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THOMAS JEFFERSON THEN AND NOW

THESE are days when Jeffersonian themes stand a better chance of revival than they have had for at least a hundred years. With this idea in mind, the late Alexander Laing prepared for the *Nation* (July 3) material on Jefferson's vision and hope for the United States. He began:

> Americans are said to be born either Hamiltonians or Jeffersonians. Although most live out their lives unaware of the contrasting symbolism, they behave like predestined hero-worshipers of one, but not of the other, of these statesmen who established, early in the 1790s, a durable stress that has powered our politics ever since.

Hamilton, as Mr. Laing says, "stood for central control, in the interest of commerce and its fiscal institutions." Since business—commerce and industry—is far more "institutional" in character than farming, Hamiltonian conceptions have dominated American society since the middle of the nineteenth century. Americans may be rhetorical farmers, but they have placed the stamp of industrialism on their civilization. James Truslow Adams put the matter briefly:

> We practice Hamilton from January 1 to July 3 every year. On July 4 we hurrah like mad for Jefferson. The next day we quietly take up Hamilton again for the rest of the year as we go about our business.

What did Jefferson stand for? He wanted America to remain predominantly agricultural in character. He gave his reason in a letter written in 1787, speaking with high confidence of the native intelligence of the people—on which self-government must depend—adding, however, a qualification:

> This reliance cannot deceive us, as long as we remain virtuous; and I think we shall be that, as long as agriculture is our principal object, which will be the case while there remain vacant lands in any part of America. When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there.

Jefferson made a moral analysis, while Hamilton, a business man, made a managerial analysis. Jefferson's view was closer to the realities of life in terms of value, while Hamilton's outlook was related to the norms of achievement as he and the "practical" men of his time thought of it, and as many do today. Since the moral approach is beginning to assume greater importance in our eyes, we shall stick to it here. How, then, did Hamilton's thinking translate and eventually filter down into the everyday attitudes of Americans? In a newspaper article of some two years ago, Wendell Berry gave what amounts to a precise summary:

> The entire social vision, as I understand it, goes something like this: man is born into a fallen world, doomed to eat bread in the sweat of his face. But there is an economic redemption. He should go to college and get an education—that is, he should acquire the "right" certificates and meet the "right" people. An education of this sort should enable him to get a "good" job—that is, short hours of work that is easy or prestigious for a lot of money. Thus he is saved from the damnation of drudgery, and is presumably well on the way to proving the accuracy of his early suspicion that he is *really* a superior person.
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> Or, in a different version of the same story, the farmer at his plow or the housewife at her stove dreams of the neat outlines and the carefree boundaries of a factory worker's eight-hour day and forty-hour week, and his fat, unworried paycheck. They will leave their present drudgery to take the bait, in this case, of leisure, time, and money to enjoy the "good things of life."

A further image of how the Hamiltonian view was translated is given by D. S. Carne-Ross:

> Let me remind you of . . . the vision of the City of Tomorrow. Along the traffic-free boulevards of abstract and intentional megalopolis strolled men and women in stylish hygienic dress; above, worm-like

> trains carried ranks of passengers in silent, rapid comfort. Huge airships nosed their almost instantaneous way to Tokyo or Paris amid the gleaming skyscrapers, one of whose windows looked into Tomorrow's odorless kitchen where carefree woman turned a switch for Tomorrow's instantaneous meal. We know now that none of this will happen.

What actually happened is *very* different. It is hardly necessary, in the present, to go into detail concerning the multiple disorders, verging on nightmare, which this dream has produced, ecologically, morally, and socially. Of far greater importance is the historical situation which has resulted from the vain pursuit of such a hedonistic paradise—a situation laced with sudden awareness that we live in a time when certain stringent necessities of physical survival are close to being upon us, and that recognition of this is combined with urgent moral longing for radical changes in our way of life. There is obvious historical leverage in this combination. Interestingly, the Jeffersonian theme chosen by Alexander Laing in his *Nation* article seems to embody both objectives. He asks:

> The question for us is whether we have at last grown up enough to confront the major ideas of Jefferson. The hard test of our readiness will be the most pervasive but least understood of his concepts, which he summarized in a letter composed in Paris for his beloved disciple, Madison, on September 6, 1789: "A subject comes into my head . . . The question Whether one generation of men has a right to bind another. . . . I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self evident: *'that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living':* that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it."

The operative expression, here, is in *usufruct* To possess something in usufruct means to enjoy its benefits, but *without diminishing them.* It derives from traditional English law under which the eldest son inherits his father's estate, but is required to maintain its value undivided and undissipated, and to pass it on to the next generation in a preserved condition. This was the idea that Jefferson expanded broadly to cover both the opportunity and the obligation of the living in relation to the riches of the earth.

How did Madison respond to this large-hearted proposal? A practical legislator, Madison had at that time been working hard to get the Bill of Rights adopted by the Constitutional Convention. He knew that any such guarantee of the future as Jefferson advocated, if at the expense of the present, would bring "yelps of outrage" from many of the delegates. So he replied to Jefferson respectfully, but pointing out, as Laing says, "the limits of possibility when dealing with men driven by self-interest, sectional as well as personal: men of the sort who had pushed the Convention to the edge of ruin again and again." There could be no agreement, he said in effect, to a demand for Environmental Impact Statements from the first generation of free-enterprisers of the new-born United States!

Mr. Laing prepared his *Nation* article on the theory that 1976 might be the right time to revive Jefferson's question: "Has one generation of men a right to bind another?" Should, after all, *any* generation be permitted to despoil the future of the next? Heretofore this question has been carefully avoided, even by Jefferson scholars. And those few who discussed it seemed to echo Madison: while it might be "a great idea" affording "many interesting reflections to legislators," they contended that the usufruct provision "would upset too much," that it "reaches into everything we do."

And that, Mr. Laing rejoins, is *exactly* its effect. He wonders if a changed outlook affecting "everything we do" is not precisely what we now require:

> Having been brought to our present shambles by a contrary doctrine dictating all our habitual arrangements—a system of assumptions that has poisoned our soil and air fouled our waters, rotted out our cities, ruined the self-reliance of plain citizens, and squandered the once great strength of our moral posture throughout the world—what else should we be concerned with, other than concepts capable of a deep, unsettling thrust into everything we do?

At present "everything we do"—the style, that is, of our entire economic life—is pressing us

in the wrong direction. For example, the *Washington Spectator* for July 1, reporting on food in America, notes that between 1973 and 1975 food prices rose 50%. A major factor in this increase is the dependence of agriculture on fossil fuel:

> Since 1972 the American family farm costs have risen 122%, says the *Journal of Social Issues.* Eighty-five per cent of the farmer's expense is for fuel, fertilizer and machinery. The energy needed to produce high yields of corn in America went up 310% from 1946 to 1970, according to a Cornell study. An Illinois farmer told *Business Week* he is cutting production rather than pay $225 a ton for ammonia fertilizer and $21,000 for a new tractor. . . . The National Science Foundation warns, "Modern agriculture . . . is an energy-consumer of a magnitude that raises profound doubts as to its ability . . . to prevent wholesale starvation." The *Wall Street Journal* adds that "the high cost of petroleum threatens the efficiency of America as a food-producing machine."

Meanwhile, excessive use of land during years when crops bring high prices leads to continued loss of topsoil. The rate of loss is now high in the South and agronomists fear that another cycle of drought on the Great Plains will bring a repetition of the dustbowl destruction experienced in the 1930s. At the same time, farm land is being consumed by urban expansion. "The National Association of Conservation Districts reports that land use for cities, highways, reservoirs, and housing suburbs is increasing at the rate of 1.2 billion acres a year."

Among other ominous symptoms is the diminution of basic water supply and the increasing salt content of water used for irrigation in some areas. Worst of all, perhaps, is the continuing trend toward bigness. While the Department of Agriculture has said that most of the economies thought to be unique to the large farms are available to the one-man mechanized farm, the size of farms continues to grow and the number of farms diminishes. During the past twenty years, the total of farms in California, a leading agricultural state, has been cut in half. Big farms require extensive mechanization, and mechanization means higher gasoline consumption. "Another oil embargo," the *Spectator* observes, "could cripple American farming and bring prohibitive prices at the supermarket." And the authoritative weekly, *Science,* is quoted as saying: "To feed the entire world with a US type food system, almost 80% of the world's annual energy expenditure would be required just for the food system."

Unhappily, the question raised by James Madison still has obvious pertinence. Is it possible, he asked, to convert men ruled by self-interest to a concern for the future?

In *Smithsonian* for July, Wilson Clark contrasts the extreme of the supertanker—dangerously vulnerable to disaster but required by an oil-based economy—with the growing interest in intermediate forms of technology around the world. Big business, which through its economic power controls most major governmental policy decisions, is still opting for centralized, large-scale production, and to locate trends in the opposite direction one must search out grass-roots undertakings. Mr. Clark says:

> Although there has been too little effort by corporations and governments to investigate the use of such appropriate techniques in the developing world, a number of small, nonprofit organizations in Europe and America have made great progress in this field for years. The English economist E. F. Schumacher coined the term "intermediate technology" to describe the kinds of approaches and industries needed in the developing world. "I have named it *intermediate technology,"* he says, "to signify that it is vastly superior to the primitive technology of bygone ages but at the same time much simpler, cheaper, and freer than the supertechnology of the rich."

After summarizing a number of intermediate technology innovations in Africa and Asia, Mr. Clark says:

> It is no coincidence that most of the projects described here were accomplished by individuals and small organizations, working independently and at low cost; this characterizes the goal of appropriate

> technologies. Although their application is often confined to developing countries, there is no compelling reason to limit the use of these technologies to countries where agrarian conditions and fuel scarcities are common. In fact, the increasing development of small-scale technologies in America, Japan, and Europe indicates that this new industrial revolution may offset the historic tradition of industrial civilization.

Big technology and large-scale operations have seemed more efficient because in the past they have been able to exploit low cost fuels. This, as Schumacher points out, has led to an improvident exhaustion of the energy capital of the earth. The time may come, possibly quite soon, when for many operations—especially food production—the small operation may be recognized as the most efficient as well as "beautiful." Habit, however, and immediate self-interest still dominate big business, exerting its influence for methods followed in the past:

> . . . the inertial mass of large capital investment works in favor of large organizations in our economy, and government subsidies and laws tend to encourage bigness to the detriment of small businesses and organizations. Even government funding for development of small-scale energy technologies, notably solar energy, has favored large corporations rather than small research groups and businesses which have already developed systems for heating homes and buildings.

Appropriately, Mr. Clark ends by telling about a modern blacksmith who makes all his own tools—mostly out of discarded junk—and the *Smithsonian* writer looks forward to a time of the restoration of individual resourcefulness, self-reliance, and Yankee ingenuity. He reports that of the "71 major 20th-century inventions, more than half were the product of individual inventors, working without the backing of corporations or government."

These, then, are some of the background resources for practical realization by Americans that the earth is ours only *in usufruct*, its wealth a long-term trust. These are the resources which need to be strengthened and increased. The land-trust idea, based on the usufruct principle, is a prime example. Conventional enterprise is likely to be the last to respond, since corporate charters shut out concern for future generations. There can be no community vision in policies shaped by the tensions of competition yoked with concealed lust for monopoly. Politicians are similarly limited. For "leaders" who insist that the common good will be dependent upon whether or not they achieve or retain positions of power, the future can have no further reach or meaning than the next election day. Small wonder, then, that neither corporations nor governments have been responsible for any of the decisive moves in the direction of Jefferson's dream. Corporations and governments are in large part the deliberate codifications of attitudes developed in opposition to that dream.

What shall we say, then? That we are locked helplessly in position by institutions inherited from the past? This is a necessary conclusion only if we decide that we must await changes planned and engineered by laggard and sluggishly reacting institutions. The fact is that vision and creative innovation are neither the task nor the responsibility of institutions. Institutions are incorporated passivity—the vast somatic structures of human society, its dead wood, not the germ cells where inventive and moral intelligence thrives and makes itself felt. Institutions are by definition Epimethean in outlook, statistical in comprehension. They are ruled in law and in custom by the suppositions of the past. Unlike creative and vision-inspired individuals, institutions have achieved their second-rate certainties by ignoring originality, fragmenting human possibility, and reducing enterprises and goals to objectives of calculated self-interest.

Jefferson, Mr. Laing implies, when he realized that he had no allies who would work to establish the usufruct principle in American law—indeed, he found no friendly voice but that of Thomas Paine, who put the principle in *The Rights of*

Man—decided to retire from politics. If the time had not yet come for men to adopt such high resolves in government, then he, as an individual, would do himself what could not be accomplished corporately. So, in 1793, he resigned his office as Secretary of State and "turned his energies instead to the rescue of his plantations from calamities visited upon them by imprudent overseers during almost a decade of his sequential absences in Paris, New York and Philadelphia." Laing saw this decision by Jefferson as a symbolic application of the usufruct idea:

> Jefferson's intent, confirmed not only in a full reading of what he wrote but also in his resignation from public office to restore his ravaged plantations, was of "moment to the modern world" as the most seminal expression of the ideas we now gather up under the heading ecology.

Earlier we suggested that Jefferson's views were based on moral perception. This seems undoubtedly the case, but there is a sense in which the principle of usufruct is naturally arrived at by responsible scientific inquiry. In his essay, *Prometheus* (University of Washington Press), Eric Havelock proposes that the foresight of the Titan represents the scientific spirit in man. Those whose horizons are extended by science to include the far-off future, he says, are drawn to think generously and altruistically. This seems a natural foundation for understanding why the ecologists are proving to be the most effective advocates of Jeffersonian vision. Prof. Havelock says:

> Short-range effort fastens on the thing nearest to one's nose; this thing becomes one's own utility of the immediate moment, something private to oneself. As the time range extends, so does the orbit of persons and interests. The mind enters into a calculation. What will this momentary utility mean to my further utility, the day after tomorrow? Then if necessary the first utility is remodeled to suit the second, but the second meanwhile is remodeled to suit a third, till the process is pushed to that point where "utility" takes on the meaning of a common denominator between "myself" and an expanding range of other men's interests. This common denominator automatically involves a harmonization of interests, because the task of predicting what "I" will need, at a further and further stage of insight, can be carried out only by trying to imagine a hundred other relationships in which "I" will be involved and in predicting a thousand actions of others on which "my" needs in turn will depend. The perspective extends, if pushed far enough in time length, to the point where it takes in city and state and family of states, and the state of the unborn.
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> The conclusion would seem to be that if man cares to prethink far enough, his forethought becomes increasingly moral in its direction. Man cannot prethink evil, but only good.
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> This quality of intellectual prevision is close kin to the scientific imagination, and it needs the patience, the precision and the analysis of science to accomplish the states of forethought; it calls for the discipline of measurement and a large dose of experimental courage.

This also seems an excellent explanation of why the effective Jeffersonian innovators of today are almost always individuals and small groups, "working independently and at low cost."

REVIEW
HEALTH: A MEDICAL MYSTERY

IN 1190, the Carnegie Commission authorized Abraham Flexner to evaluate medical education in the United States. In *Environment* for last May, two eminent practitioners and teachers of social medicine, Robert B. Greifinger and Victor W. Sidel, describe the results of the influential Flexner report:

> The public was responsive to the report's suggestions that commercialism, incompetence, and avarice should be removed from the practice of medicine and that America should create a new breed of physicians. This advice, however, had other consequences—the concentration of medical education in the laboratory and the hospital rather than in the home and the doctor's office and the concentration of control of medical education by the AMA and other professional organizations.
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> Science had provided a new vocabulary for the university and the use of anesthetics had given both credibility and renewed power to practitioners of healing arts. . . . The emphasis on the utilization of scientific theory in medical care, especially in a society wedded to the "single agent theory" of the genesis of illness, developed into a focus on disease and symptoms rather than on therapy, prevention of disability, and caring for the "whole person."

Today, these writers point out, medical care is "a huge part of the American economy, second only to the construction industry in size," and its most visible and most expensive component is hospital care, largely based on advanced technology. Because of the focus on hospital technology, medical practice and services have been removed from the home and the workplace.

> There is a concentration on disease rather than on health, which tends to separate medical care from concern for the patient and the family. The power of the technology itself can lead to problems such as adverse drug reactions and injury from equipment or procedures and to ethical dilemmas such as indefinite prolongation of the process of dying. Most physicians in the U.S. practice specialty medicine, as contrasted with general medicine, a pattern different from every other country in the world. . . . In sum, health care services are in our view a reflection of the prevailing values and the political and social systems of the society.

These facts and circumstances call for further attention to Ivan Illich's new book, *Medical Nemesis* (Pantheon, $8.95), which we discussed in draft form earlier this year (Feb. 11). Many people think that the problems of medicine are something that doctors will have to correct. Illich believes that only laymen can inaugurate the necessary change. He thinks this because he is convinced that the present practice of medicine its preoccupation with specific technical remedies for specific ills—grows from an attitude of mind which has spread throughout society. Specialists can't stop being specialists except on public demand. People generally, Illich is persuaded, need to think of themselves as responsible for themselves, and *able* to be responsible for themselves. In short, he proposes a psycho-moral or existential revolution. But while his purpose is thus philosophic, his method is scientific. His book is exhaustive criticism assembling facts to show that modern medicine does not and cannot deliver health, that supposing it can and acting on that supposition is making people sick. As he says:

> This book offers the lay reader a conceptual framework within which to assess the seamy side of progress against its more publicized benefits. It uses a model of social assessment of technological progress that I have spelled out elsewhere (*Tools for Conviviality*) and applied previously to education (*Deschooling Society*) and transportation (*Energy and Equity*), and that I now apply to the criticism of the professional monopoly and of the scientism in health care that prevail in all nations that have organized for high levels of industrialization.

What is wrong with the specialist's scientific approach? The answer is easy. The human body is not a machine. It is a living, breathing, sensitive organism which houses a conscious soul. Some few of the ills of the body may be mechanical, but bodily health is not a mechanical matter at all. It springs from health in mind and feeling. Healthy human beings are self-reliant and responsible. Technological medicine ignores these primary

realities and for this reason is making people sick. It makes them sick by doing the wrong things to make them well, by creating ills which are products of narrow, occupational blindness, by spreading attitudes which cause people to be irresponsible and dependent, and by creating medical institutions which oblige people to submit to a wide range of sickening procedures. Dr. Illich nowhere suggests that there cannot be desirable and right uses of technical knowledge, but he insists that distinguishing between right and wrong in the practice of medicine will require actively intelligent patients instead of frightened and submissive believers in the misconceptions spread by the technological approach.

Original Sin, for medicine, began in the seventeenth century:

> The hope of bringing to medicine the elegance that Copernicus had given astronomy dates from the time of Galileo. Descartes traced the coordinates for the implementation of the project. His description effectively turned the human body into clockworks and placed a new distance, not only between soul and body, but also between the patient's complaint and the physician's eye. Within this mechanized framework, pain turned into a red light and sickness into mechanical trouble. A taxonomy of diseases became possible. As minerals and plants could be classified, so diseases could be isolated and categorized by the doctor-taxonomist. The logical framework for a new purpose in medicine had been laid. Instead of suffering man, sickness was placed in the center of the medical system and could be subjected to (*a*) operational verification by measurement, (*b*) clinical study and experiment, and (*c*) evaluation according to engineering norms.

At issue in this book is the whole question of "reality" for human beings. What are they? Who are we? What does health mean for a human being? What part do attitudes toward oneself and others play in health? In modern times there has been almost total neglect of these areas of reflection, since it has been vaguely assumed that such questions have been properly answered by scientists and specialists who know how the world works. Illich has taken upon himself to show, at several major levels of human life, that whatever the technicians know, the world as supervised by them is not working well, and that the cost to human beings of these managerial mistakes is growing greater and greater. His book provides the evidence, almost all of it expert testimony. He provides only the synthesis and some illuminating generalizations.

Here is a passage summarizing testimony on the drugs or chemicals taken by more than half the population, almost every day:

> Some take the wrong drug; others get an old or contaminated batch, and others a counterfeit, others take drugs in dangerous combinations, and still others receive injections with improperly sterilized syringes. Some drugs are addictive, others mutilating, and others mutagenic, although perhaps only in combination with food coloring or insecticides. In some patients, antibiotics alter the normal bacterial flora and induce a superinfection, permitting more resistant organisms to proliferate and invade the host. Other drugs contribute to the breeding of drug-resistant strains of bacteria. Subtle kinds of poisoning thus have spread even faster than the bewildering variety and ubiquity of nostrums.

Again:

> Unnecessary surgery is a standard procedure. *Disabling nondiseases* result from medical treatment of nonexistent diseases and are on the increase: the number of children disabled in Massachusetts through the treatment of cardiac nondisease exceeds the number of children under effective treatment for real cardiac disease.

Doctor-caused ills are called iatrogenic. Speaking of social iatrogenesis, Illich says:

> It obtains when medical bureaucracy creates ill-health by increasing stress, by multiplying disabling dependence, by generating new painful needs, by lowering the levels of tolerance for discomfort or pain, by reducing the leeway that people are wont to concede to an individual when he suffers, and by abolishing even the right to self-care. Social iatrogenesis is at work when health care is turned into a standardized item, a staple; when all suffering is "hospitalized" and homes become inhospitable to birth, sickness, and death; when the language in which people could experience their bodies is turned into bureaucratic gobbledegook, or when suffering,

mourning, and healing outside the patient role are labeled a form of deviance.

The account of *health* given by Ivan Illich is extremely brief, yet the whole book depends for its true sense on the idea of health. The brevity, however, seems inevitable since health is a general, not a "scientific" idea. Health, Illich says, is the ability to adapt to changing environments, to grow up, to age, to heal, to bear suffering and to be serene in death:

> Health designates a process by which each person is responsible, but only in part responsible to others. . . . Health is a task, and as such is not comparable to the physiological balance of beasts. Success in this personal task is in large part the result of the self-awareness, self-discipline, and inner resources by which each person regulates his own daily rhythm and actions. . . . The level of public health corresponds to the degree to which the means and responsibility for coping with illness are distributed among the total population. This ability to cope can be enhanced but never replaced by medical intervention or by the hygienic characteristics of the environment. That society which can reduce professional intervention to the minimum will provide the best conditions for health. The greater the potential for autonomous adaptation to self, to others, and to the environment, the less management of adaptation will be needed or tolerated. . . .
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> Medical nemesis is the negative feedback of a social organization that set out to improve and equalize the opportunity for each man to cope in autonomy and ended by destroying it.

COMMENTARY
IN SPITE OF INSTITUTIONS

WHEN we are busy listing what is wrong with a situation—assembling the reasons for what seems a massive structural defect—it is difficult if not impossible to do justice to the "good" side of the situation. The effectiveness and point of the criticism are blurred by a lot of meticulous qualification which needs to be made, actually, at another level.

In the case of Ivan Illich's *Medical Nemesis* (see Review), this "other level" is the natural desire and determination of physicians to give help to sick people. Certain excellences in human relations persist no matter what the institutional overlay of limitations. And doctors have a great deal of knowledge about the function of the physical body. Most of us would feel quite desperate without someone of training and experience to go to in time of serious illness. Most of us feel much gratitude to doctors for their help.

So it is a fact that life goes on; Dr. Illich is concerned that it does not go on very well for a great many people, and that, with a change in their thinking about health and disease, it would go much better. His focus is diagnostic, making what he says almost entirely critical. He does not defend doctors because he does not think of himself as attacking doctors. His book is an attack on a set of ideas and practices which he finds misguided and anti-human in effect. He has collected evidence of this effect and related its ills to the assumptions under criticism.

In any practical system which grows out of human thought, gross rigidities develop in time, bringing the necessity for change. But if the system is widely regarded as crucial to our welfare, the resistance to change may be stubbornly conscientious, to which may be added all the protective devices of a professional bureaucracy. It should be noted, however, that many doctors are aware of the problems Illich describes, and speak of them openly, although in the more temperate terms of self-criticism. The essays of Dr. Lewis Thomas, collected in *The Lives of a Cell*—which first appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*—are an example. Dr. Thomas believes that "the current elaborate technology of medicine will probably be set to one side" when there is a genuine understanding of disease.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ODDS AND ENDS

SAGE counsels from Famous People sometimes deserve close attention, even when they seem commonplace or "obvious." The following advice to writers was selected by a C. S. *Monitor* editor from Arnold Toynbee's *Experiences:*

> Write regularly, day in and day out, at whatever times of the day that you find you write best. Don't wait till you feel that you are in the mood. Write, whether you are feeling inclined to write or not. . . . You will be dissatisfied with your first draft. . . . However, you can revise your first draft. . . . If you were to wait until you had achieved perfection, you would be waiting for the rest of your working life. . . .

Toynbee also said:

> Don't waste odd pieces of time. Don't say to yourself, "There, I've finished that piece of work, and it is really not worth beginning this next piece till tomorrow morning or till after the week-end. So for the rest of today or for the rest of the week I might as well let myself relax and take things easy." The truth is that you might not as well do that; for the right moment for starting on your next job is not tomorrow or next week; it is . . . in the American idiom, "right now."

Another *Monitor* extract is from an address by William Holladay, dean of the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Sciences. He quotes the three questions Kant said universities should be concerned with—"What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?"—and suggests that present-day institutions focus on the first question but neglect the second, for which "responsibility is as subtle and demanding as it is inescapable." Then he says:

> The university cannot meet it by imposing moral codes, or by espousing doctrinal creeds, or by forsaking its political neutrality, or by becoming a partisan agent in social causes. What it can do and what its responsibility compels it to do is provide for the cultivation of moral sensitivities in its members—primarily its students and faculty.
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> Elements of the curriculum and modes of instruction can contribute to the purpose of enhancing moral sensitivities by considering issues related to the uses of knowledge and the consequences of knowing. The cultivation of a moral sense transcends the curriculum and flows not only from the social and physical environment, but, indeed, from the very style with which the university conducts its affairs. An attitude that what we do must have meaning and fulfillment for the human enterprise must pervade our activities.

Mr. Holladay tells what ought to be done, but only what fails to do it. This may be inevitable. Nothing really worth doing can be reduced to a formula. In the *UCLA Monthly* (July-August) Charles Hampden-Turner lists the fallacies of what he calls Pop Psych. The worst fallacy of all is that truth can be obtained somewhere or other in finite quantities—

> the fallacy that psychic goodies can be sold on the marketplace without vitiating their true values. Our most precious human values cannot be sold, directly grasped, or obtained. Consider the idea of self-actualization. It's a good description of the healthy human being, but it's a lousy prescription.
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> The hardest way to become self-actualized is to concentrate on self-actualization. It's rather like trying to work very hard at being happy. All attempts to directly grab at sensations are like putting a needle in your arm and getting high without loving somebody.
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> True values are not a programmed high. They are a reconciliation of opposites. Creativity is a synthesis of change with continuity. Courage is a synthesis of bravery, which is the affirmation of courage, and caution, which is its negation.
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> All moral advice and all moral help are two-dimensional. Ultimately, the relationship *between* values is the key to self -actualization.

For brief explanation of why "moral education" is the subtlest of all human undertakings, and is destroyed almost at once by any sort of heavy-handedness, these generalizations by Hampden-Turner seem hard to beat.

A book we hope to obtain for review is *Agriculture in the City,* issued by the Community

Environmental Council in Santa Barbara. Meanwhile, we have this quotation from it:

> Murray Bookchin has stated, "The city's purpose is to provide the people with a concrete focus of distinctive qualities and experiences not available in rural life." An urban farm expands this focus, for it embodies the principles of rural life (the self-sufficient production of food and goods) as well as the principles of urban life (education and cooperation) within a cooperative framework.

"Urban farm" seems a ridiculous contradiction in terms, but in a time when the contradictions of society itself have reached appalling dimensions, the initial remedies may often seem upside-down, until we are able to recognize how well they work.

The things that work best are often filled with conventional contradiction. At the "Education for Change" conference in Chicago last June, Ivan Illich talked about the senselessness of prejudice toward people who are, as we say, "illiterate." From the June *30 New Schools Exchange Newsletter:*

> *Why* should we continue, after the enormous educational research which has gone on, to discriminate against people who can't read and write? And not against people who can't play the guitar, or dance? There is so far no reason to believe that the majority of people learn anything which is useful to them out of their ability to read. I say the majority.
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> In Puerto Rico when I first got into this problem, 20 years ago in 1956, we looked at two groups; a group of David-Dubinsky-organized cigar rollers, of whom two thirds were technically illiterate, and a group of graduates from the University of Puerto Rico where for fifteen years everybody was always reading the great books. We took a list of fifty books for which some kind of agreement could be found; novels and theoretical books which constituted a group most often called intelligent discourse, arbitrarily chosen. The competence to discuss these books and their contents and the memory of their contents was enormously higher among the cigar rollers than among the graduates and students of the university. Why?
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> Because the cigar rollers had obtained, as one of their union rights, the right of one man out of fifty or sixty to get off of cigar rolling if, instead of cigar rolling, he would read a book to the other cigar rollers. The idea that literacy in a country can be measured by the secret ability of individuals rather than with the shared power of reading books, in fact is a capitalistic idea. . . . There is very little evidence that beyond a very low level of investment of money or of man-power into the teaching of reading, we further increase the percentage of those who, in any population, enjoy (reading) books. Under exceptional circumstances we do; if you are an exceptionally good reader and lover of books of course you expect your children to do this, but such a person is always rare. If somebody has that competence, why shouldn't he sit down and read to others? Most people who learn how to read do it almost entirely by themselves.

Illich is an upsetting man. Does he want everyone—or almost everyone—to be illiterate? Does he long for the Dark Ages? Not really, but he is inviting us to consider the true nature of darkness. Inevitably this involves shock. The shocks Illich administers are not really damaging to our lives, whatever havoc they may play with certain hypersensitive areas of the psyche.

It is characteristic of Illich that he identifies with the mass of humanity, not with the educated few. He invites you to think of a situation in which someone comes up to you and says:

> "I got this. Will you read it to me?" Quite normally, in the same way and with as little shame as you would go to the plumber and say, "My toilet is not flushing. Will you please fix that?" But we have made out of non-reading capacity something which enables us to discriminate. You have a toilet-repairing incapacity but you are not fired from school because when the toilet doesn't work you can't repair it.

FRONTIERS

The Conjugal Bond

IN *Losing Ground* (Norton) Erik Eckholm speaks of the "littered ruins and barren landscapes" that are all we see of former civilizations. A similar destruction of fertile areas, he says, is now going on at a far more rapid pace:

> National income averages conceal the billion or more people locked in cycles of poverty and exploitation, many of whom live in worse conditions than did their parents. World and national food output totals conceal the stagnant or deteriorating productivity of huge numbers of farmers in the poorer countries and regions, . . . the half billion people suffering chronic malnutrition in the best of years, and the hundreds of millions who join their lot when food prices soar. . . . The statistics of progress ignore the swelling towns filled with refugees from untenable rural situations. . . .
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> Rapid population growth, miserable social conditions, and environmental deterioration form the ultimate vicious circle. . . . The sterile debate among those who advocate attacking this conundrum mainly from one side or the other grows more shrill with each passing year. . . . Many forget that these issues form a circle, not a square, and thus have no distinct sides. . . . Redistribution of power, land and social services can improve prospects for the world's dispossessed and also reduce birthrates. Yet reform and development efforts will not achieve their aims if they are not also suffused with an ecological ethic that recognizes the conjugal bond between humankind and the natural world from which there can be no divorce. Environmental deterioration requires direct action in its own right; at the same time, the balance of nature will not be preserved if the roots of poverty, whatever they may be, are not eradicated.

An example of one vast disaster area will illustrate the process Mr. Eckholm has described. The India of today is a country tortured and disorganized by economic and moral tragedy. A passage in an article in *Peace News* for June 11 (reprinted from the *Catholic Worker*) gives the substance of India's recent history:

> A country that had been self-sufficient for food and clothing for thousands of years and had been one of the principal exporters of textiles for centuries had become impoverished in the space of a hundred years. Land was taken up for the cultivation of cash crops like indigo; food was hoarded by profiteers, and famine for the first time swept over the countryside while wheat was exported to England. Peasants were forced to sell all their crops to pay the massive taxes, only to repurchase their own food at increased prices. Government-supported money-lenders gave credit to farmers at staggering interest rates. The cottage textile industry was ruined with the importation of cheap English cloth made from Indian cotton. The village industries, which had supplied the peasants with from 20% to 60% of their income as well as meeting their basic needs, were destroyed. With nothing to replace these industries, the villages—once the cradle of Indian civilization—fell into ruin and stagnation. The cities—strongholds of British power and money—began to swell, draining the countryside of its population and wealth, as the country grew deeper and deeper into dependence upon Britain.

Gandhi saw all this, what had happened, how it worked, and what needed to be done, back in 1908 when he wrote *Hind Swaraj* (Self-Rule for India). His diagnosis never changed. The *Peace News* article summarizes:

> Western economics was based on conflict and conquest of the earth and human nature. How could such a system survive? It raised efficiency, technology, speed and growth, which have no virtues of their own, except insofar as they serve human needs, into ends in themselves. With no more sense of balance, no sense of real ends, this idolatrous obsession with results, efficiency, consequences, had the effect of making all of real value inconsequential. Western economics plundered the earth of irreplaceable resources, and violence against the earth all too easily became violence against people. A nonviolent economy would emphasize not conflict but cooperation, not conquest but harmony with nature. Gandhi called it "the economy of permanence." It was held together not simply by necessity and self-interest, but by mutual trust and fellowship. . . .

The remedy Gandhi proposed can be named feasible utopianism—the kind of utopian program which would work if people would *do* it:

> To an astonished nation, Gandhi claimed that England would be forced to relent by the power of the *charka* (spinning wheel). If all Indians spun to clothe the nation, EngIand would have no choice but to leave without a fight. While manufacture of *khadi* (homespun cloth) was of course a practical aspect of

the boycott of foreign cloth, it was also something more. Gandhi encouraged the boycott of cloth manufactured in Indian mills as well. Such capital-intensive means of production in a land of idle millions was prompted, not by economic considerations, but by greed and was thus an instrument of exploitation.

Gandhi believed that every man, woman and child in country and city should spin for a minimum of one hour daily. For the impoverished rural masses, forced into idleness six months out of the year, spinning would provide a steady income, while at the same time helping them directly to satisfy a basic need.

Feasible utopianism, if it is to catch on at all, needs at the outset simple applications and if possible an element of drama. For Gandhi the immediate application was spinning. There are other applications embodying a similar spirit and inspiration. A current example is E. F. Schumacher's proposal in his foreword to *Forest Farming*. He says that if every able-bodied person in India, man, woman, and child, would plant a tree every year for five years, and see it through to healthy establishment (water it regularly), the resulting 2,000 million trees would do more for the country than any five-year plan. Without a penny of foreign aid it would "produce foodstuffs, fibres, building material, shade, water, almost anything that man really needs."

The idea has drama and it would indeed work if it could catch on. But the people themselves must be fired up to apply this idea. The government can't do it. Governments, actually, are seldom inclined even to propose what is needed. As Erik Eckholm says, "A failure to place agriculture in its ecological context has been evident at even the World Food Conference in 1974, where forestry was never mentioned, despite its myriad effects on food production."

We can hardly hope to have a really useful government until the day it becomes, in relation to the enterprises of the people, a follower instead of an ineffectual and fraudulent leader.