an over-view of human life which cannot be politicalized, because it reaches up instead of down, in instead of out, although it can, as was the case with Gandhi, be made the ground of social applications.

In the interest of understanding the problem in the round, let us look at it from the other end. In his novel, *Man in a Mirror*, concerned with the impact of externalizing Western culture on an African tribe, Richard Llewellyn describes the dilemma of a leader who sees the difference between the inner life-energies and attitudes of his people and the impersonal knowledge and power

to manipulate brought by the modern West. Following is a passage in which the African, who has a European education, ponders this difference:

> Nterenke began to realize with increasing dismay which he found almost comical that the Masai intellect held not the least notion of physical science, no philosophy, or sense of ideas in the abstract, or any mathematical processes higher than the use of the hands and fingers. He amused himself in trying to imagine how he might teach Olle Tselene the theory of the spectrum. Yet every tracker knew the value of sunlight in a dewdrop because the prism told where the track led and when it had been made. How the eye saw the colors or why the colors were supposed to exist was never a mystery or problem. They had no place anywhere in thought. But all male Masai, from the time they were Ol Ayoni, had a sharp sense of color from living in the forest and choosing plumage for the cap. Color became a chief need in the weeks of shooting, and comparing, and taking out a smaller for a large bird, or throwing away a larger for the smaller, more colorful. He wondered where the idea of color began, or why a scholar should interest himself. Mr. James had taught that sound politics led to a rich economy where people earned more money for less hours of work, and so created a condition of leisure needed by inventors, whether mental or physical. The Masai had always enjoyed an ample economy, if it meant a complete filling of needs, and after the animals were tended, there was plenty of leisure. Yet there were no inventors of any sort. There was a father-to-son and mouth-to-mouth passing of small items that pretended to be history, and a large fund of forest lore that might pass as learning, but there were no scholars, no artists, no craftsmen in the European sense.
>
> The effect was to lock a growing mind in a wide prison of physical action and disciplined restriction that by habit became accepted as absolute liberty.

It is easy enough, from a relativist point of view, to discuss Nterenke's dilemma, but not easy at all to consider, from the standpoint of human values, what he ought to do or attempt. What is "the good" in such a situation? Send to Africa a corps of disillusioned sorcerer's apprentices to teach these people the culture and science of the West while at the same time warning them of the dread consequences of externalized, impersonal knowledge—of power and control without understanding? How do you tell people to preserve their traditional values and inner life while giving them the means to cut themselves off from these ancestral roots? There is no ready answer to this question—no more than Tolstoy knew what to say to the peasants he loved—and even if one should find an answer, it might not be adaptable to organization into a post-colonial "policy." The fact is that we have little experience in thinking such thoughts, and less in implementing their imprecise conclusions. What seems called for here is an embodiment of what Gerald Sykes terms "the ideas of the shipwrecked"—the wisdom, one might say, of men who have survived being smashed. For the inexorable process of Westernization, until it is controlled and understood, has a smashing effect.

Sykes put it well in *The Hidden Remnant:*

> The technical revolution demands in time that man be equal to his own creations. He cannot merely run his airplane well. His consciousness must go as high as his body does. He must not merely be a flyer but a Saint-Exupéry. Otherwise he becomes a mere chauffeur. This may have been a reason why as Lombroso suggests, the great innovators of the Renaissance called a halt to their inventions; they sensed that men would not be worthy of them. But we have gone ahead with ours, and now we must equal them or perish. A first step would be to realize how dangerous they are to mental health. One can so easily misuse them as ways of short-circuiting personal experience.

This is a text that would be useful for expansion by Michael Polanyi in the direction of his criticism of "objective certainty" in *Personal Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press), and to A. H. Maslow for discussions similar to that of the "desacralization" of science in a forthcoming Harper volume.

These are but a few of the innumerable symptoms of deep questioning and new beginnings in fundamental attitudes, which go back to pre-institutionalized levels of thinking, and almost to preconceptualized states of feeling, in behalf of an authentically human outlook.

We turn now to an expression of direct interest in religion, or rather, "the religious," by a student of Goddard College. In the Christmas 1965 issue of *Viewpoint/1965* (a publication issued by students and faculty members at Goddard), Don Benson considers the failure of social critics and the protagonists of change to be effective. Under the title, "Toward Para-Religious Radicals," he writes:

> I mean we are not making much headway toward ending the war in Vietnam or revising the structure of American society so as to give everyone a better chance to realize his human potential. We look rather pitiful in comparison with the military industrial complex, and we have yet to deal systematically with the powers-that-be in education and urban affairs. We have only occasional visions that go beyond protest, and our appeal is limited even in its prospects.

Benson borrows a critical focus from an article by Paul Goodman ("The Great Society," in the *New York Review of Books* for Oct. 14, 1965). Goodman observes that the "Great Society" slogan represents "an ideology made necessary by contemporary history" in order "to gloss over the dangerous vacuum of political-moral values" and "to provide professional employment and other business for card-carrying members of the Establishment." This "Great Society," Benson comments, "is too corrupt to provide a moral incentive for youth," and "it avoids the fundamental problems that deeply concern us." We need, he says, "to develop a dynamic theme and a dynamic method that succeeds where the Great Society fails." For some of the basic questions, he uses the following list from Goodman's article:

> How to use high technology for human beings?
>
> How to regain substantive democracy in modern cities and with mass communications?
>
> How to get rid of the bomb and the whole atmosphere of the Cold War?
>
> How to be educated without being processed?
>
> How to work at something worthwhile outside the rat-race of an infinitely expanding GNP?
>
> How to avoid 1984?

With these objectives in mind, Benson continues:

> We are fortunate, I think, because much of the ground-work for coming around and realistically facing up to these problems has already been done. The intellectual ground-work has been done by Kropotkin and Marx and Camus and Sartre and Jefferson and Christ and John Stuart Mill; Eugene V. Debs, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and a whole panoply of poets. There are myriad peace and social action groups which get more significant and give off progeny every month. A great deal of practical experience has been gathered in the past five years for us to draw on. Some excellent books and articles are being written; increasingly, we see fruitful uses of analysis and expertise. We do not, however, have the basic spiritual-ethical commitment that would enable us to use our diversity most constructively.
>
> I think we have a lot to learn from the history of religion. Granted, the books are rife with examples of injustice and bigotry in the name of religion; yet, I think that religious traditions have been very productive of the values and standards we draw on when we criticize the existing American Establishment. Much that is solid in American tradition had religious swaddling clothes. In the face of difficult times, I do not suggest any regression to antiquated *forms* of religion; I do suggest, however, that we consider the potency of para-religious purposes, values, and life-styles. Authoritarian religion that is not open to impiety, is out; *the religious* in human life really has to do with those who ride in the van of history. If two independent groups were set to work, one to design a religious movement suited to the times and the other to study the personalities and actions of those who are deeply concerned with the problems Goodman mentions, I think their results would be highly compatible.
>
> The conscious development of a para-religious movement today would, in one sense, be merely an extension of what is already happening. Nonetheless, it might substantially facilitate the improved (decentralized) communication and coordination we need. . . . Politics, no matter how broadly conceived, can never properly fill the vacuum of our era. A new movement of the human spirit is required that will eventually restore the dynamic equilibrium which nurtures human progress.

It is probably to the point to note that Benson may have the cart before the horse, in speaking of

a revival of independent, philosophical religion as though it were some kind of potent resource for gaining radical ends. In all likelihood, the process of regeneration works the other way, with the vision of spiritual objectives coming first, and this leading, in turn, to a redefinition of both ends and means, such that the wholeness now felt to be lacking will create its own regions of vital influence and practical forms of action. For there is a sense in which, taking the generally negative or "protest" character of Goodman's questions, we must admit that we don't really know what we want half so much as we know what we *don't* want. (Of course, we may know what we want better than we know how to describe it.) A genuine religious inspiration, it seems fair to say, brings the kind of synthesis in human life that leads to the *immediate* practice of affirmation, regardless of the existing environment; and that, further, this practice turns out to be itself the main thrust of the regenerative process. The application of high religion does not wait on the achievement of particularized social goals, but moves on the assumption that the religious life is repressed by no contingencies and conditioned by no circumstances which can seriously interfere.

But is it possible, as Benson suggests, to extricate the "para-religious purposes, values, and life-styles" from the *forms* of historical religion, in order to gain a clearer conception of how these might lead to "the basic spiritual-ethical commitment" that is desired?

Let us begin by asking what are the essentials of religion? If we start by declaring, with Tillich, that religion is "ultimate concern," we should go on to say, at the very least, that this means the involvement of human beings with the question of what is "real," or the ultimate ground of universal being, with the question of the self or the nature of man, and with the several problems of ends and means, process and progress, good and evil, and, finally, the achievement of degrees of meaning by bringing an appropriate resolving unity to each of the (apparently endless) categories of diversity as we confront them in life.

But as soon as we offer the above or any other formulation, we are made to realize how weak or at least incomplete must be such attempts to "define" religion. This is a way of saying that we know—and at the same time don't know—what religion really is. Tillich faced this dilemma with a judo-like sagacity:

> Religion he described as an "ultimate concern," making virtually everybody religious by definition: even an atheistic statement shows concern for ultimacy, since "genuine atheism is not humanly possible." He believed that doubt was not only inevitable in the human quest for divine truth but was even a part of that truth. . . . Real life was his theological specialty. He was particularly expert in art and in depth psychology. "Religion," he said, "is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion." (*Life*, Nov. 5, 1965.)

It might here be argued, of course, that this is no more than explaining religion away altogether. But may not this be the heart of the matter? Perhaps, if we are to avoid what Benson regards as the traps of "formal" religion, loss of a finite sense of meaning is something that must be risked. ("Give up thy life if thou would'st live.") The feeling that familiar religion is being dissolved is certainly a characteristic result of the mystical life, if we can place any faith in the reports of those who have undertaken it. "Dark night of the soul" has been an expression with considerable meaning for those who used it.

Is there any other approach to an account of the meaning of religion? Shall we resort to the precepts of men who are honored as the religious heroes of mankind? We may do this—we can hardly avoid doing this—but in time we shall probably realize that the maxims of religion, however sanctioned by the intuition, do not contain its essential meaning. It is as Michael Polanyi says of both art and science. There are elements in the practice of these callings which are simply indefinable in intellectual terms. He writes:

> An art which cannot be specified in detail cannot be transmitted by prescription, since no prescription for it exists. It can be passed on only by example from master to apprentice. This restricts the range of diffusion to that of personal contacts, and we find accordingly that craftsmanship tends to survive in closely circumscribed local traditions. . . . Again, while *the articulate contents of science* are successfully taught all over the world in hundreds of new universities, *the unspecifiable art of scientific research* has not yet penetrated to many of these. The regions of Europe in which the scientific method first originated 400 years ago are scientifically more fruitful today, in spite of their impoverishment, than several overseas areas where much more money is available for scientific research. Without the opportunity offered to young scientists to serve an apprenticeship in Europe, and without the migration of European scientists to new countries, research centers overseas could hardly ever have made much headway.
>
> It follows that an art which has fallen into disuse for the period of a generation is altogether lost. There are hundreds of examples of this to which the process of mechanization is continually adding new ones. These losses are usually irretrievable. It is pathetic to watch the endless efforts—equipped with microscopy and chemistry, with mathematics and electronics—to reproduce a single violin of the kind that the half-literate Stradivarius turned out as a matter of routine more than 200 years ago.

While there may not be a strict correspondence between the practice of an art and the discovery of the meaning of religion, there are doubtless parallels to be discovered, although, conformably with what Polanyi says about maxims, such analogues may have meaning only to those who already know some of the secrets concerning the process to which they apply.

However, there is surely a sense in which many, many people understand what is intended by the idea of stripping away the forms of traditional religion, until only its essence—its para-religious content—is left. And even if they would be hard put to "explain" what is left, they would probably be able to give us maxims of increasing subtlety. Yet an unwillingness to attempt explanations is a wholly desirable attitude, since the reduction of religion to creeds and formularies is precisely the source of the forms which we wish to escape, and of those differentiating sectarianisms which Dr. Smith regards as the death of true religion or the exile of "the religious" from human life.

Still, we know from experience that there is not the slightest possibility that the modern world will cease from overt religious questing by taking the path of quietism and silence. Men are going to look for meaning, and they are going to tell others what they have found, or think they have found. And it is fair to say, with Benson, that already there are individuals and groups pursuing this quest.

Well, is it conceivable that people animated by a purified religious inspiration and a deep sense of historical and social responsibility will be able to make statements about their convictions which go somewhat beyond the maxim stage? Might not their affirmations amount to the kind of structured conviction which led Socrates to declare—at the time of his death:

> A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is the case.

REVIEW
UNCOMFORTABLE ASIDES ON VIETNAM

WE are less interested, here, in attempting an evaluation of the foreign policy which involved the United States in the Vietnamese war than in the general human attitudes which may be held responsible for producing this controversial situation. In the first place, MANAS can hardly pretend to knowledge sufficient to evaluate short-term strategy; second, there seems far greater need for attention to the psychological and attitudinal factors which rationalize both inter-personal hostility and wars of any sort.

The February *Progressive* is devoted entirely to "The Ordeal of Vietnam." Among various informative and provocative contributions deserving notice is a report of observations by a U.S. Army psychiatrist, Major Jon Bjornson, who until late in April of 1965 was the only psychiatrist serving in that area with the U.S. Army Medical Corps. In effect, Dr. Bjornson confirms the general analysis by Marshall Windmiller (noted in MANAS for last Dec. 29 under the heading "The Myths That Kill"). Bjornson, like Windmiller, is chiefly concerned with increasing public awareness of the delusions which encourage powerful nation-states to justify their own aggressiveness on the ground that they are "the chosen people." Dr. Bjornson begins:

> A fundamental flaw in the U.S. approach in Vietnam is its dependence on the single premise, "Communism is bad." While the U.S. military adviser in particular and Americans in general in Vietnam could agree with this negative political premise, there was no positive alternative to sell. Since there was no democracy that we were supporting, it was my feeling that, when an American was not enmeshed in his isolated area problem, he could not help but sense a continuing underlying doubt as to where it was all leading to.

This doubt, Bjornson contends, is not only represented by protest movements and marches at home; actually, face-to-face encounter with the Vietnamese themselves makes it impossible for intelligent military personnel to avoid realizing that "the Viet advisee knows that the war is considered by the United States as more our war than his." Bjornson continues:

> The adviser and his Viet advisee are both aware that Vietnam is viewed as a buffer between East and West, between Communist China's aggrandizement, control, or influence versus that of the United States.

In other words, the "democratic" premises underlying the American approach to Vietnam are daily being given this sort of laboratory test and are found wanting. The main premise, deriving from what Bjornson calls "a phobic response to Communism that approaches paranoia," is that "if 'target nations' on the Communist expansion timetable fall under Communist influence, economic isolation of this hemisphere may well ensue." A continuing confusion at the policy-making level suggests that we may be able—though at a high cost in human life—to learn a great deal from the whole experience. For instance:

> Who decides in Saigon? Parallel channels of communication in two languages are hazardous enough. Basic premises regarding government, politics, economics, and military functions had to be effective at the top to work in the provinces. Obviously they were not and, in my opinion, one of the major false assumptions related to U.S. foreign policy was that we could "sell" ideas, overtly, or subtly, especially at the upper levels. At the lower levels, blackmail with supplies, a device which does not particularly improve the relationship between the U.S. adviser and his Vietnamese counterpart, became the single predictably successful method of "advising." Our ambiguous policy left us indecisive. Sensitive that we be labeled colonialists, dictators, or imperialists, the Americans were in the position of almost total inability to make decisions.
>
> How does one handle such frustration? One way is to call for help. And in Vietnam, help came aplenty, mainly to Saigon. Thus, the State Department, the CIA, AID, USIS, the three branches of the military services with numerous subdivisions (even the Coast Guard), research units, volunteers such as CARE-MEDICO, and on and on. More supply systems, more clerks, more problems. The spiral staircase of bureaucracy became more dizzying. Commands were decentralized and recentralized.

> Confusion reigned. But no one could tell the people of South Vietnam to support their changing and changling governments and no one could convince them that the U.S. government could do no wrong.

At this point we turn to the generalized insights of Paul Goodman. In an essay (1962) titled "Some Remarks on War Spirit," Goodman concludes by reporting a typical reaction to his evaluation of the deadly danger of the Cold War—a reaction coming from a gathering of experts in the social sciences, in engineering, and in politics, to whom he spoke. One scientist spoke up ingenuously: "You say that the Americans have a neurotic feeling of powerlessness. You don't realize that those in power are equally frustrated." Now what is the basic cause of this "powerlessness" and "frustration"? Not, says Goodman, the threat of Communism. It grows out of our own immaturity and civilization:

> Our modern times are affluent and disappointed, active and powerless, technical and purposeless. The clinch is the Cold War.
>
> In America, the so-called high standard of living, urbanism, the sexual revolution only partly carried through, have notoriously resulted in excessive busyness with little reward in happiness. People are balked by the general inhibition of anger and physical aggression in our cities, offices, and streamlined industries and grievance committees. And since one cannot be angry, one cannot be affectionate.
>
> At the same time, as part of the same urban-technological-economic-political complex, common people today are extraordinarily powerless. Few ever make, individually or in face-to-face associations, decisions about many of the most important matters.

From the psychiatric point of view, this vacuum in the individual's capacity for decision-making leads to both individual and collective neuroticism. Respecting the former Goodman continues:

> The nuclear phobia of many patients is a projection of their own self-destructive wishes, and it vanishes when so analyzed, that is, when the patient can reconnect the images of disaster to the actual things that he wants to explode, burn, poison, annihilate.
>
> Similar are fantasies of destructive Enemies, who will do the job for us. And it does not help if two opposed Enemies cooperate in their projections, so that each one recognizes a threat in the other and arms accordingly and so provides more tangible proof of the threat.
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> On these grounds, we can speak of War Spirit as an epidemic wish to commit suicide *en masse*, as one community. To have the frustration over with! to get rid of all that junk at once! Thus, an important explanation of the paralysis of the public in safeguarding against, or simply dismissing, the obvious irrationality and danger of war policies, is that people are inwardly betrayed by a wish for the catastrophe that they rationally oppose. The powerlessness of the small gets solace by identification with power Elites, and people eagerly say "We" and "They," meaning one bloc or the other.

These are all reasons for regarding Major Bjornson's report as an important investigation of the sort of psychological education which must shape any future the *peoples* of the world can hope to share:

> Months after departing from Vietnam, I feel more certain than ever: Instead of guns, tractors; instead of military "advisers," experts in farming, industry, and road construction. Instead of money distributed to the military leaders, money controlled by Americans for non-military projects. Instead of coupe, U.N.-controlled elections. Instead of destruction, production. The millions of dollars, millions of man-hours wasted in the war could have built whole cities, factories, hospitals, schools, dams. The war was lost long ago. Alan Moorhead in *The Blue Nile* describes Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia in the following terms: "The rest of the pattern is the familiar one of the dreaming megalomanias, of the raging reformer who finds his reforms rejected and wants to pull the whole world down in ruins to appease himself for his failures." So the United States in Vietnam from 1956 through 1965.

COMMENTARY
TIMELESS DIMENSIONS

THE practice of science—any kind of science—needs the factor of intuitive perception to make it come alive for human beings. There is a natural hunger in all men to feel their relationship with the natural world, and the science which fails to give them assistance in this is irrelevant to the human spirit—a technological blasphemy, a studied achievement in alienation. As Walter Weisskopf says in the first sentence of Part II of his article on Repression (see Frontiers): "To grasp the totality of human reality and experience, one has to accept the dimension of the unknown and the belief that the world of spiritual and 'religious' human experience cannot be independent of the rest of the (nonhuman) universe."

There is a growing consensus to this effect among the pioneers of modern thought. Harold Searles, a practicing psychiatrist, observed recently:

> It is my conviction that there is within the human individual a sense of *relatedness to his total environment*, that this relatedness is one of the transcendently important facts of human living, and that if he tries to ignore its importance to himself he does so at peril to his psychological well-being. . . . By "relatedness" I mean a sense of ultimate kinship, a psychological commitment to the structural relationship which exists between man and the various ingredients of his nonhuman environment.

With such declarations, we begin to see the complementarity between the science and the poetry or art of man's being. And we recognize, further, an emerging correspondence between these modern expressions and the ancient idea of the sacred, found throughout the literature of ancient pantheisms.

Man's existential susceptibilities are open to more than the pain arising from the otherness which self-consciousness brings. There is also an exquisite joy in the wide community of being. Richard Byrd (in *Alone*) wrote of this infusion of the world which came upon him while isolated at a lonely outpost in Antarctica:

> The day was dying, the night was being born—but with great peace. Here were the imponderable processes and forces of the cosmos, harmonious and soundless. Harmony, that was it! That was what came out of the silence—a gentle rhythm, the strain of a perfect chord, the music of the spheres, perhaps.
>
> It was enough to catch that rhythm, momentarily to be myself a part of it. In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. The conviction came that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect to be a product of blind chance—that, therefore, there must be purpose in the whole and that man was a part of that whole and not an accidental offshoot. It was a feeling that transcended reason, that went to the heart of man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos; man was as rightfully a part of that cosmos as were the day and night.

Here, indeed, is the "inner reversal of values and the emergence of a world outlook with a holistic basis," which, as Prof. Weisskopf says, is a pre-condition for the great changes men long for in their hearts.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

CAN THERE BE FREE HIGH SCHOOLS?

II

QUESTION FOUR: Aren't few if any teenagers well-disciplined enough, even if in good health, to accept such a severe and unadorned physical environment?

Answer: If the students are accorded plenty of affection and approval, the dissatisfactions they might have should tend to be a stimulus for rendering the set-up less marginal—through ideas and work—not to serve as a reason for leaving. I think our society would find young people exercising much more self-discipline than at present were they urged to pursue the challenges they themselves find meaningful. Health can also be a crucial factor. The students and staff would tend to be not merely in good health but literally in a state of maximum vigor, both physically and mentally. The first four months of the school year, September through December, are months of gradually increasing climatic harshness. Among other outdoor activities during this period, the school's original inhabitants would be faced with the challenge of building adequate living quarters for themselves—individually or in groups, and with or without aid, as desired. On the staff would be experienced woodsmen who would frequently invite the students on overnight hikes and climbs which would combine nature study with pleasure.

Question Five: Since the facilities would be so simple—intentionally simple—why not locate the school where the winter climate would be moderate rather than harsh (such as in the Southwest or on the coast of California)?

Answer: In addition to its main center in a northern climate, the school would hopefully have a supplementary center in the Southwest or along California's coast—and a third center in Mexico. After September through December in the North, the pattern of each school year could call for the first week or two of January to be spent at the second center, followed by the remainder of January and all of February in the environment of a Mexican village. Then on the way back North there would be another stop-over at the Southwest or California location, perhaps for up to a month. April and May, the spring months, like autumn, would be spent in the North. This type of schedule should bring out the best in a student by providing maximum stimulation. The period in Mexico, which as an intercultural experience should act as a catalyst after the student's unbroken year or years immersed in U.S. culture and the English language, would follow almost immediately after the climax of the physically hardening autumn months in the North. Thus this catalytic period would also be marked by greater than usual sensitivity and creativity due simply to the individual's natural reactions when a sudden change from cold to warm transpires.

Question Six: If the students are given total freedom in their individual lives, won't they tend to be sexually promiscuous?

Answer: Perhaps. Our culture is in the midst of what has been termed a "sexual revolution" and there is no way in which a school involving adolescents can magically settle the questions or "solve" the problems it produces. The hope would be that as a result of the general intensification of life-experiences which the school endeavors to provide, and because of the kind of youngsters it attracts, ideas of personal responsibility in all aspects of inter-personal relations would be helped to have natural development. I would think that the relative freedom at such a school would not result in sexual experimentation of the unfortunate sort which is so common among supposedly "controlled" youngsters who go to orthodox schools and live at home. The school can hardly contract to reverse such trends, but would rather attempt to overcome the obsession that "morality" is solely a matter of sexual behavior. The school

would hope for balance, here, as a consequence of the general symmetry of values it would seek to foster. (In general, on this question, it should be recognized that the attitudes which pervade adolescence are often extensions of feelings generated in the home during earlier years; meanwhile, the natural shyness common among high-school-aged youth is sometimes underestimated by anxious parents.)

Question Seven: Could studies, and particularly individual research, be carried on effectively without a sizeable school library?

Answer: Nature as such may well gradually become the foremost teacher for many students. However, the original three to five staff members would have to be persons well-grounded in a considerable variety of fields. Second-hand textbooks would be acquired in areas such as math, Spanish, history, and perhaps literature and science. Courses would also be offered in composition, grammar, drama, art, etc. Special course requests from students would automatically be accommodated, even if those interested must proceed as a committee due to the lack of an adequate teacher for the subject. Although classes would tend to meet regularly, assignments would be made only on the basis of individual student inclination, and class attendance would be optional (although a work quota would be required in regard to kitchen and maintenance tasks). Thanks to the innumerable facets of the world's on-going communications revolution, information not available at the school would not be hard to secure from elsewhere, as a rule via mail. Media of all kinds would be exploited, and likewise free services provided by agencies. In addition, each student would have an opportunity once a month to spend several days alone using a state library.

Question Eight: Could three to five teachers, even if fairly well-educated, actually teach a full range of college preparatory subjects?

Answer: An advantage in choosing the staff for such a school as this is that exceptionally intelligent and highly motivated individuals are attracted by freedom. Since the college board tests and their like have relegated the accreditation of high schools to relative unimportance in the eyes of college admissions offices, high schools willing to similarly place accreditation below achievement in their list of priorities find themselves able to tap the almost virgin supply of natural teachers who (due to a variety of reasons) have not concerned themselves with the acquisition of a B.A. degree. The ultra-intellectual atmosphere at our hypothetical school would arouse in most students a desire to participate. Thus the average level of mental *effort* should be quite high relative to any other type of school. It is also stimulating to teach—and all students would be expected to teach to a greater or lesser extent. Instruction in various languages—and in specialties such as astronomy, ornithology, guitar, poetic composition, voice—might when available be requested for a full year by some individuals and merely dipped into by others. Well and good. The committee system in addition to being used in some courses, would also prove helpful in other aspects of the school-community life, for it has educational value comparable to that of the "council" meetings which would make more important decisions. (The "council" would be open to all students and staff members and would emphasize decisions via consensus rather than voting.)

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FRONTIERS

Repression and Industrial Dialectics

(*Concluded*)

TO grasp the totality of human reality and experience one has to accept the dimension of the unknown and the belief that the world of spiritual and "religious" human experience cannot be independent of the rest of the (nonhuman) universe. The idea that only man can have such exceptional experiences which have no root in the rest of nature and universe, is based on an extraordinary intellectual arrogance. Everything that happens and is experienced within the human sphere must have its counterpart in the universe. This is really the basic assumption of much of natural scientific thinking, e.g., the application of experiments with rats, apes and other mammals to human behavior. It is interesting that the positivists reject this attitude where it would lead to conclusions which conflict with their own prejudices against religion and similar phenomena. One cannot accept only *that* part and aspect of the experienced reality which is not in conflict with one's own world outlook and reject all the rest. Either man is part of nature; then his religious experience is also part of nature. Or man is an excrescence, a sickness, a cancer of nature; then one would have to reject also those aspects of human existence which are accepted by modern Western civilization such as his intellect, his technology, etc.

It has often been said that "natura non facit saltus" and that one should prefer an interpretation of nature and universe which yields a "simpler" and more "orderly" world image: This is accomplished by a world interpretation which regards the totality of human existence as a reflection of a cosmic order, which considers man as a cosmion. The desire for an "orderly," "simple" and encompassing world interpretation may be a neurotic wishdream; but the distinction between an exclusively human world quite different from the rest of the universe and nature appears as a mixture of sick arrogance and alienated despair. If man is only an animal determined by that small aspect of total experience that natural science calls nature, why does he develop a longing for an orderly comprehensible, all-inclusive universe? His consciousness separates him from the world; but could it be possible that not all umbilical cords are cut off? Could it be that, in religious and poetic experiences, in the receptive communion with nature, in the encounter and in the union with the Thou—that in such peak-experiences a bridge, although a very unstable and transitory bridge, to the depth of creation is re-established? The human intellect has discovered nothing during the last four centuries which excludes this possibility. It is high time that this possibility is explored with the same thoroughness and with the same objectivity which we apply in splitting the atom and in the production of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion we would like to summarize the consequences of these thoughts for some political questions. Thus, the conflict between the Communist and the free world will have a different meaning in the light of these considerations. If one looks at this conflict "sub specie æternitatis," from an ontological point of view, communism reveals itself as a special form of industrialism. Communism shows the same repression that we found in Western industrial societies: Communist society represses feeling, emotions, the inner world, the artistic soul, play and playfulness. Communism also glorifies technological and economic productivity at the expense of the receptive orientation. One can even assert that these repressive orientations are stronger in Russia than in the West where these repressions have become weaker under the impact of growing affluence. The Russian way of life corresponds in many respects to the Victorian period in England and on the European continent; it seems that this way of life is tied to a certain phase of industrial development. Of course there are differences between the Communist and the Western industrial systems which can be traced

back to differences in history and national tradition. The East has never known the Western concept of political freedom and its institutions. However, in East and West the concept of freedom has been emptied of content. In the West it was changed into the idea of freedom from all external compulsion; the inner meaning of freedom has been neglected. Freedom became a purely external institution, even in the West. Thereby freedom was weakened so that it finally could be suppressed by mass organizations and bureaucratic institutions, very similar to the East. The nevertheless unavoidable fight against communism would be strengthened immensely if we would understand that we in the West have committed, at least to some extent, the same sins as Communism and that the fight against communism requires a far-reaching degree of self-criticism.

This is also true of our attitude towards the *developing countries.* We should not confirm them in their belief that industrialization according to the Western pattern—with continent-wide economic units and large scale business organizations—can solve all of their problems. Instead we should warn them to avoid the mistakes of the industrialized West. This is also applicable not only in the economic but also in the political field. The developments in Africa since the last World War can partly be explained by the reliance on a misunderstood concept of freedom as freedom from external foreign domination. The interdependence of external freedom and inner discipline—which stems ontologically from the antinomy of freedom and necessity—should be made clear. Because there is no discipline and inner control, these national liberations lead too often to despotisms and dictatorships.

In the economic field the *myth of eternal economic growth* has to be abandoned, in the West and East as well as in the developing countries. Growth as an end in itself, merely as a manifestation of vitalistic power and strength, must be recognized as an "unhealthy" goal. More and more wealth and power as such are not desirable.[7] In the United States the meaninglessness of the myth of economic growth has not yet been generally understood; it is too much rooted in the American belief in progress and in its technological and economic optimism which has spurred the extraordinary economic accomplishments of the American economy but which has become obsolete in the affluent society. The similarity of the American with the Russian materialistic optimism is characteristic; both are dangerous because they are an obstacle for the re-evaluation and the reversal of ultimate values which is necessary to save Western civilization and the existence of mankind.

In the last analysis it is this re-evaluation of all values in the light of a holistic world outlook which is required; a world outlook which encompasses *all* elements and dimensions of human existence, not only the intellectual, materialistic and vitalistic dimensions. This is a re-evaluation of values in the opposite direction than the one that Nietzsche proposed. This radical reversal of ultimate values in which contemplation and worship will again be re-instituted as the highest value, and action, labor and work as secondary values, cannot be planned like a five year plan and like an increase in the Gross National Product. Such a reversal of ultimate values can only arise organically from a change in conditions, especially from a change in attitudes and thought. The conditions for such a reversal are favorable today insofar as the repressed dimensions of human existence—such as inner experience, receptivity, contemplation, poetry, art, play, the unconscious, intuitive reason—cannot be repressed as successfully as they have been repressed in the past. They are coming to the surface, although in distorted form. Inner experience has been resuscitated by modern psychology, by existentialism and by the

[7] Walter A. Weisskopf, "Economic Growth and Human Well-Being," *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Business*, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois, Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1964, pp. 17 ff. (Printed in MANAS for August 21, 1963.)

movements towards religious renewal. The affluent society has brought about, to a certain degree, an abandonment of purely economic goals and a certain satiation with consumers' goods. This manifests itself also in the increasing interest in the performing and creative arts.

All this is still in its infancy and not clearly understood in the Western countries; but the turning towards non-economic goals in private business administration and in public agencies, is already visible. Growing automation and cybernation can only strengthen this development; if there will not be enough jobs in traditional markets, people will, for purely economic reasons, turn to non-economic activities of a religious, artistic and educational nature, which will have to be better paid and therefore will attract a greater labor supply. An inner reversal of values and the emergence of a world outlook with a holistic basis is however a necessary pre-condition for these developments.

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