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A SOCIETY WORTH HAVING

THE greatest mistakes that the people of modern societies make seem to result from illusions concerning what and how much institutions can be expected to do for them. Social studies or analyses throw little light on these questions for the reason that it is almost impossible to start out with a normative view of social relationships. We don't have a sense of proportion, of fitness, about institutions. The problems we encounter have to do with the break-down and failure of institutional functions, and people attempt to prevent the failures by replacing the personnel, or giving the public agency more—or less—power; or, if the situation seems so bad that a radical solution seems called for, by eliminating the agency altogether. People who take the trouble to look carefully at problems of institutional failure over a period of years often become totally disillusioned and may find themselves developing an almost nihilist frame of mind. Anger fills emptiness which ought to be occupied by an understanding of the laws of social existence. We have never even attempted to find out about the good society as a thing in itself.

Take for example an institution like the secret service. You start out with the assumption that a nation has to have a military institution to protect the people from invasion and conquest. Then, in connection with the tasks of the military, you need a special kind of intelligence, so you create an agency to ferret out and keep track of the needed information. The people working for this agency do their job, and you forget about it, being busy with other things. Then, as a result of the extraordinary progress in technology, the plans and projects of the military leap into the foreground of national affairs. Diplomacy turns into a technique of manipulating the threat of nuclear weapons. Security begins to be thought of in terms of equations involving the psychology of terror. While, a hundred years ago, the ordinary citizen might have had cause to think about the problems of national defense a couple of times a year, now he thinks about it every day of his life. It is as though your next-door neighbor, who used to have a rifle and a shot gun to protect his hearth and home, now has cannon mounted on his roof. You of course have to have them, too. And you get into the habit of thinking anxiously about those cannon, yours and his.

Along with the military, the secret service expands in importance. It gets bigger jobs to do. From gathering information its projects grow into larger undertakings such as arranging or putting down revolutions in neighboring countries. If the national defense involves eliminating wherever possible any danger of attack by one of our neighbors, and if the danger could easily involve the threat of nuclear weapons, it is natural for the secret service to take on more responsibility, even to planning something like a Bay of Pigs invasion; or, simply on general principles, the overturning of a Latin American government which shows socialist tendencies. Secret service men are not Plato's Guardians. They weren't hired to think like Tolstoy, but like Machiavelli. It isn't just their misfortune that what used to be minor technical problems of making war have been replaced by larger global strategy which often dictates the preservation of the *status quo* in many parts of the world. It is the misfortune of us all. Meanwhile, the possibility that not good societies, but only bad ones, can be served in this way, does not occur to us. We have not thought about the nature and needs of good societies.

The most shocking and depressing case of institutional failure that we have come across recently is described in detail by Julius Horwitz in *The Inhabitants,* a fictionized study of public relief in New York City. This is a book about the impotent poor and the inability of money to solve their problems. Mr. Horwitz is a social worker with firsthand experience of the misery and degradation of life in East Harlem, where many of the Puerto Ricans have settled. The one thing you are sure of, after reading this book, is the *permanence* of all this grimy

horror, this loneliness and hopelessness. The man who tells Mr. Horwitz' story is a social worker. In a passage about his interview with a young woman, Miss Fletcher, there is this incident:

> Just as I crossed the middle of the room a Negro girl stood up and screamed. I saw her screaming at the interview desk of Mrs. Nivens. She turned toward the wooden benches to scream. The people on the benches stared dumbly at her wideopen mouth. Mrs. Nivens sat quietly at her desk waiting for the girl to stop screaming. In an instant the girl did stop screaming.
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> "Why did she scream?" Miss Fletcher asked me.
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> "Probably because Mrs. Nivens asked her a question that she couldn't give an honest answer to."
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> "Do people often scream here like that?"
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> "Some do it loudly, most do it quietly. But everybody screams." . . . .
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> The Negro girl screamed again. Miss Fletcher dropped the bottle she was holding. The Negro girl broke just as the bottle broke. She stood up screaming, "I'm human! I'm human! I'm human! . . . can't you see I'm human!"
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> The cry of the human being was the most commonplace cry in the Service. I heard it daily. It is the spatial cry of the beggar. Look the next time you see a beggar. The successful beggar always suggests that he too is human. I don't know why we should have beggars. But beggars beg you to look on their face. Almost like the anger of a god. I knew one boy who begged on the subways. He had twisted legs and one arm chopped off. He dragged himself up in front of each passenger and stared in his face.

You read in books which champion the West against the East (Orient) about the sluggish indifference of Easterners to poverty and human suffering, as contrasted with Western activism and progress. But what shall we do about New York's poor? Or the poor anywhere?

In another part of *The Inhabitants*, another social worker talks about the thick, black manual which is his professional book of rules:

> "This is the damnedest book. I've been studying this book for the past couple of weeks instead of just using it. This book Phillips, contains the absolute minimum fixed prices necessary to maintain subsistence living in present-day New York City—which is one of the richest, biggest cities in the entire history of the world, period. This book is the papa for 350,000 people right here in New York City getting assistance. And I'll bet my pay that there are tens of thousands of people right here in New York who don't even live up to the minimum standards that we lay down but who would rather eat old newspapers than apply for welfare. Do you see what I'm driving at, Phillips? We're not giving what is necessary, we're just giving what's minimum. Because those tens of thousands who live below the minimum have got what I call what's necessary for living. Do you know why I've been studying this manual? Because my actual take-home pay is below what I would get if I went downstairs and signed an application. So it's not money. And now I become lost. . . . That's where I become lost. That's where my thinking gets stopped. And as far as I can make out, nobody else's thinking begins."

Whom do you blame for such situations? Or if nobody is really to blame, then how do you distribute responsibility for changing the situation? It's much easier, of course, to ignore it, or say that the government shouldn't have let all those Puerto Ricans come to New York. But if you say that, then you have to take a look at life in Puerto Rico, which is also a part of the United States.

The social decay behind such problems is illustrated by a letter which appears in the current issue of *Despite Everything*, a quarterly published in Northern California (2208 Curtis Street, Berkeley, Calif., 50 cents a copy). This letter is from a man now in southwest Georgia:

> I am beginning to see the War on Poverty much more clearly now. . . . Did I tell you that an organization called the Southwest Georgia Planning and Development Commission got $10,000 from the Poverty Bill to "organize proposals for Federal aid"? I tried to figure out who this group is and I am finally beginning to see what is happening. This group is nothing more than a pre-existing set-up of the Chamber of Commerce to entice industry to this part of the State. Now, the city commissions are very heavy Birch, reactionary. Their public position is WE DON'T NEED FEDERAL HELP and a whole lot of nonsense on how there is no poverty here, and how free enterprise could cure it if there was any. But at the same time they don't want to pass up anything that is offered—so you create this agency (or rather, you utilize one already created for a different

purpose). They take the money and draw up the plans. The county commissioners can be "dean" of the whole deal and even issue statements scoffing at it—and still they are the people who decide where the money is to be put, etc. 'Very, very clever. This is done to avoid the whole embarrassing problem that Goldwater faced when people reminded him that he would vote for federal money to come into Arizona to build dams, etc. . . .

Now, as for the Office of Economic Opportunity and ECOPACT itself: Years ago when people got restless you could offer them "outside" welfare to quiet them down—*e.g.*, the New Deal. This was done on a "we'll do it for you" basis. Today people know that these wonderful programs are administered by local whites, so they are starting to do things by themselves and won't hear talk about what the government will do for them. So the Government comes up with a new scheme: "You tell us what you want to do—yes, you, the person in the state of poverty—and we will simply supply the cash. You carry out and administer the program yourself, with all the trappings of democracy. Just sit tight for a while and wait for the red tape to be cut." . . . You get a sapping of all initiative. People talk about wanting a place for the kids to play after school. The white community won't do it for them (Welfare) and they know that, so they decide to get together and do it themselves. Then you interject the Poverty Bill: "Yes, a wonderful idea. Organize yourselves—draw up plans—and tell us what it will cost. You don't need volunteer carpenters, we will pay them and this will be good for the economy. Just wait a while until the bill is more clearly set up. . . ." And the people wait and wait.

Obviously, it is necessary to get down into the grain of these processes—processes with such proud labels—to see what actually happens in attempts to make them work. This issue of *Despite Everything* contains other illuminating material by people who are involving themselves in practical problems of this sort. For example there is a letter by Mrs. Wily Harawitz telling about the origin of the Welfare Rights Organization of Oakland (California)—a group she was instrumental in starting. (Her letter was written in reply to an inquiry by an official of the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington.) The work of the Welfare Rights Organization focuses on helping people to get the help they are entitled to under the law. Mrs. Harawitz explains:

. . . the group began almost two years ago around one woman's problem. She was a Negro woman, about 38 years old and with seven kids. Ever since she left her husband, her family had been on the Aid to Needy Children (now the Aid to Families with Dependent Children) welfare program. Anyway, there was a fire in her house and her roof burned off. When this was reported to the Welfare Department, the social worker decided to hold up Mrs. _____'s check because she was "living in unfit housing." The woman tried many times to reason with her social worker, telling the worker that she desperately wanted to move, but she needed money to move with (for a deposit on the new place, a moving truck, etc.) but the worker's response was, "I'm sorry, Mrs. _____, but the longer you wait (to move), the harder it will be on you." And it did get harder and harder on her—besides going without food, without beds and extra clothes (these had been burned in the fire), and without hope (she was desperate when I spoke with her; I remember her saying, "I've always been able to provide for my kids somehow, but now I just can't")—besides her going without all these things, the rainy season was beginning and she was without a roof, too.

So I talked with her and she was convinced that she ought to try once more and go down with me to the Welfare Department. At this point, and I'm really not exaggerating, she was close to suicide.

When we went down to the Department, I really didn't know anything about the Welfare Law. What I did know however, was that the Welfare Department was supposed to help people, and that surely the laws were designed to do that. So when we all got together—the welfare client, myself, the social worker, and the worker's supervisor—I questioned *them* about the legal basis for their action. It turned out that they had no legal basis for holding up the check, that the worker had just been trying to provide the woman with "incentive" for moving faster (!), and that the check would now be released after all, because they had no right to keep on withholding it.

The effect of this interview on Mrs. _____was tremendous. I knew that she was a woman of spirit and strength, because she had told me a good deal about her life before she had all this trouble—so I was really shocked when I saw how she acted in front of the Welfare people. She quaked in front of that social worker. She has a twitch in her left eye that kept getting worse, and she was silent most of the time, except at one point, when the worker talked about the "incentive" plan—then she looked at the worker with an expression far from silent.

Out of this and similar encounters was born the Welfare Rights Organization, a kind of "self-help" body which is producing incalculable benefits in morale as well as practical usefulness in getting people their rights under the law. Even some of the social workers appreciate the efforts of WRO, since they are harassed in their work by powerful local opposition to the extension of welfare security. WRO is staffed mostly by people who have themselves been helped by it. Mrs. Harawitz says:

> For most people on welfare coming into the group, this is their first opportunity to make a *social* contribution as well as a contribution toward their own security. The hardships of survival make people self-involved, but not selfish. Cooperation among the poor is a necessary way of life. If one neighbor is out of food, another gives, no matter how little, because not only does she understand another's hunger, but she expects hunger for her own family-—next week, perhaps. In the Committee, this cooperation is extended, and people begin to feel their strength and dignity as individuals as well as a group. It was a task accomplished with great pride, for instance, when Mrs. _____went to a neighborhood church as a representative of the Welfare Rights Committee to ask for food for another woman who had wrongfully been discontinued from aid, and then gave that food to the hungry family.

The reports on poverty and the administration of relief in this issue of *Despite Everything* all have the touch of first-hand experience, which is indispensable for any real comprehension of the problems involved. You have to get behind the façades. As Mrs. Harawitz says, "It is difficult to appreciate how deeply a person is affected by an establishment (welfare agency) that is at best condescending, and at worst punitive toward those who depend upon it for their survival." What might be added is that the people who exhibit these attitudes toward relief are often only reflecting the similar attitudes of a great many people in the larger social community—people who take it for granted that, somehow or other, the poor lost their human rights by having no money, and that it is quite proper for them to be made to feel their degradation as a kind of "lesson." The question of whether such attitudes would or could exist in a good society is not asked.

Well, what are the corrective approaches to a condition of this sort? There is the revolutionary approach, which would use forcible means to erase the humiliation and infamy of the situation of the poor, and attempt to re-educate the general population to ideas of social responsibility. The revolutionary solution would involve ruthless application of vast, coercive power, with which, as recent history has repeatedly shown, other and perhaps worse evils would immediately appear. (See *The Captive Mind*, by Czeslaw Milosz, Knopf and Vintage paperback.) Further, such a solution, in the United States at least, is at present quite impossible. Then there is the approach of the reformer, who would attempt to staff public agencies with more responsible personnel. But the clean-up drives of reformers soon prove superficial. The reforms don't last. The general cultural mood is indifferent to the ideals of the reformers. Further, you need aroused public opinion to put the reformers into office in the first place, which makes you realize that, even in modest reformist terms, things will have. to get worse before they can be made any better.

Remaining is the solution applied by Mrs. Harawitz—a tremendously impressive performance. Yet if you say this you have to add that such methods are treating only symptoms, not the disease. You have to admit that it is an emergency measure. But it has proved itself a *good* emergency measure. In the framework of a sluggish and irresponsibly administered state function, the Welfare Rights Organization has produced the rare fruits of justice and restored human beings. The association sparked into being by Mrs. Harawitz is a special kind of "community" which learned from practice the secrets of the dynamics it needed to function for its special ends. The motivations of the workers in the WRO are directly related to *community* ends. The members see what they are doing *whole*. That, you could say, is why it works, and works so well.

The Western tradition of thought concerning social organization has little in it concerning such dynamics. We have given little or no attention to the organismic side of organization. We try to provide for our "rights" in a social contract, and then we talk

heavily about the "responsibilities" of citizens. Theorists and critics fi11 book after book with discussions of what *ought* to take place, using arguments from ethical or social doctrine, but they give little attention to the dynamics of the social organism. (The term, "social organism," is not used, here, as a reference to past theories of the "organic state," but simply to suggest that a society, of which the state is no more than a shell (usually a hardening and growth-preventing shell), is a living entity which has vital requirements, and that these requirements include deeply ingrained moral ideas, intuitive understanding of means-to-ends processes, some conscious awareness of the nature and needs of social good, and the will to fulfill them. Further, these ideas and comprehensions must be general enough to enable the members of the society to adapt to changing conditions.

In another context—the context of India before her independence was gained—Gandhi proposed some of the dynamics of a functioning, free society. As summarized by Horace Alexander in *Consider India:*

> The best way to begin working for your country is to act as though it were free today; in other words, begin to build up all the useful mutual services that will give true dignity to the country when it does achieve its freedom, ignore the alien government as far as possible, and build alternative organs of common action. To build world peace, begin by acting peacefully toward your neighbor today; show understanding of his point of view. . . . And again with poverty you will not destroy poverty by destroying the rich; better to set a good example by making friends of the poor, by sharing what you can from your own surplus, by trying never to use for your own selfish enjoyment what others need for the bare necessities. Such living may help to commend peace and social justice to others

It might be argued that if there are not enough people to make a dent in the futile practices of the existing society by such means, harsher methods will have even less success. The main point, however, is the need for study of the workings of the living community. The changes that are needed cannot be brought about by political specialists who imagine that they can compensate by furious activism for the ignorance and apathy of the majority. It takes people who start living by the principles of the good society to begin to bring such a society into being. It takes people who become excited by the good they experience, not people who are enraged by the evil they see all about. And the good can be experienced in very bad situations; Mrs. Harawitz and her friends in Oakland have proved this. The strength of her group lies in its experienced good, while the evil is only the raw material on which the community works in order to transform it into something better.

Even in such limited frameworks as a welfare rights organization, people learn that they don't have to submit to manipulation. This is one of the basic requirements of a good society. People who get into the habit of resisting manipulation can make a good society. By setting up realizable ends, and working for them—as Henry Anderson suggested in his recent *Liberation* article, and as Paul Goodman has personally illustrated in a variety of ways—people learn to make their undertakings accomplish concrete good. And they learn to relate many of the participating activities of their lives to projects that they can personally control for decent, humane ends. They come to ignore or refuse to cooperate with projects that are likely to betray them. The members of a living community will not nourish anti-human activities—and activities which do in their name things which work death or injustice to others are anti-human.

All this will take time. Our proposition is that the society that can be had in less time—without, that is, the evolution of living communities—will not be worth having.

REVIEW
THE LIMITATIONS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

UNDER this title, the *Saturday Review* for March 16, 1957, presented a group of discussions bringing some of the unresolved problems of psychotherapy to the attention of the general public. Erich Fromm's article, "Man Is Not a Thing," was the first contribution—perhaps, apart from his *Psychoanalysis and Religion,* the most succinct and pointed of all Dr. Fromm's writings. Since the *SR* editor, Norman Cousins, shows a continuing interest in ethical and philosophical issues, it is not surprising to find such discussion of psychoanalysis appearing frequently in this magazine.

Last December *SR* published "The Theory of Positive Disintegration" by Dr. Kazimierz Dabrowski, with later commentary by Dr. Karl Menninger relating Dr. Dabrowski's critique to views in his own recent book, *The Vital Balance*. Now *SR* for March 6 presents a concise statement concerning Reality Therapy by Dr. William Glasser. Reality Therapy moves from assumptions which are openly different from those of conventional psychotherapy. Dr. Glasser says in his introduction:

> Conventional psychotherapy, based either strictly or loosely upon the psychoanalytic beliefs and teachings of Sigmund Freud, is taught in almost every major college and university in the United States and Canada. Whether it is practiced in an orthodox, Freudian setting in a Park Avenue psychoanalyst's office or in a loosely structured college counselling service, it believes firmly that mental illness exists, that people who suffer from it can be meaningfully classified, and that attempts should be made to treat them according to the diagnostic classification. Deviant behavior is considered a product of the mental illness, and the patient should not be held morally responsible because he is considered helpless to do anything about it.
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> Both the theory and practice of Reality Therapy are incompatible with the prevalent, widely accepted concept of mental illness. We believe that this concept, the belief that people can and do suffer from some specific, diagnosable, treatable mental illness, analogous to a specific, diagnosable, treatable physical illness, is inaccurate and that this inaccuracy is a major road block to proper psychiatric treatment. Our scientific and lay literature are both filled with the idea that anyone who behaves and thinks in a way unacceptable to the majority of the society is mentally ill or, in popular terms, "sick." Every conventional psychiatric approach to the treatment of these people is based upon the belief that they are suffering from mental illness, a concept as prevalent to our culture as the flatness of the earth was to the Middle Ages.
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> Those who believe in mental illness assume incorrectly that something definite is wrong with the patient which causes him to be the way he is. Most psychiatrists believe that the patient was all right at one time and then fell victim to a series of unhappy life experiences which now cause his deviant behavior. When these experiences are exposed and resolved through conventional psychotherapy, the mentally ill person will recover in much the same way that the physically ill person recovers from a strep throat when the penicillin kills the streptococcus. We believe this concept misleads the doctor, the patient, and those concerned with him into the false belief that the doctor's job is to treat some definite condition, after which the patient will get well.

Operating from the conventional assumptions, it is easy enough for both therapist and patient to think that a "cure" can be effected by technique rather than by a conscious effort towards self-transformation. So long as the patient is told that he is not responsible for his present condition, or for the behavior patterns that led to it, he is encouraged to play the part of the misunderstood or mistreated child. But Freud himself cannot be held accountable for this view. Freud knew that while a disturbed person should not be expected to feel that his own personal wishes brought on all the disquieting events which occurred during his childhood, he was and is responsible for the motivations, attitudes, and destructive feelings which arose within him at any time. This, for the simple reason that he is the character or person who has been living with the destructive wishes, and who must decide to alter them.

Dr. Glasser's experience as consulting psychiatrist at the Camarillo school for girls (not mentioned in the *SR* article, but reported in MANAS for April 1, 1964) convinced him that a change in the behavior patterns of delinquency would occur only when the teen-ager sees that he or she is, and has been, a destructive rather than a constructive individual—one who may at any time decide to assume responsibility for a future born from entirely different motivations.

In Freud's *Introduction to Psychoanalysis,* two of his lectures stress the point that therapy begins only when the patient sees for himself the nature of his disorder and desires to make a transition, the analyst having the role of one who encourages the insights necessary for transition. Herbert Fingarette, in *The Self in Transformation,* writing on "guilt and responsibility," in effect makes Dr. Glasser's point in a discussion of frequent misinterpretations of Freud's conception of the unconscious. Briefly, it can be said that Freud suggests that one is relieved of responsibility for "evil wishes" and destructive behavior only until he has realized their presence—but then he must assume responsibility, and go on from there. To quote Fingarette:

> The matter is as simple and direct as in the case of a "natural disaster." I am a member of the community. I face the disaster and say, "I had no control over what happened. (Indeed, I am in this instance guilty for none of it.) Nevertheless, I accept responsibility for it; I will clear up and repair this area. What else can I do except run away from reality like a child?"
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> Moral man must *accept* responsibility for what he is at some point in his life and go on from there. This may seem a harsh view of life, an arbitrary and inhumane one. And it will always appear unjustifiable so long as one looks to the past for the reason. It is to the *future,* however that we must look for the justification of this profound moral demand. It is not that we *were* children and thus nonresponsible but rather that we are *aiming to become* mature persons. This *ideal,* and not the past, is the ground for the harsh demand that we accept responsibility for what we are, even though we are in many ways morally evil and even though we could not help ourselves. Guilt is retrospective, but responsibility is prospective. Responsibility is based on a willingness to face the world as it is *now* and to proceed to do what we can to make it the world as we would like it to be.

A key passage in Erich Fromm's "Man Is Not a Thing" has a similar emphasis:

> What happens so often in psychoanalytic treatment is that there is a silent agreement between therapist and patient which consists in the assumption that psychoanalysis is a method by which one can attain happiness and maturity and yet avoid the jump, the act, the pain of separation. The psychoanalytic situation looks sometimes like that of a man wanting to learn how to swim and yet intensely afraid of the moment when he has to jump into the water, to have faith in the water's buoyancy. The man stands at the edge of the pool and listens to his teacher explain to him the movements he has to make; that is good and necessary. But if we see him going on talking, talking, talking we become suspicious that the talking and understanding have become a substitute for the real swim. No amount or depth of psychological insight can take the place of the act, the commitment, the jump. It can lead to it, prepare for it, make it possible—and this is the legitimate function of psychoanalytic work. But it must not try to be a substitute for the responsible act of commitment, an act without which no real change occurs in a human being.

All this shows the long-term contribution of psychotherapy to philosophy, amounting to the gradual restoration of the idea of the self as a responsible, self-determining moral intelligence. This is the burden of the work of Carl Rogers, of A. H. Maslow, and the implied theme of Ira Progoff's important book, *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology.*

COMMENTARY
A CAUSE OF MORAL DESPERATION

THE transition of the human environment from a natural world to one in which even the physical circumstances are largely man-made has consequences that would have been difficult to anticipate a hundred or even fifty years ago.

Before the impact of the technological revolution, it was possible to approach the general problem of human betterment with a certain patience. You allied yourself with the forces of "progress" and did what you could to help people to cope more successfully with the external environment. In this task, you expected a great deal of assistance from "science," since nearly all men of progressive intelligence shared in the dream of the Enlightenment, to the effect that scientific knowledge, education, and social vision would eventually bring good health, reasonably comfortable circumstances, and the advantages of civilization within the reach of all.

This would take time, of course, but the harnessing of natural forces and their adaptation to human need was, after all, an evolutionary process. It was supposed to take time, and modern man took pride in the fact that he had at least settled down to working seriously for the common good.

Today, our feelings about "progress" are radically changed. The straitened circumstances human beings find themselves in are all too plainly the result of the human action. The agony in South Africa and in the American South cannot be blamed on the elements. The "spatial cry" of people in want is a reproach to man, not Nature. Most of the catastrophes of the present are marked "Made by civilization."

In short, the confrontation of the human conscience by the causes of human suffering has become a torturing experience. No longer is it man in a valiant struggle with Nature, but man victimizing man. "Patience," now, is not only difficult, but in itself seems wrong.

What we are going through may be the first stage of recognizing our almost complete ignorance of the dynamics of *moral* evolution. When you can no longer solve the problem of the bad people by ignoring them, or even making war on them, and when getting a change of circumstances is not obtained by migrating to some other country, and when the magic of technology, instead of promising universal prosperity, threatens the fate of Croesus for all, we have left no alternative to finding out what we have been doing wrong. It is being thrust into this situation, we think, that is causing a great deal of the psychological unrest in the United States. There is no way to make pleasant the process of facing one's own mistakes, of having to consider the possibility that the tried is not true, that blaming scapegoats for our problems no longer makes a credible excuse.

What else will explain the irrational character of so many of the public explanations of the difficulties and failures of the times?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

FRIENDS WORLD COLLEGE

LAST year we gave attention to long-range plans for the founding of an educational institution which would reflect the broad, humanitarian aims of world-wide Quaker fellowship. The actual beginning of this venture, called Friends World College, is now scheduled for September, 1965, and an article in the *Friends Journal* (Jan. 15) gives something of the history of preparation. Morris Mitchell writes:

> For six years the Committee on a Friends World College has been asking itself and others, "How can education grow beyond the provincialism of local, regional, or national systems? What form would a college take? Who would teach? What would the curriculum be? How would it differ from the best of present practice? Some of the answers seem to be:
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> (1) Friends World College would take its place as an avowed and determined agent of peace. The teaching would unhesitatingly promote a moral concern for peace, a study of the causes of conflicts, war, and avenues to conflict resolution. Earle Reynolds, Honolulu Friend whose atomic radiation research led to his protest voyage into the Pacific nuclear-testing area in 1958, is at the Friends World College headquarters, Harrow, Glen Head, New York, working on a syllabus for the Peace Study and Research Center, for the use of which Dr. Joseph Broadman has given his periodical library of more than a million items, collected from 1914 to 1964.
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> (2) The world will be the campus. There will need to be centers for study; these will be distributed over the world in such broadly representative areas as Europe, Africa, South and East Asia, Latin America, and North America. Students will remain at each center for six months, then each group will move by plane one stage to the east, returning to its own center for the final six months. The cost of this round-the-world travel will be about $700—an amount that, to some extent may be absorbed by the lower cost of living in many parts of the world. When the program is in full operation there will be, at each center, seven different homogeneous groups, thus assuring polycultural exchange within the college itself.
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> (3) The core study will be the problems of life. Fragmentation of knowledge will give way to the process of integration and growth which is the natural way of learning when problems are faced with hope, imagination, and determination.
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> (4) With meeting for worship as the college's spiritual center, seminars will normally be preceded and followed by periods of silence. Seeking will be the basic process. The program will unfold from such seeking by listing the great persistent problems of mankind and then setting out to study them through discussions, books, resource leaders, travel, and sharing in service projects. There will be structure, but it will be the structure that evolves from concerned search, not that which is arbitrarily imposed.
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> (5) The basic philosophy of Friends World College will reside in those ever-present and everywhere-present evidences that divinity is creative; that truth is forever unfolding, that man, as offspring of that force, comes rightfully by his own creative urges; and that he is beckoned to share with the forces of destiny in giving shape to man's ultimate affectionate relationship to his environment as setting for the harmonious family of man.

The first "Bulletin" for students, issued by the advisory council of FWC, contains information of interest to prospective supporters:

> The faculty and student body will be drawn, as far as it is possible, from all regions of the world, and the college itself will reach throughout the world by establishing centers for study in widely scattered parts of the globe. The college will thus have a strongly cross-cultural outlook, in which students and faculty will seek involvement in, and appreciation for, the many different designs for living that groups throughout the world have developed as ways of giving order and meaning to life. It will endeavor to prepare young people of all races, faiths, and nationalities for participation in the shaping of an emerging world culture which must reconcile the diversities of local cultures with the realities of the modern world.

The work of the college will be carried out through four interrelated programs:

> *The Division for Resident Study* will maintain a campus in the United States with a resident four-year program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The Division of Study Abroad will operate centers in a number of foreign countries and provide a program in which students gain knowledge and insight in countries around the world. The program will embrace a series of six-month terms of residence in each country and will lead, at the end of a four-year program, to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The Center for Peace Studies and Research will maintain a research center both for the enrichment of the undergraduate program and, as rapidly as it can be developed, for the graduate student who wishes to prepare himself professionally for the rapidly developing opportunities in international agencies, teaching of peace study, peace research institutes, and many other areas needing the services of experts in conflict resolution and conciliation. The graduate program would lead to the Master of Arts degree. The Center also has under its jurisdiction the facilities of the Broadman Library on War and Peace, a 1,000,000 item collection of contemporary documents covering the period since 1914.

The Summer Study-travel Program will operate a series of trips abroad during the summer months for students in the Division of Resident Study, for students from other colleges and universities, and for students not yet enrolled in college who wish to obtain the intimate knowledge of foreign countries that can come only from first-hand experience on the spot, not as tourists, but as dedicated seekers for understanding.

Inquiries may be addressed to Committee on a Friends College, Harrow Hill, Glen Head, New York.

Aspects of other enterprises currently carried on by the Friends relate directly to the world College concept. This becomes clear in a letter to MANAS:

Wanted—15 young men and women willing to devote a year of their lives to study and in long hours of work in training for creative and constructive roles in the cause of civil rights, world peace, and other areas of social conflict.

To help meet this urgent and continuing need for leadership trained to understand and deal with forces for social change in nonviolent ways, a group of concerned people have established the Upland Institute in Chester, Pa., near Philadelphia. Students participating in this new experimental program will study the forces of social change and conflict with continued reference to the history and experience of the civil rights movement, urban development, the peace movement, and other areas of current social protest. Emphasis will be given to the theory and practice of nonviolent action in effecting constructive change. Each student will also engage in an intensive period of supervised field work in some area of social conflict of his choice. The faculty of the Institute will be augmented by visiting lecturers drawn from the civil rights movement, peace, and other areas of social concern. The emphasis of the Institute will be to train young leadership to work in communities to shape constructive nonviolent social change.

We are now selecting students to participate in the Institute's first training program beginning September 20. Prerequisites for admission: a serious interest in solving social conflicts and a college degree, or equivalent in education and experience. Inquiries should be addressed to Dr. John Thomas, Director of Studies, The Upland Institute, Upland Ave., Chester, Pa.

Sincerely,
George Willoughly, *Director,*
Training Development Program

FRONTIERS

The Tool-Maker's Dilemma

INCREASINGLY, the view that human beings impose upon the world their distorted and limited conceptions of it, and then mistake these conceptions for "reality," is becoming a tool of wondering self-analysis. The problem, obviously, is to avoid emotional investment in such illusions, for if we allow too many self-identifying attachments to grow up around ideas that ought to change, changing them becomes almost impossible.

A reader develops this general analysis in connection with man's tool-making capacity. In particular, he suggests that the tools which are used to interpret our experience may have a controlling effect on the explanations we make of that experience. He writes:

> As man gradually achieved tools to interpret more accurately his experiences and translate them into real values, he was forced to rebuild his cultural habitat. Presently, he has invented machines of infinitely more (technical) rationality than his brain possesses, and with these machines he can explore territory beyond the environment of familiar culture. Of course, these machines depend upon man being able to supply them with values capable of interpretation by association or relation. Because of the complexities of communication developed in language, many loose, emotional, and false definitions creep in.
>
> In other words, I feel that we have the reality of the universe in which we developed and of which we are a living part; and we also have our conception of it, this artificial culture which modified and adapted the real world in order to establish our perception of it with the emotions of acceptance. Here tradition and the ambivalence of language play a part. We also have the fear of lonely human beings, thrust into a seemingly irrational world of peril and agony.
>
> As our old mythologies break down, exposing to us the reality of the natural world, we suffer deep alienations from our fairy stories, but we gain new and rewarding realizations. These insights may not have the reassurance of nursery tales but they may make us aware that, beyond any confusion of language or anarchy of culture, the basic situation of human beings remains as Shelley defined it—
>
> Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
> From the broad moonlight of the sky
>
> I am the eye with which the universe
> Beholds itself . . . .

* * *

Another letter on the subject of the machines of "rationalization" comes from a writer with personal experience of their use. We reproduce it entire:

Murrieta Caves
Lost County, Calif.

Dear MANAS: Your review of Jacques Ellul's book, *The Technological Society*, in the March 17 MANAS, entitled "Portrait of, the Enemy," is a very significant article. I am an engineer working in the computer industry, and am deeply concerned about these issues. I understand what Professor Ellul means by the progressive dehumanization of man by the spread of the mindless imperialism of the technological process. I have experienced the process in several acute stages during my engineering training and practice. On some engineering problems I have to stop each day to think about whether I am serving the computer system or whether the computer is helping me. I have to decide daily what part of the engineering problem I am working on can be mechanized in the form of a logical program of instructions for the computer to carry out and what parts require the unique qualities of a human being to analyse.

These current daily problems remind me of my earlier experiences in 1938 when I realized that my engineering and military training intended for preparation of the defense of my democratic country were being organized in my mind in a mechanistic way characteristic of the structure of Hitler's Nazi Party—the organization against which I was fighting—a strange dilemma: in preparing to fight the enemy I was becoming more like the enemy. When I realized what was happening to me, I got sick—apparently the only

way my subconscious could stop the process—but I soon recuperated. When I continued my engineering education, I kept alert for any ideas that might lead to a feeling of "wholeness." After a while I developed a kind of circular chart showing physical science, biological science, and philosophy as principal sectors. On the chart I drew links between these sectors: mathematics between physical science and philosophy; religion and psychology between philosophy and biological science; and the group of engineering, political science, and economics between biological science and physical science.

The development of this chart helped me to organize my knowledge of technology as a component part of reality, not an overriding force. I also developed some learning techniques during my study of mathematics in which I thought of theorems in pure mathematics first as philosophical abstractions, then as idealized forms of real engineering structures or circuits, and then as representing the structural processes of biological and sociological systems.

I later began to realize that the mathematical tools I learned had a generalized application to all levels of phenomena: physical, chemical, biological, psychological, and sociological. This gave me a perspective of the prospects of parts of mathematics having a deep philosophical impact in the form of an integrating effect in helping develop the whole man, instead of narrow, "irresponsible" specialists. I use the term "irresponsible" in the sense used in the October 1940 editorial in the *Journal of Applied Physics,* which was based upon the book by Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress—*The Irresponsibles,* published in 1940.

As I later moved more deeply into computer-communication systems, more specific examples of the usefulness of mathematics on several levels of phenomena occurred to me. The concepts of Norbert Wiener in *Cybernetics* (Wiley, 1948), and *The Human Use of Human Beings—Cybernetics and Society* (Houghton Mifflin, 1950), and Claude Shannon in *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (University of Illinois Press, 1949), turned out to be even more powerful for developing analogies from the physical sciences applicable to guiding research in the social sciences. But here I became frustrated in that I have not yet learned how to translate these mathematical concepts into suitable language for the educated laymen. My more significant results are related to maximizing the negative entropy of sociological systems.

For those of you who are eager to make a start on understanding these mathematical concepts and their potential impact in humanizing our technological society, there is a parallel development of thought reported by R. B. Lindsay in his book, *The Role of Science in Civilization* (Harper & Row, 1963), which has a chapter on Information Theory and concepts from Thermodynamics. Dr. Lindsay asks, can there be a science of ethics? He reviews the Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative and then develops a "thermodynamic imperative":

> All men should fight always as vigorously as possible to increase the degree of order in their environment, i.e., consume as much entropy as possible, in order to combat the natural tendency for entropy to increase and for order in the universe to be transformed into disorder, in accordance with the second law of thermodynamics. (P. 292.)

The above thermodynamic imperative is illustrative of the kind of ethical concept that can be derived by analogy from the science and mathematics at the base of our technological society.

If we fully explore the relevance of certain mathematical forms to all levels of phenomena, we can develop the philosophical base for transcending the problems of the technological society about which Jacques Ellul is alerting us.

Sincerely yours,
JOAQUIN E. MURRIETA