

MOTIVES OR METHODS?

IT is easy to be seduced into taking economic thinkers seriously. They are highly educated, urbane, and some of them try earnestly to make their capacities of use to their fellow men. Their occupational conditioning, however, seems to render this impossible.

A case in point is provided by Victor Lebow's review in the *Nation* for July 17 Of Robert Heilbroner's latest book, *Business Civilization in Decline*. This is a work likely to be declared by many readers to contain certain facts of life that we dare not ignore, however unpalatable. It is Mr. Heilbroner's view that business—or capitalist—civilization is on the way out. He is persuaded that it can't last another century, although unsure about what will replace it. He gives all the familiar reasons for its demise: It can't expand any more, and the survival of capitalism depends on expansion; the exhaustion of energy and critical raw materials is another major reason; pollution a third. These inexorable factors have a prejudicial psychological effect, already in evidence:

With the limits imposed on its growth will come an "exhaustion of spirit" and changes in the values, ambitions, and morale of the business system. Fixed and limited output must mean a steady erosion of profits, and between the intensified competition and the demands of the workers, it must continue to decline. The struggle between labor and capital will grow more fierce. With limited profits, the demands of the poor can only be met out of the pockets of the rich. At this point the legitimacy of property rights will confront the society. Heilbroner sees another cause for the breakup of the business system in the very operations of the planning bureaucracy, in which the power of the scientists and technicians increases. The public authority makes the decisions as to what products and services are to be made available to the citizenry. Whether this political power will find some pleasant means of doing the job, or whether it will require the imposition of military discipline and the use of force, he cannot foretell.

At the outset of his review Mr. Lebow remarks that this is the third book noticed in the *Nation* this year which says that economic planning is necessary, but he fails to suggest how it will be done under capitalism. Quite evidently, the State will have to adjust or regulate the "tensions between the selfish, acquisitive character of capitalism and the demands of the very social order which it has spawned." This is a prospect *no one* can look forward to with enthusiasm, since even socialist planners under systems allowing them total control do not seem able to avoid overproduction, shoddy quality, and indifference to what the people want and need. The conclusion must be that, apart from the minimum conditions of "survival" which might be expected from the ministrations of the Bureaucratic State, the material and cultural fare provided by centralized planning will be drab, monotonous, and second-rate. There is simply no way for imaginative human beings to break through the wall of bureaucratic authority and routine erected by clerks carrying out the orders of planners who themselves never touch a tool or even prepare a meal.

The intelligent revolutionists of a century ago saw this inevitability. Summarizing the temper of Alexander Herzen's *Memoirs* in the *New Yorker* (Feb. 18, 1969) George Steiner wrote:

Herzen strove with all his might for revolution but came to know that such revolution would spell ruin for the civilization that he himself embodied. The impulses that made him a rebel, that drove him into exile and unbroken resistance to autocracy, were generous and deep-seated, but they reflected the idiom and intellectual values of a privileged, high-bourgeois culture. . . . What lay ahead was most likely a grey plateau, a mass society devoted to the crafts of survival. Herzen knew this; he sensed the philistinism, the vengeful monotonies that waited beyond the storm. Unlike so many new left pundits and would-be bomb-throwers of today, Herzen never

minimized the cost of social revolution in terms of culture. Stuffed into the dustbin of history would be not only injustice, exploitation, class snobberies, religious cant of every kind, but a good measure of the fine arts, speculative insights, and inherited learning that were the peculiar glory of Western man. Herzen knew that the task of a radical intellectual elite was in a very precise sense suicidal. In preparing a society for revolution it was inevitably digging its own grave.

One needs to question Mr. Steiner's identification of cultural excellences with bourgeois privilege. Actually, he is talking about values which existed *in spite of* the framework of what we call a bourgeois (shopkeeping, buying and selling) society. The pejorative flavor of his adjectives need not blind us to this. There are a few human decencies which may be present in any sort of society, and we ought not to brand them with the names of the surrounding evils. Finally, are those decencies—including the arts and culture which have been "the peculiar glory of Western man"—necessarily doomed by the sort of changes that survival requires?

How, we ought to ask, could those excellences Herze mourned manage to exist at all in company with a system which has so many revolting moral consequences. The most important paragraph in Mr. Lebow's review seems an attempt to get at this question by moving to a level above the arguments between "Left" and "Right"

Capitalism is already showing signs that it can no longer generate the social morale so essential to continued existence. It is true that it has freed probably more than half the American people from scarcity and want. But at the heart of this business civilization is a "hollowness"—everything is evaluated in money terms. "Or consider advertising, perhaps the most value-destroying activity of a business civilization." That hollowness is further emphasized by the low estimation business places on the value of work, which it sees as a means to an end—not the true end in itself for that is profit, income, economic growth. Nor is industrial socialism immune to this outlook, for its roots lie "in machine process and worship of efficiency." Under a business civilization, as Heilbroner puts it sharply, "the values

of output are celebrated and those of input merely calculated."

This, it would seem to anyone of common sense, is where the trouble really lies, and where effort should be expended. So long as we had more than enough of everything—a planet running over with riches to exploit—we thought it was possible to let "business" go its vulgar way, while enlightened people would continue to fight the good fight for decency and values, and perhaps, in the long run, be able to change the quality of industry and commerce after these activities had become efficient enough to bring affluence to all.

But the circumstances have changed. The promise of universal affluence as a solution to world injustice and unrest has become patent nonsense. With inflation, the spiralling of actual costs, and the ever-growing quantity of funds poured into military technology—to say nothing of the expansion of government to deal (seldom successfully) with one malfunction after another—the old idea that general prosperity will erase all problems has given way to dull expectation of bare survival, probably under the supervision of some sort of 1984 political order.

This, at any rate, seems the clear implication of Robert Heilbroner's hardheaded analysis of the decline of the business civilization. The pessimism of the reviewer seems entirely justified:

But between the greed and power hunger of the corporations and the ineptitude and hypocrisy of the rule of the nation-state—with its dependence on that "last refuge of scoundrels," patriotism—one is at a loss to know where mankind is to turn for its deliverance.

What is wrong with this general approach to the appalling problems of the modern world? It is, we think, the unquestioning acceptance of the *complexity* that our world had produced, and goes on producing, as though no other way of life can be possible for human beings. The willing embrace of complexity makes toleration of the forces which produced it inevitable. It also justifies searching for solutions in terms of existing

systems and methods, to the exclusion of attention to motives and goals. The problems of the modern world, whatever their present technical dimensions, are moral problems, and there are no technical solutions for moral problems.

What sort of analysis becomes possible if you *don't* accept complexity as the immutable condition of life for modern man? Not ignoring, but refusing to be bound by complexity opens the way to endless possibilities of individual action. It leads to the kind of activity that has been pioneered by E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small Is Beautiful*.

In 1961, several years before the formation of the Intermediate Technology Development Group, Mr. Schumacher was invited to give a talk on "Modern Industry in the Light of the Gospel" to a group of young Christians studying industrial problems in Britain. From what he said it becomes evident that all the characteristics discussed by Mr. Heilbroner were then plainly present and well recognized. But in his analysis Mr. Schumacher considered attitudes and motives as primary, systems and structures as secondary, simply as results. Yet systems and structures must have attention because of the influence—often amounting to almost hypnotic control—they exercise over motives and human attention. Complexity, in short, has a *blinding* effect. Mr. Schumacher said:

Modern industrial society is immensely complicated, immensely involved, making immense claims on man's time and attention. This, I think, must be accounted its greatest evil. Paradoxical as it may seem, modern industrial society, in spite of an incredible proliferation of labor-saving devices, has not given people more time to devote to their all-important spiritual tasks; it has made it exceedingly difficult for anyone, except the most determined, to find any time whatever for these tasks. In fact, I think I should not go far wrong if I asserted that the amount of genuine leisure available in a society is generally in inverse proportion to the amount of labor-saving machinery it employs. If you would travel, as I have done, from England to the United States and on to a country like Burma, you would not fail to see the truth of this assertion. What is the

explanation of the paradox? It is simply that, *unless there are conscious efforts to the contrary*, wants will always rise faster than the ability to meet them.

Mr. Heilbroner and his reviewer are not unaware of the evils of complexity. But "conscious efforts to the contrary" are not a solution in their eyes. Mr. Lebow says in one place:

Only primitive peoples have been able to live their lives without the organizational and bureaucratic impedimenta that characterize more advanced civilizations, building their lives "around the great supportive pillars of tradition or religious life." Since we have not such elements that may serve to solve our problems in this "middle future," we will have to utilize "both the crude agencies of nationalism with its irrationality and force, and corporations or ministries with their hierarchies of status and inculcated dissatisfaction."

This seems to argue that the only sort of salvation available to modern man will have to come through a manipulation of our established habits, carefully avoiding any change in motives or goals. Mr. Schumacher, however, pursues his analysis in terms of precisely those "elements" we are said to lack:

Whether the tendency to raise wants faster than the ability to meet them is inherent in industrialism as such or in the social form it has taken in the West may be a debatable question. It is certain that it exists and that the social forms exacerbate it. In this country [England], expenditure on advertising falls only a little short of expenditure on all types of education. Industry declares that advertising is absolutely necessary to create a mass market, to permit efficient mass production. But what is the great bulk of advertising other than the stimulation of greed, envy and avarice? It cannot be denied that industrialism, certainly in its capitalist form, openly employs these human failings—at least three of the seven deadly sins—as its very motive force. . . . present-day industrial society everywhere shows this evil characteristic of incessantly stimulating greed, envy and avarice. It has produced a folklore of incentives which magnifies individual egotism in direct opposition to the teachings of the Gospel.

The complex system based on these incentives—which must continually feed those

incentives, or falter and fail—degrades most forms of human employment. How, Mr. Schumacher asks, does work in the industrial system become "utterly uninteresting and meaningless"?

Mechanical, artificial, divorced from Nature, utilizing only the smallest part of man's potential capabilities, it sentences the great majority of workers to spending lives in a way which contains no worthy challenge, no stimulus to self-perfection, no chance of development, no element of Beauty, Truth, or Goodness. "Every man," it has been said, "should be a special kind of artist." How many men can be artists of any kind in their daily work? The basic aim of modern industrialism is not to make work satisfying but to raise productivity; its proudest achievement is labor-saving whereby labor is stamped with the mark of undesirability. But what is undesirable cannot confer dignity; so the working life of a laborer is a life without dignity. The result, not surprisingly, is a spirit of sullen irresponsibility which refuses to be mollified by higher wage awards but is often only stimulated by them.

Putting working men in charge of industrial production without changing the conception of purpose behind production has little or no effect:

It is a frequent experience that as soon as a working man finds himself saddled with managerial responsibility he begins to develop an almost uncanny understanding for and sympathy with the current preoccupations of management. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? Modern industrialism has produced its own coherent system of values, criteria, measurements, etc.; it all hangs together and cannot be tampered with except at the risk of breakdown. If anyone said: "I reject the idolatry of productivity; I am going to ensure that every job is worthy of a Man," he would have reason to fear that he might be unable to pay the expected wages or, if he did, that it landed him straight into bankruptcy court. All the same, autocratic management which treats men as "factors of production" instead of responsible human persons, is a grave evil leading to innumerable stunted or even wasted lives.

In just the same way, the critic of the economic assumptions of industrialism, once he allows himself to be involved in the chains of its logic, is seduced into accepting the prevailing preoccupations. Then his argument proceeds in a way that does not really challenge the

assumptions, and he ignores the possibility that human intentions and goals could be of a very different sort. So there might well be an end to the reading, if not the writing, of such books. Schumacher, for example, gives little attention to the technical equations of economics, although he knows them well enough. He starts at the other end, with the issues of human motivation. He conceives life to be a school of self-development, a central task being to establish firmly the goals of personal freedom and personal responsibility as chief among the realities of human existence. What folly to start anywhere else? He says in this early paper:

As Prof. A. V. Hill says in his recent book *The Ethical Dilemma of Science*: "To imagine that scientific and technical progress alone can solve all the problems that beset mankind is to believe in magic, and magic of the very unattractive kind that denies a place to the human spirit." Too much contact with machinery has convinced the masters of the system that economic development is a mechanical, *i.e.*, unalterable, process which could only be thrown into disorder but never stopped or modified by the intrusion of value judgments.

Schumacher ends his critique of the industrial society by listing the natural consequences of the general pursuit of activities which are undertaken without reference to values. Of this society, he says:

1. It has disrupted, and continues to disrupt, certain organic relationships in such a manner that world population is growing, apparently irresistibly, beyond the means of subsistence.
2. It is disrupting certain other organic relationships in such a manner as to threaten those means of subsistence themselves, spreading poison, adulterating food, etc.
3. It is rapidly depleting the earth's non-renewable stocks of scarce mineral resources—mainly fuels and metals.
4. It is degrading the moral and intellectual qualities of man while further developing a highly complicated way of life the smooth continuance of which requires ever increasing moral and intellectual qualities.

5. It breeds violence—a violence against nature which at any moment can turn into violence against one's fellow men, when there are weapons around which make non-violence a condition of survival.

What does he propose?

Everywhere the values of freedom, responsibility, and human dignity have to be openly affirmed, even where a neglect of these values would appear to allow the big industrial machine to run more smoothly and more efficiently. . . . It is the individual, personal example that counts. The greatest "doing" that is open to every one of us, now as always, is to foster and develop within himself a genuine understanding of the situation that confronts us, and to build conviction, determination, and persuasiveness upon such understanding. . . . Much thinking, much discussion, much imaginative, personal pioneering work will have to be done before democratic, collective action becomes possible.

A reading of *Small Is Beautiful*—happily a best-seller—would make plain that these counsels are neither "vague generalities" nor moralistic slogans. They are principles of action.

REVIEW

RARITIES OF HEALTH

PEOPLE who recall Robert Nathan's *Portrait of Jenny* and wish they could find similar reading today will probably enjoy Eleanor Cameron's *The Court of the Stone Children*. One could say that these books have in common an element of the "supernatural," but actually the word has a misleading effect. The delicacies of both tales make them above all natural, and most readers will feel that, one way or another, the themes of these stories are faithful to life, or "true." Curiously, they deal with death, yet, when you think about it, all that we feel or suppose we know about death is in terms of life—death is one of *life's* mysteries.

The Court of the Stone Children is a story in which life and death flow together. An adolescent girl named Nina moves with her family to San Francisco, where she is lonely and bitter, missing the country and her friends until—of all things—she falls in love with a museum. But what comes out, little by little, is that the attraction she feels comes from the mythic presences for which the museum stands. It is not easy to embody mythic presences in the particular circumstances of a story. Few do it well. Eleanor Cameron does it almost perfectly.

How should we characterize this story? Well, it's sort of a brave *old* world tale. It seems just the opposite of Mr. Huxley's formidable anti-utopia. As you read, you keep asking yourself, are there really adolescent boys and girls like that anywhere in the world? Haven't they all been shut out, driven away?

Recently we read somewhere that the French—even the sophisticated French—have a great liking for American Westerns. Since most Westerns are elaborations of an apparently inexhaustible cliché, the writer wondered why this should be. He decided that it was because righteousness triumphs, virtue is admirable, evil put down. People get very hungry for reading

that helps them to believe that such good things can actually happen. Westerns are a modern version of folk tales—the kind that children like to hear over and over again, instead of something new. They are stories which support the legitimacy of spontaneous longing and human beings can't do without them.

This is the quality of Eleanor Cameron's story about the girl who falls in love with a little San Francisco museum. There are appropriate reasons why, in the environs of this wonderful place, a girl who lived back in Napoleon's time in France becomes a tangible presence for Nina, and only Nina. This French girl, Dominique, has been waiting, waiting, for someone to help her right a wrong. Her father had been executed by Napoleon on a charge of murder, but he was innocent, and his daughter *knew* he was innocent. There is no atmosphere of "spiritualism" in this book. It has no sticky psychic quality. Nor is it doctrinal. If one has theories or beliefs about such things, it seems suitable to suspend them for a bit, in order to grasp the underlying intent of the writer. There is mythic soundness in the story, as this passage will suggest:

Nina, while Domi was speaking, had lived inside that other time, seeing each scene as Domi described it, herself *being* that far-off Dominique. So that now, with Domi silent and the story ended, she looked away and felt herself, almost as much as Domi must, a stranger in this world of the present century.

"And your father, Domi—you never proved him innocent?"

"But if I had—don't you understand, Nina?—my dream about you would have meant nothing. I would never have had it. All my life, in this world, I searched for the facts of what had happened to my father in those last weeks before he was shot. Where had he been? . . . It was as if my father had stepped off the edge of the earth. Forever after, in all the historical records, which the whole world has read and believes are true, my father has been a traitor who was once called the conscience of Napoleon, and the murderer of an innocent old man who loved him all his life and whom my father loved in return. . . . he was never a traitor, but he had the courage to speak out about what he felt to be wrong and there is a vast difference. He would never have conspired to

murder Napoleon because he felt that to murder someone you disagree with is barbarism, and that it does no good in the long run because such an evil only begets further

"But, Domi—it was all so long ago! If somehow I can help you to prove him innocent, what good will it do him?"

"It will do a good. It will set straight one more lie. As for time, that is nothing. Two hundred years—what are they? But truth is something. . . ."

This is the "human interest" of the story, and Nina fulfills it. By a series of lovely accidents and ingenious plans she vindicates Dominique's father, with the help of the museum experts, and Domi is freed to go where she needs to go.

The natural weaving of morality with romance, without blighting either theme, is the task of the artist, and Eleanor Cameron seems better at it than practically all the Western story writers. (Dutton was the original publisher of her book, and the paperback edition is by Avon, \$1.25.)

Another book in which righteousness triumphs—this time a vigorous, extrovert righteousness—is *Give Us This Day* by R. F. Delderfield, a sequel to *God Is an Englishman*. Delderfield is not, we suppose, regarded as "serious" literature. We don't remember seeing much notice of his work in *Harper's* or the *Atlantic*. Maybe he is too healthy to be serious. Anyhow, *Give Us This Day* is a fine book to enjoy and get to know something about the English. Here is a passage giving the reflections of Adam Swann, founder of the family transport business, whose life makes the central drama of these books. He is wandering through London and finds himself near the Tower:

The bus set him down on Tower Hill, where some of his favorite characters from the past had taken their final glimpse of the world in the upturned faces of ten thousand Cockneys, assembled to witness a spectacle that was even more popular than a bear-baiting or a cockfight. Strafford, who put too much trust in Princes, old Lord Lovat, for his share in the Jacobite rebellion, and that nincompoop Monmouth, who died gamely, they said, but only after crawling on his knees before that bigot James. Well, they

managed these things more discreetly nowadays, and he wasn't at all sure that the condemned thanked them for it. He had a notion that a man needed an audience on occasions like that and might even look for a chance to show his paces at the last minute. . . .

He stood for a minute beside the slab marking the spot where the scaffold had stood, remembering the luckless Ann Boleyn and rekindling his lifelong resentment for the least likeable of England's monarchs, who had her pretty head lopped off by the Calais executioner. They said the damned scoundrel (Adam had never regarded Henry as anything else) waited outside the city wall for a cannon shot, announcing the fact that he was a widower, before riding off to Jane Seymour, and he wouldn't put it past him.

Remembering other eminent victims of the royal axe, he thought of Walter Raleigh, who spent his last days in the Tower on the battlemented walk overlooking the Thames. Raleigh went to his death upheld and in dignity. As he had said in some lines memorized by Adam when a boy:

*But from this grave, this earth, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.*

This began another line of musings for Adam:

It occurred to him to wonder how much store his own family set upon hope of a personal resurrection. Not much, he would say, for all their regular church-going when they were youngsters. Henrietta, he knew for a fact, never let herself contemplate death, her own or anyone else's. Alex, professional soldier, would have come to terms with it long ago. George wasn't the spiritual type, or Hugo either. Giles was more difficult to predict. He was too intelligent not to have renounced conventional doctrine long since, but, like Adam, he had a powerful belief in man's potential and in the never-ending struggle between good instincts and bad. As for the girls, they had almost certainly given a great deal more thought to their clothes, looks and figures than they gave to their souls, and not for the first time he envied men like Raleigh their deeply-rooted faith in an all-seeing, all-caring Creator, universal at the time, he supposed, before tiresome fellows like Darwin and Huxley set about confusing everybody.

One measure of a good novel is how little you skip. Delderfield's books are enormous, but you don't skip much.

COMMENTARY

BAROMETERS OF CIVILIZATION

THIS week's lead article is concerned with the disintegration of business civilization. Why has it taken so long for the decline to become evident? Perhaps because the moral emptiness of the motives of self-interest has seemed to us natural in commercial enterprise.

However, there are other activities not by nature commercial which might have served as barometers of cultural health—publishing is an example. Quite possibly, the long history of troubles in the publishing business has been due simply to the fact that it shouldn't *be* a business. Letting the market rule publishing inevitably results in the printing of a great many books that are not worth reading at all.

Interestingly, thirty years ago, in the 1946-47 edition of Dorothy Norman's *Twice a Year*, Harold Clurman said something like this about the theatre. He wrote then, as he might write today, that the theatre "is sick unto death." He explained:

The crucial factors in this regard are the sources and objectives of theatrical production. With us the theatre is a business. There may be nothing wrong with business but—I am ready to shout it from the housetops—it is not the business of theatre to be a business! You can argue, protest, you can analyze or point to historical evidence (Shakespeare was box office, wasn't he?; Shaw is a rich man, isn't he?) but I repeat with as little humility, apology or qualification as possible: for the theatre to function as a truly humanizing agent or even, if you will, as an honest project of entertainment, it cannot primarily be a business.

In the 1920s, Clurman thought, the theatre was in better shape—even though it did good "business" then—because making money was not the primary goal.

But now even the reviewers, whose salary does not increase with the receipts of any particular show, write as if their supreme joy resided in the heralding of a hit. In this they are a manifestation of a corrupted audience. The audience has been

corrupted, of course, by the ambient hysteria of the inflationary psychology which includes the theatre—its producers, backers, and philosophers. It does not seem to matter so much to the reviewers whether a particular play is what it purports to be, because if it is likely to make money it is really serving the purpose which apparently everybody agrees it should serve. Their applause is the echo of the coin as it falls in the till.

There is a very simple reason why the theatre is not and cannot be a business. The reason is: that it is an art. . . . This goes for the writing of novels, the painting of pictures, the making of music, but the theatre is the place where the opposite temptations are most readily at hand, and where the hard path appears to lead most rapidly to a kind of non-existence.

There is a way back to existence for the arts and civilization. It will be painful to take, but joyful, too, once we decide that civilization does not depend upon business.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

SOME OBLIGATORY READING

TAKING notice of a book in MANAS entails some responsibility. Readers, we have found, very often look up the books reviewed and sometimes write their appreciation of the choices. Here we try to notice mostly books that will be directly useful to individuals.

But there is another sort of book which it doesn't seem right to ignore. We have two books like that now—books which cause pain—recommended by a reader who has worked with children for the whole of a long life. One, *The Little Victims* (David McKay, 1975), looks at the lives of children in institutions—mental hospitals, jails, foster homes, welfare offices, and juvenile courts. The author, Howard James, has spent years visiting such places in practically all the states. The resulting record of continuing cruelty and indifference to the helpless young makes you wonder how he can bear this work as a career. The bright spots and moments he comes across in these investigations are so few.

What is really wrong? The decline, decay, and breakdown of community life seems the best brief answer. An effort is made to replace the missing elements of community for some—a lucky few—of the millions of children in America that nobody seems to want or care about, but the professionally created "community" can never have the same qualities as those which were once naturally present. The good places devised to help unwanted children have to be "deprofessionalized" in order to heal bruised and shattered lives. Mr. James ends his first chapter:

No community meets the needs of even a fraction of our unwanted and handicapped children. Billions of dollars are being squandered on schools, institutions, agencies, and programs destined to fail. Nor do the professionals have the answers either. That is why Karl Menninger, the eminent psychiatrist who has devoted his lifetime to problems of people and children, told me that the best hope lies—to his

mind—in The Villages, started in Topeka Kansas. The Villages are really strong foster homes, built in a cluster with wholesome and intelligent foster parents, using normal community facilities.

Dr. Menninger will not permit psychiatrists or policemen on the grounds; his whole program centers on building a strong family for children who do not have adequate families of their own. He gives them shelter, food, love, and stability. But even Dr. Karl has not been able to get others to accept his plan and spread it across the nation.

Toward the end of his book Mr. James makes it clear that welfare is "big business" and that those who fight poverty as a professional career benefit from it. But while social workers are often blamed for their ineffectual and sometimes indifferent efforts, failure seems built into their jobs. An Illinois official said: "They start out as warm, compassionate people with empathy and a sense of mission, but they get so busy rushing around from one bonfire to the next they don't have time to catch their breath. The bureaucracy burns them out." A New York director of social services points out that the goals of social service are poorly defined. "What," he asks, "does the community want to do about hunger and housing?" He says that success in providing welfare services seems bound to terminate in failure. "If we develop a good program to take care of the poor, then we end up taking care of all of the poor and the caseload and costs go up. This makes people mad." Mr. James asks:

How do you measure a social worker's success rate? What should be the goal for a nation of over 200 million persons with more than 20 million of them poor; a country where the mating system produces shaky marriages and unwanted children; where millions of children are abused sexually, physically, or emotionally; where the infant mortality rate, illegitimacy, and venereal disease rate are high where tens of thousands of men abandon their wives and children; . . . where the number of muggings, murders, robberies, rapes, burglaries, thefts, and other crimes is astronomical; where we do not know how to cure the emotionally ill or the delinquent or criminal and where we pump children full of drugs to keep them calm, or send them off to warehouselike institutions, or both?

What is the social worker's role in a nation where the President's highest aides approve of burglaries, wiretap innocent citizens as well as criminals, and discuss vengeful methods of using a variety of federal agencies to punish enemies of the President?

The other book concerned with the helpless young is more specific and more directly moving. Lois Forer, a lawyer and formerly Deputy Attorney General of Pennsylvania, has for years defended juveniles against felony and other charges in the courts of Philadelphia. Her book, *No One Will Listen* (John Day, 1970), tells in case history after case history "How Our Legal System Brutalizes the Youthful Poor." She first saw Robert, a nine-year-old black boy, when he was held in a filthy juvenile cell on a charge of "breaking and entering, robbery, larceny, receiving stolen goods, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct." This was the story he told her:

Eight days before, while he was walking home from school, two men had run past him carrying several packages. One small bundle had dropped on the sidewalk. Undecided whether to call out to them, Robert finally said nothing and waited. A few minutes after the men had disappeared around the corner, Robert picked up the bundle. Just then he heard the siren of a police car several blocks away. He tossed the bundle under a parked car and fled. A few minutes later he was seized by the policemen, taken to the police station and then to the detention center. Now he was to be tried. He didn't know what the charges were. He'd told the same story to the policeman and the intake interviewer. But no one listened. He repeated it to me with weary, hopeless resignation.

The package contained two clean shirts taken from a laundry, along with a lot of other valuable clothing. The laundry owner had identified the shirts. When Mrs. Forer insisted that the laundry owner be called to testify at Robert's hearing, the judge asked her if she was "trying to teach this poor boy how to beat the law and set him on a life of crime?" But when the owner came to the next hearing he said that entry to his place had been made through a second-story window, very high and difficult to get at. It became evident that a

nine-year-old could not possibly have got in and taken the quantity of goods stolen.

Robert was put on the witness stand and told his story for the fourth time in his flat, unemotional voice. Judge Charles Wright leaned over the bench to look at the small prisoner at the bar of the court.

"You hadn't done anything wrong, Robert. Why did you run when you saw the policeman?"

"Cause I knew they wouldn't believe me."

"And they didn't!" Judge Wright laughed.

Robert was released after he had already spent eight days in detention. The Negro judge did not suggest that the arresting officer might have checked out Robert's story. It is a fact of life that no one, least of all a policeman, ever believes a black boy.

Although a little investigation by the police would have saved Robert from arrest and detention, he was one of the fortunate children because he was released. Many others are less fortunate. After being arrested and held on the flimsiest evidence, they are often considered guilty because they were arrested. On a second arrest without probable cause the fact of the prior baseless arrest is held against a child. And so a record of delinquency is built against a child who may never have committed an offense. Seeing a record of several arrests, a judge may decide to send a boy away for years "for his own good." From there the pattern of delinquency takes over. The origin of this process may be nothing more than a policeman's decision to bring in a suspicious-looking boy.

About the only people able to *get at* and understand and do something about the routine injustice practiced in the courts are lawyers like Lois Forer. Fortunately, more and more young attorneys are beginning to give some time to this work. As Mrs. Forer shows in her last chapter, this is probably the only sort of "research" that can accomplish some good.

FRONTIERS Theory and Practice

THE *Manchester Guardian*—the weekly edition is especially useful to American readers wanting to know something of the European outlook—regularly prints material from *Le Monde* and the *Washington Post*. An article by Theodore Wertime from the *Post*, "The New American Revolution," deserves special attention. (*Guardian*, July 18.) The changes of direction implicit in present affairs are listed briefly but in sufficient detail to point from theory to practice.

"Simple finiteness," Mr. Wertime says, "brings the 20th century to a close." What comes next?

It is a new American Revolution that entails the reform of the world's urban culture from the countryside—call it the new traditional or the new rural society. It seeks a periodic overthrow of large governmental bureaucracies as they become incapable of governing. It seeks correspondingly new federal relationship to regional governments everywhere. It brings to bear a regiment of non-energy-wasting technologies—such as sun and wind and hydrogen and electronic communication—that nurture economic and social activity in small corporations and communities.

This can all be filled in. Major American cities are on the verge of bankruptcy, and some of them have stopped growing. "In February, the U.S. Census Bureau released statistics showing that, for the first time in recent decades, the trend to city life has been reversed, notably in the migration to smaller communities in the South and the Southwest." We are returning, Mr. Wertime believes, to conditions under which individual resourcefulness must be restored. Production of food will have to be labor-intensive, and people will need to learn to build their own dwellings. He looks to "a deliberate effort to restore regionalism, diversification, a new ruralism, and freedom from bureaucracy." The beginning of the resettlement of the population in towns and villages points to the need for ingenious application of technology to small-scale means of

direct production, since it will be necessary for the great majority to produce their own food:

The restoration of indigenous life and institutions—down to the mudbrick house—is now an objective of many countries. Efficient farming along labor-intensive lines is the first requisite of the new revolution from the countryside, along with village architecture and village modes compatible with the 20th century. . . .

Diversification and smallness will return not simply because large concentrations of industry become less supportable as energy grows more expensive and cities more anarchic, but because new technologies and practices will also encourage them. As solar and wind electricities become practicalities they will offer localized sources of electrical energy and also tie into national grids. Industry and agriculture must necessarily diversify and return to smaller units. A new industrial revolution is in the wings.

What are the indications that these changes will actually take place? They will go on, Mr. Wertime thinks, because they have already begun. The U.S. is a "nontraditional" society, free of compulsions from the past, and already there are numerous avenues of change opening up. It is "when the curve of deterioration in Western urban civilization meshes with the curve of appreciation"—when admission of failure is linked with imaginative recognition of opportunity—that action begins in another direction.

But to see the actual beginnings of change one must go to scores and hundreds of sources. There can be no single, comprehensive account of a movement which gets its energy and start from hundreds and thousands of unknown innovators. And no generalization is adequate to tell what is happening. The very genius of the change lies in its privacy, in the unorganized independence of its origins. Consider, for example, the group which calls itself Community Technology, Inc., in Washington, D.C. The least important thing about this small collection of engineers, scientists, and technicians is what can be said about the formal structure which unites them. They are working to bring practical help to the inner city

environment, to show by demonstration that "inner city" neighborhoods can be far more self-reliant in basic production, including food, than usually imagined, and that engineering and technical skills have a useful and innovative place in community life as well as in the life of great institutions and corporate bodies.

An interesting aspect of Community Technology is that its work is largely self-financed. The "liberal foundations," says Karl Hess, the chief organizer of the group, "have expressed great skepticism at the entire notion of neighborhood scale technology, preferring, instead, projects of more spectacular scale and, particularly, projects which, rather than emphasize work, emphasize welfare." So most of the work of Community Technology is done in the evening; during the day the members work at jobs to help keep the project going. They have space in a warehouse where they meet, plan and construct. Fish (trout) farms and roof vegetable gardens are two of the achievements of the group. Other plans show the way these people think:

The group's next order of priority, particularly after getting the second-generation fish production system under way, is to develop self-sustaining projects which will, also, produce enough income to sustain the operation overall and even enable at least one or two people to work at it fulltime. One such project would be a mobile auto repair service—driving to disabled machines, particularly in the suburbs, and earning enough, say, from two or three days' operation there to enable several more days of operation at cost, or free, in the neighborhood. . . . But the long-range purposes of the group will be served only as the skills and information available at C-T permeate and become useful tools in the neighborhoods generally. Thus, a "teaching hardware store" is also planned, with hope of some space for its operation being available some time next year. The store would carry basic items, tools, fasteners, and wood and metal modules (boards and strips, plates and rods) and would provide tools on the premises, for basic fabrications such as cutting to size and threading for finished assembly. (*Spark*, Vol. 4, No. 2.)

This work, Karl Hess says, "enables scientists, engineers, technicians, and craft people

to rethink the roles of their skills and talents while actively or, you could say, scientifically testing the material possibilities of new ways of work." The basic purpose is to redirect the creative energies of human beings toward efficient, small-scale endeavor: "The vision is of people living in peace, in a society of mutual aid and full participation. The work is to ensure a material base for the vision, for the dream."

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