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REPRESSION AND INDUSTRIAL DIALECTICS

[This article by Walter A. Weisskopf, of the Department of Economics, Roosevelt University, is reprinted by permission from the September 1965 issue of *Review of Social Economy* (Vol. XXIII, No. 2, pp. 116-26). It elaborates on a paper which first appeared in *Zeitschrift für Ganzheitsforschung*, Neue Folge, 8 Jahrgang IV/1964, Vienna, Austria. We present Dr. Weisskopf's discussion in two parts. The second part will be printed next week, in Frontiers.—Eds.]

THE dialectic interpretation of history has come into disrepute mainly because Marx and Engels have given it a materialistic and economistic interpretation. It is, however, possible to apply dialectics in a much more encompassing way. The following ideas represent an attempt to apply depth-psychology, ontology and the holistic approach to the development of history and to use them as a basis for a critique of industrial civilization. Such a dialectic is not restricted to economic factors or even to ideas; it will have to include the totality of human existence in all of its dimensions.

Human existence is dominated by the separation of existence and consciousness. Man "is" and he knows that he "is." This basic antinomy rests on the ability of human consciousness to transcend the actual given situation. Thus, man experiences everything in the form of a split, in the form of antinomies. The origin of this split is veiled in mystery. However, it would be "hubris" to assume that this split caused by consciousness is an exceptional, unique product of evolution, found only in man, and that it does not correspond to the logos structure of the universe.

Whatever the reason, all of man's experiences and manifestations of life are split asunder by consciousness. The resulting antinomies, however, are of a polar nature: the two "opposed" branches of every antinomy are parts of a whole, and man strives towards their re-union. This is true of all antinomies such as self and world, individual and social aspects of personality, consciousness and the unconscious. There is in man an "instinctive" striving to negate the antinomies and to re-establish unity.[1]

This basic split is not a static one; it is subject to an evolution on the ontogenetic and phylogenetic level. In primeval times (as well as in the infancy of individuals) only the seeds of the antinomies are present. They develop and harden in the process of growing up and of individuation. *Individuation* implies separation of self and world, the basic antinomy from which all others are derived. The process of individuation takes place in the Life of each individual as well as in history and is accompanied by an intensification of all antinomies. In his development man is exposed to tremendous antithetic forces; he strives to harmonize them and to establish unity.[2] Only favored individuals, in transitory periods of grace, are able to accomplish such unity through mystical experiences, philosophical and artistic creation, love relationships which encompass all dimensions of love, and through similar peak-experiences.[3] Outside of these exceptional situations, man is forced to make these antinomies temporarily tolerable by negating one pole of these opposites and emphasizing the other one. This is not only true of individuals but of entire cultures, periods, and societies: they repress, deny and neglect some aspect of human existence and accept and emphasize the opposite aspects. What is at work here in the life of the individual as well as in history is the *process of repression* in a form which resembles what Freud described under this name. If it happens in entire cultures, however, one cannot regard such cultural repressions as symptoms of sickness in the medical sense. The concept of estrangement and alienation is more

appropriate for such social repressions: man fails to grasp the totality of his existence. He saves himself by a flight into a restricted reality because the total reality, including all conflicting opposites, has become unbearable for him.

Change in history is brought about by the repressed, neglected, and denied forces and aspects of human existence. They are not removed and destroyed by their repression but they hover in the twilight of the unconscious and half-conscious psyche. The more and the longer they are repressed, denied, and neglected, the more intensively they knock at the door of consciousness. They then begin to manifest themselves in a distorted form (like neurotic symptoms) and finally they break into the open and change the world. The leaders and pioneers in history are those who are able to look into the depth of the unconscious and half-conscious psyche. By bringing these forces to light, they prepare the way for their liberation. In this sense the evolution of history can be interpreted as a dialectical process in which an antithesis negates a thesis. However, these two opposite poles are not to be found in *one* dimension of human existence only, such as the economic, or the social, or in the dimension of thought; they are found in all dimensions, on the levels of the body, the soul (psyche), the intellect and the spirit; in society and human relations, in individual experiences and in the manifold manifestations of human life. Everywhere, man tries to overcome antinomies and opposite forces, and everywhere he oscillates between a thesis and an antithesis. It can only be hoped for that history and individual development are more than an eternal oscillation between thesis and antithesis, and that it might consist of an evolution towards a higher stage, encompassing more or all dimensions of human existence. Experience, however, teaches us that every new stage of development creates new forms of antinomies.

This holistic dialectical interpretation of history can best be illustrated by applying it to the present situation of *Western industrial society*. We are suffering from a *gigantic repression of important dimensions of human existence:* the inner world is repressed in favor of the external world; intuition and intuitive reason is repressed in favor of the analytical weighing, measuring intellect; expressive behavior is neglected in favor of purposive, utilitarian action; play is ignored at the expense of labor and work; activism directed towards the exploitation and control of the external world is preferred to a receptive, contemplative orientation towards nature and universe; conscious, deliberate, purposive (so-called rational) action is preferred to behavior that springs intuitively from the unconscious. Thus all action, behavior, feeling and thought that used to center around what is usually called the "soul" and the "spirit" is neglected. These antinomies and the concomitant cultural repressions will now be discussed in some detail.

In Western civilization the *"inner"* is repressed in favor of the "outer." In the antinomy of self and world, the "world" is emphasized but in an "outer" external sense. Insofar as the self is comprehended and experienced as a reality, it is an external bodily self; feeling, the psyche, the "soul," and the inner "animistic" forces are neglected. This repression of the inner world, however, has been somewhat reversed for the last half century, and depth psychology has contributed to this reversal; but psychoanalysis formulated its findings in terms of natural science, in mechanistic and biological terms which prevented a real turning towards the inner world of the soul or psyche. The widespread psychologization of our approach to man during the last fifty years represents a compromise between the longing for a real encounter with our inner world on the one hand, and an externalized orientation and terminology still prevalent in the natural sciences.

A complicated process of repression in Western Society centers around the antinomy of *intellect* and *intuitive reason* (analytical versus

ontological reason). The extreme rationalism which developed in the West since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries considered the analytical intellect as the only and exclusive instrument of knowledge. Thereby it has excluded from our world image everything which this intellect cannot apprehend. The Cartesian dissection of man into mind and body and the interpretation of the body as a mechanism has reduced our world to a clockwork of expedient, utilitarian rationality. This hyper-rationalism neglected and repressed the inner world of feeling and emotions, the dimension "between" mind and body, the sphere of the soul, the anima, the psyche; however, it could not eliminate or destroy its existence. The psyche reappeared in a distorted form; the explosion of irrational forces in technology, in the economy, and in politics is the consequence of this repression. When feelings, emotions and inner forces are repressed, they break out and manifest themselves in inappropriate ways. The irrational belief in unlimited economic and technical growth, the drive towards more and more regardless of what we get more of, are one of the results of this repression. We are super-rationalistic in our methods of production but in the field of consumption we have discarded all rationality. The same applies to politics; the outbreak of irrational totalitarian movements may be the consequence of repressed inner forces; if they cannot find any outlet in legitimate forms and institutions they will become instruments of aggression and destruction, such as in national-socialist, fascist and communist movements, as well as in the nationalism of the American South and of some of the underdeveloped countries. However, the antinomy "rational-irrational" should be used with caution; Western industrial society has defined the "rational" as the economically rational which implies maximization of profits and other gains. However, what we call "intuition" is also rational, is reason in a much deeper sense although we are inclined to classify it as "irrational."

The hypertrophy of purposive, expedient rationality in the West (and in the Eastern and other imitations of the West) has led to a neglect of all behavior which is not utilitarian and purposive. Human behavior (the term "action" has too much of a connotation of purposiveness, goal-directedness and expediency) can also be purpose-less, merely ex*pressive*, and playful. *Play*, in the broadest sense of the word, has lost its place in the scale of Western values.[4] We are playing but with a bad conscience; play was, and still is, often justified only as recreation and revitalization for the purpose of labor and work although play does not need any justification in a scale of values which is adjusted to human nature. The decline of the arts may be connected with this situation because art is, in the last analysis, the result of creative play.

Expressive behavior such as can be found in cults, rites, in drama, in the dance and even in etiquette and in ceremonies, is rarely found in Western culture. Hatred of the colored races and nations may be an unconscious result of this attitude because these races and nations have more affinity to play and do not repress it as much as the Western society. Jazz, twist, folksinging and similar phenomena may represent a renaissance of the spirit of play in the West (and East).

The antinomy *activism-passivism* can be traced back to the ontological antinomy of being and becoming. Since the Renaissance, Western man has aimed at the control of the external world. In order to control the external world, modern industrial man has to be "active." Every other way of life has been and is condemned as passivity. The traditional identification of active with masculine and of the passive with the feminine plays a role in this context because the female has a lower rank in the hierarchy of a patriarchal world. The opposite of an active life, however, is not necessarily one of passivity but an open, receptive attitude towards the world which in previous ages manifested itself in receptivity for

revelation and religious experiences. This, however, is a general human orientation which can be found also in communion with nature, in reproductive artistic experiences such as listening to music or poetry, and in the silent listening to the Thou in the encounter between persons.

In the United States the first reaction to everything is the famous "let's do something about it!" There are, however, human situations in which doing is out of place and where it is appropriate to keep oneself open and to listen to the non-concrete, to what one cannot grasp with the five senses; to the mysterious, the *tremendum et fascinosum*[5] in us and in the universe, which can be grasped by humble waiting, and open receptivity. Meditation and physical exercises used in religious practices in the East and West served to prepare and establish such a receptive orientation which is a general human attitude independent of any specific religions.

This leads us to the antinomy of the *conscious* and the *unconscious.* It may seem tautological to say Western civilization represses the unconscious and that it has barred the access to its contents. In all cultures some aspects of human nature are repressed; but it is important *what* is repressed and *what* continues to work within the unconscious.

The content of the unconscious must be extended beyond the sphere of what Freud, and even what Jung has uncovered. It is, however, essential to recognize that the Western world outlook has no place for the unconscious in the widest sense of the term. The unconscious thus understood, is the unknown, the in-comprehensible in which human existence is embedded and of which only a small part is illuminated by the light of human knowledge. A culture is characterized by what it leaves in the dark of unconsciousness and how it relates itself to it. Mythologies and religions have allocated a place to the dimension of the unknown. The modern scientific world-outlook has no place for it. The unknown and the unconscious are regarded as a transitory phase; one expects that, sooner or later, everything will be known and conscious; the progress of science is supposed to remove, in the long run, all of it into the glaring light of knowledge. Therefore, we have no awe of and reverence for the unknown and the unconscious. It is left to itself and therefore penetrates into apparently rational and conscious activities. Everything that our civilization represses and neglects continues to work in the unconscious and distorts our world outlook and life; the inner world, feeling and emotions, the instinctive, the play tendencies but also the holy, the so-called "super-natural," and the miraculous.

In respect to the so-called *"super-natural"* it cannot be denied that there are human experiences which have, in the past, been described and interpreted in religious terminology. In discussing religion one should not start with its logical, ethical, or psychological aspects but, like William James, with the given data and varieties of religious experiences. It is a given fact that human beings have had and have these kinds of experiences. However, one has to deal with the argument that such experiences are so-called "illusions" and that they could be traced back to "scientifically" explainable phenomena. Modern philosophy in the form of logical positivism, however, has not developed any valid criteria for the distinction of the real from the not-real. Positivism maintains that the object is determined by the method. This kind of nominalism leads to the conclusion that reality is defined by the system of thought, that is applied to it. Positivists have applied this line of thought to religious and philosophical systems in order to invalidate their claim to absolute truth. It is possible to reverse this procedure and maintain that a religious system of thought will simply lead to a different definition of reality than a positivistic one. If all thought is relative and determines its own reality, validity, and method of verification, religious thought is as legitimate as any other system and method. Thus, one could validate religion and theology from the relativistic and nominalistic point of view. This,

of course, is not enough, but with this argument one defeats the nominalistic positivists with their own weapons.

Such sophistry, however, is not sufficient to comprehend what religion, the belief in miracles, prayer, and revelation are about. There may be no problem for the traditional believer; but even the intellectual who is grappling with these problems should at least take religious experiences seriously. Depth psychology has taught us to take other much less "important" experiences seriously: who, one hundred years ago, took phenomena such as dreams, slips of the tongue, compulsive behavior and neurotic symptoms seriously?

It is legitimate and permissible to mention religion in connection with the unconscious. Religious experiences have their sources in the unconscious. They have been pushed into the unconscious by modern Western civilization and thought. To take something seriously means to consider it as a phenomenon sui generis, as something different from other phenomena which cannot be reduced to other factors which are foreign to and outside of the phenomenon in question. One certainly can take the experiences which William James describes in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* seriously without having to explain them in terms of conceptual realism or hypostatizations.

The taking seriously of these experiences has to go hand in hand with the acceptance of the unknown, the mysterious and of the depth-dimension of being. Not only Goethe's Faust knew that, in the last resort, we cannot "know" anything about the ultimate things; this was already the basic experience of the Platonic Socrates. Only short-sighted fools can maintain that our "success" in the natural sciences and technology has fundamentally changed this situation. There is a depth-dimension of the unknown which transcends the Freudian sphere of "vipers and similar vermin" and which also transcends the Jungian collective and archetypical unconscious.[6] There are experiences which are vague and unclear in the light of scientific observation and analytical logic but clear to intuition, feeling and emotions which are able to penetrate the unconscious and grasp its content. Such experiences are therefore "legitimate," "existent" and "real." Some will, of course, raise the question of verification. Verification, however, *is* a question of method. Religious and similar experiences are verifiable as much as those observations in the natural sciences which can only be made and verified by highly trained scientists with complex machines. It is simply pure fiction if one talks today about the universal comprehensibility and acceptance of the finding of the natural sciences when perhaps only two hundred people are able to understand nuclear physics. We are far removed today from the naïve eighteenth-century faith in universal reason and the general comprehensibility of natural science which was supposed to be self-evident to all human beings. Religious phenomena are accessible to and verifiable by persons "trained" in this kind of apperception, observation and verification. The only difference is that today we are training students in scientific but not in "religious" apperception, observation and verification because of our one-sided and reductionist system of thought and beliefs.

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(*To be concluded*)

NOTES

[1]Walter A. Weisskopf, "Existence and Values," *New Knowledge in Human Values.* A. H. Maslow, ed., New York, 1959, pp. 108 ff

[2]Erich Neumann, *Ursprungsgeschichte des Bewusstseins*, Zurich, 1949, pp. 185 ff.

[3]Maslow, *Cognition of Being in Peak Experiences*, Presidential address, American Psychological Association, Chicago, September 1, 1956.

[4]Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, London, 1950.

[5]Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, New York, 1959, pp. 12 ff.

[6]Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun*, New York, 1959, pp. 89 ff.

REVIEW
DEFINING THE CITY'S NEEDS

ONLY a little study of the problems of modern cities is likely to discourage many readers. Their complexity defies comprehensive synthesis. Both the growth and the decay of cities—processes which go on concurrently—are out of control. Over-all planning, while attractive as a utopian solution, has inherent practical difficulties in addition to obvious political obstacles and the conflicts of voracious interest groups. The modern city is without intelligible unity. Scott Greer's new paperback, *The Emerging City* (Free Press, $1.95), makes this about as clear as it can be. In one place he says:

> The argument for city planning is the desire to control and foresee the consequences of necessary housekeeping tasks of the urban populace.
>
> To foresee the results of alternatives, however, requires an organization that has the information. To act with foresight on area-wide problems requires an organization whose sanctions apply across the urban complex as a whole. In the absence of a single polity for the metropolis, growth is uncoordinated and unplanned, with the transport system tending to follow, willy-nilly, the development of new areas controlled by tiny municipalities or not controlled at all, while improved roads precipitate further building and settling. The lack of coordinated policy produces lack of foresight, perpetuating the tendency to act first and think later that has left the American city continually in arrears on its civic agenda. And, as new development progresses, it represents massive capital investments, not easily to be ignored when future decisions are made. The city of the future loses freedom of choice and becomes a captive of the unplanned commitments of today. Its problems, like those pressing most severely now, will be problems of "redevelopment."

What becomes apparent from Mr. Greer's book is the comparative uselessness of reading only a little about the city and its problems. Reading a little only bewilders, while reading a lot, although it hardly brings ground for optimism, will at least prevent over-simplifications and it may open up recognition of areas of need where an individual can work with the hope of doing some good. Initial suggestions for further reading should include Lewis Mumford's *The City in History* (Harcourt, 1961), Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Random House, 1961), and Richard Whalen's *A City Destroying Itself* (Morrow, 1965).

But while the reader may develop some constructive ideas from this reading—especially if he relates it to local areas he knows personally—he may still be tempted to throw up his hands and back away. The problem is just too big, too complicated. The stratifications of self-interest are so numerous, so deeply entrenched, on the one hand, and the ruthless power required for far-reaching changes so threatening, on the other, that large-scale efforts to improve our cities seem doomed from the start.

Mr. Greer has another way of describing the difficulties, using the language of a professional scholar:

> Intellectual confusion and a problematic empirical ordering seem to be the defining traits of the "metropolitan problem." The conceptual framework, already awry through the confusion of ideology, utopianism, and social science is doubly warped by indeterminacy in what we want of the city and the mixed metaphors of our theory. This state of affairs is common in the social sciences today, but it is accentuated by the rate of change in urban society, the unprecedented nature of our present situation, and the pluralistic normative order related to the community.

These are not really the same difficulties, of course. Mr. Greer is speaking of the lack of handles for an intellectual grasp of the problem, while we were referring to practical aspects. In either case, however, the question comes down to the matter of what to do.

The right approach, it seems certain, is to pick out a course of action which, while not attacking the *whole* problem, may help to solve a small portion of it, and at the same time begin to generate those attitudes of mutual consideration and friendly awareness which are the only keys to wholeness in any human community.

What we are trying to say is that, quite possibly—or rather, quite obviously—the fact that we don't know how to attack the "whole" problem, nor even how to define it, ought to be taken as

evidence that the "whole" problem is not *our* problem—no more than changing a confused, gangling, upset adolescent into a mature man, in a year or two, by some mighty effort of analysis and planning, is the problem of the educator.

No doubt important parts of the problems of cities are objective, and no doubt helpful things can be done about them, through intelligent planning, but to acknowledge straight-out the prior importance of the subjective side—the *human* side—of the problem of the city seems absolutely essential to ordering the objective, practical solutions. We can't do with plans what has to be accomplished through individual attitudes and growth.

The fostering of better attitudes is not a one-dimensional undertaking. Some people live, so to speak, as victims of the city; others use the city selectively, according to personal convenience and inclination. Many people hide from or buy out of situations they don't like. Their attitudes are very different.

For one direction of practical work for "urban renewal," we turn to an article contributed by Theodore Roszak to *Peace News* in 1964, in which he says of existing methods:

> 1. Negroes and other underprivileged social elements are "removed"—often driven haphazardly—to other slums (preferably in other cities) or, where there has been better planning they are walled up into some form of hive-like public housing. The typical housing project is over-sized, slapdash, characterless, ponderously utilitarian, often prison-like, densely and noisily populated—*and* clearly marked out as public housing so that its residents cannot escape the stigma of their poverty. Thus, in one way or another, the original ghetto is reconstituted. The gross injustice of some of these practices has become so clear that, under pressure from federal housing authorities, some cities have begun taking more care to relocate their "renewal DP's"—in some cases by subsidizing their rents in ordinary neighborhood housing.
>
> 2. The slum landlords are then bought out by the city, state, or federal governments, and their land is sold at criminally low prices—in order to provide "incentive."
>
> 3. The private developers then slap up hive-like "middle-income housing which is . . . depressing in almost every respect—but possessing electric garbage disposals and wall-to-wall carpeting.
>
> What is fundamentally wrong with such urban renewal is the refusal of those in charge to recognize that the renewing of cities involves the renewing of people. A slum is not simply ramshackle buildings and filthy streets; it is rather depressed and socially useless people who cannot afford (often cannot clearly comprehend) the social respectability they want sorely to enjoy.

As a humanizing alternative to this kind of program, Mr. Roszak proposes training and aid to help the people living in slum areas to restore some of the basically good buildings in their neighborhood. *Some* unemployed men can learn to be carpenters, with a little teaching and supervision. People can be taught to do renovating and restoring, and even the first steps of reclamation of a neighborhood will begin to generate a new spirit among those who live there. Further, as Mr. Roszak says, often buildings so reclaimed would have far more character and charm than the structures planned for "renewal." Then there is the profoundly important truth pointed out by Jane Jacobs. A slum may be ugly, unhealthy, and degrading, but it is still a *life-process* for a number of human beings.

Mr. Roszak's idea illustrates a basic approach which comprehends and lays the major emphasis on the problem of human attitudes. There are plenty of specialists who could devise similar approaches in those areas of reconstruction, planning, and change that they are most familiar with. Working on attitudes, on one's own along with those of others, means getting at the problem at the place where it really goes out of control and becomes irrational—or rather, where it produces those behavior patterns which, when extrapolated and multiplied by a million or so, will never submit to humane solution.

Perhaps we should have an almost total holiday from technical analysis, and learn to define all our problems in terms of feasible action by individuals and small groups.

COMMENTARY
WHAT MUST WE RENEW?

WHEN, in this week's lead article, Walter Weisskopf remarks that "in the field of consumption we have discarded all rationality," he says something that has endless illustration in the way we consume living space—in the city (see Review). What *are* the humane forms of rationality, today? They seem to be mostly in salvage operations. It is often difficult for a sane man to relate with good heart to anything but an effort to pick up the pieces of broken lives. A man can still make an honest product in industry, teachers can still teach, and builders can still construct good houses, but the obstacles—projections of the irrational forces Dr. Weisskopf is talking about—became greater and more frustrating from year to year.

Speaking of houses, we have often wondered about the thought processes of planning architects and how they manage to maintain any optimism at all. They seem—some of them—to feel great social responsibility, yet what Theodore Roszak is quoted as saying in Review—that "the renewing of cities involves the renewing of people"—must be true in a wider sense than just in relation to physical replacement of the slums. It must apply to *all* building projects.

Mr. Greer ends his book with a look at the future, which sees many of our great cities stretching out into vast suburbs without concentrated centers. This kind of growth may provide a measure of physical solution, but the problem of the quality of life will remain. As he says:

> So the older city appears to be dying—functionally, structurally, politically, and eventually, ideologically. Yet the compliance of the population with these changes we have noted has hardly been forced. . . . And, for the average man, the contemporary metropolis is a vast improvement over his share of the older city. Out of the row houses and tenements, the streetcar and the loft building, he has moved to the ranch house with its patio and two-car garage, the job in the pastel industrial park, the television, the children. . . .

The dying city is no doubt a by-product of this enormous expansion, and therefore a special problem, to be solved, eventually, more by luck than by management, as Greer seems to imply. But is the prospect for "the average man" really so inviting? One gets the impression that "individuality" will be entirely a matter settled on the tract draftsman's drawing board, that the pastoral element will be supplied by the "industrial park," while mental life will be devised by television program directors. What makes a slum, anyway?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
CAN THERE BE FREE HIGH SCHOOLS?

[Despite the heroic qualifications required of students in the "free high school" described by Paul Salstrom, his proposal deserves attention, if only for the reason that the reforms needed at all levels of education will surely demand elements of heroism from practically everybody. There is also the possibility that we habitually under-estimate the capacities of the young, and in this case ought not to measure the suggested program by how we would expect to fare under its Spartan regime. In any event, Mr. Salstrom wants to hear from interested readers. Write him care of Camp Ahimsa, Voluntown, Connecticut 06384.]

A VERY basic rethinking of the nature of education seems to be under way, largely on the American scene. Several of the books post-dating A. S. Neill's *Summerhill* and comparable to it—equally radical and thus equally stimulating—have been discussed in recent issues of MANAS. Two of the books strongly recommended are John Holt's *How Children Fail* and Jules Henry's *American Classrooms: Learning the Nightmare.*

The following thoughts, laid out in the form of a hypothetical dialogue between a parent (asking questions) and the would-be founder of a "free high school" (answering them), represent a personal attempt to visualize as concretely as possible what it would mean for a high school to be "free." The school is visualized as college preparatory, but also as partaking of many of the qualities of Danish folk schools for adults. The school would attempt to function as a "community on the land" with economic support coming by and large from subsistence bread labor. One reason for trying to create such a school-community within the United States, but rejecting involvement in the U.S. economic system, would be to demonstrate to citizens of countries considered underdeveloped that cultural and even economic development need not be a repetition of either the American nightmare or the Soviet nightmare. The school-community outlined below would be an experimental test of the thesis that the "communications revolution" which has swept over the world in the past two hundred years—though originally dependent upon the industrial revolution—could now bring about a universal cultural enrichment in any society capable of breaking the bonds which render the "communications revolution" a slave of forces of economic and political centralization. Theoretically, one route to democratic decentralism and cultural enrichment would be (in parts of "the third world," if not in the already highly industrialized world) a popular movement to gain independence from all machines and centralized institutions which are not direct and necessary elements of communications systems. This is a thesis which I owe to Bill Coperthwaite, who is the source of many other ideas expressed here. (Mr. Coperthwaite's conceptions are not yet available in printed form, from his own pen directly, since he hopes first to found a school which can put them to a test.)

Parent's Question One: What would your prospective experimental high school and "community on the land" offer our youngsters beyond the programs of existing schools—why should we send them there rather than to a boarding school which is already well-established?

Answer: Actually it would be a waste of time for any parent to send a child to the school, since the school would have a policy of never accepting students who come because they have been "sent" by their parents. Such motivation would be antithetical to a desire or ability on the part of the student to deal meaningfully with the challenges which would face him or her at the school. Here are some motivations which would be considered excellent on the part of an applying student: (1) admiration and affection for a member of the school's staff; (2) a strong desire to live away from home which is complicated by lack of money; (3) a desire to learn how to live on the land in a subsistence manner; (4) a desire to experiment with being a teacher as well as to learn in the usual

capacity of student; and (5) a desire to practice basic, participatory democracy in social matters and total self-regulation in individual matters.

Question Two: Indeed, such a program may not be available at any other boarding school or at home, but wouldn't a youngster have plenty of opportunity to follow such inclinations just a few years later in life—when, of course, it wouldn't cost tuition?

Answer: Yes. In many cases, however, the high school years are precisely the time when a student loses idealistic desires such as those mentioned above, and acquires in their place cynicism or materialism. Regarding tuition, the policy of the school would be to charge no tuition or fees whatsoever. In addition, there should be no need to solicit contributions from adults, but since some money would nonetheless be donated there could be three monetary funds helping to add diversity to the core program of the school: (1) a "travel fund" for school traveling expenses (mainly gas and oil); (2) a "book fund" for the acquisition of books and other printed material as they are desired (gradually resulting in a school library); and (3) a "personal expenses" fund, to be split evenly among students and staff members each year when school adjourns in June, with the hope that each share would be sufficient for summer travels. The staff members would be at the school on the same basis as the students, receiving no salary, only room and board.

Question Three: Even without the expense of salaries, wouldn't quite a bit of money be needed for necessities such as food, clothing and shelter, simply for survival's sake?

Answer: Subsistence survival, living off the land, would be precisely one of the major subjects the school would be teaching. And the concern would not be merely for raw survival but rather for attainment of genuine comfort and a sense of security. (But in addition there would be a full college preparatory program for all students anxious to academically prepare themselves for college.) There would probably be an initial period during which much of the school's foodstuffs would be purchased rather than grown on its land or caught in nearby waters—and perhaps a decision would eventually be made that there had best be several items such as wheat, oats, soybeans and fruit which the school should not struggle to grow. Such foods tend to be available for less than five dollars per hundred pounds. Sources of protein other than meat might not satisfy a percentage of the school (emotionally) and they would be free to embark upon livestock and poultry enterprises as well as fishing. For milk and dairy products, several goats would suffice. It would be income from the sale of school-made craft items which would constitute a fund expected to cover any food purchases—and also to pay for tools. (Incidentally, the best and cheapest tools available in certain parts of the country are early American items sold in antique shops.)

PAUL SALSTROM

Voluntown, Connecticut

(*To be concluded*)

FRONTIERS

"Speak Truth To Powert'

THE high point of almost any good book is the place where it gets around to a believable demonstration of human freedom. The most unforgettable of the Platonic dialogues are the *Apology* and the *Crito,* which deal with the total independence of Socrates. He understood so well both coercive power and the ignorance which uses it (and is used by it) that they never really touched him, except in ways and at the time he selected. Freedom, as has been well said, is knowledge of necessity, and Socrates did his work in the context of a knowledge of necessity, using its various aspects as well as he could for his educational purposes. He did pretty well. He illustrated the kind of mastery over circumstances that is possible for human beings.

Political thought is an attempt to generalize this relationship between men and circumstances according to some theory of achievable balance, and it adds a corresponding theory of the potentialities of free human decision. But because politics must use power to establish the conditions demanded by the theory, and must often either constrain or exploit ignorance to do this, the very elements which circumscribe freedom are always present in any political solution. The best politics always has in it some confession of failure—that is, it attempts to frame areas of life where its own rules will never be made to apply; the worst politics ignores the transcendent importance of those areas for human beings and relies wholly on enactments for the creation of what are supposed to be "ideal" conditions.

Thus the bad political system is always self-defeating, but since the potentialities of human beings for freedom and self-rule are variable, mysterious, and unpredictable, and since the motives of men who feel called upon to use political power are nearly always mixed, the practical settlements men make concerning their political arrangements are seldom based upon open acknowledgment of the difficulties in all political systems. Such candor would work against the accumulation of power, which is held to be necessary in order to do "good."

Historically, then, we may say that the best political orders have been based upon a high estimate of human potentialities for independent responsibility and good, and the worst have reflected contempt for human beings. The basic difficulty, however, is that *any* political system must make judgments on this question, and act upon them, and these judgments, in turn, become conditioning factors affecting the development of coming generations. This, plus the fear of political authorities to admit the inadequacy of political power, with resulting false claims and hypocrisies, shadows the social human situation almost beyond understanding.

The ideal of a politics which frees men from politics is so paradoxical to us that it can hardly be written about. It seems likely that this ideal will not be seriously considered until public opinion is filled with generalized awareness of the built-in limitations of political action, and it is commonly recognized that social paradoxes can have no resolution except in the lives of individuals.

Meanwhile, the dream of freedom is kept alive in the human breast by the philosophical forms of art. Through its peculiar magic, art is able to capture the reality of moments of freedom and "fix" them, so to speak, in a symbolic expression. In the novel, for example, the author's moment of high resolution comes when he reveals the reality of human freedom under circumstances in which, according to ordinary "political" opinion, it is totally denied. And when the existentialist philosopher formulates his basic proposition, *No matter what happens, I am nonetheless a man,* he reaches into the depths of intuitive reality for all human beings. "No matter what they did, *I still had a choice,"* is the essential communication of Viktor Frankl's *From Death Camp to Existentialism.*

It is no doubt a kind of diagnosis of our times that the most gripping and inspiring expressions we know concerning human freedom are framed by absolute desperation. It is as though we have deep need to hear a cry which says: "I am a man; I have an inextinguishable spark you cannot touch; you may blind yourself to my spark, but you cannot really put it out."

In a better age, we may learn to cherish other accounts of the reality of freedom, but right now, apparently, we have only the one big lesson to learn—the final futility of power.

A passage in a current popular novel about the Civil War and its aftermath strikes this keynote, which remains the pervasive meaning of the story. *And Wait for the Night* by John William Corrington (first published by G. P. Putnam's Sons at $5.95, and now available as a Pocket Book) is concerned with the agony of the South in defeat, with shallow passions turned to stubborn bitterness and folly, but also with the unconquerable spirit that appears in men again and again as a testament to their capacity for transcendence. In this passage, a federal colonel, Lodge, having commandeered quarters in the home of an elderly Southerner, is inviting his unwilling host to help him control the population of the town, now occupied and policed by Negro troops. Lodge, as a self-righteous and vengeful federal administrator, plans to strip the people of Shreveport (Louisiana) of everything he can in the way of goods and livestock that might have been used in the Confederate cause. The scene begins with an explanation by the Northern officer, who says:

> I asked you here this evening to make an offer.
>
> Amos said nothing.
>
> —If you will lend your authority and knowledge of these local people to the United States in the months to come, I believe it may be possible to save your property and set aside any proceedings against your person. It may be President Johnson would consider a pardon . . .
>
> Amos listened politely.
>
> —Do you understand me? Lodge said irritably.
>
> Amos shrugged.—I don't know, he said.—If you want me to cooperate in helping you keep order in Shreveport so you won't have to turn your guns on the people, there's no need to bribe me. I don't want them massacred. If you expect some other sort of help . . .
>
> —The United States does not bribe its citizens, Lieutenant Raisor grated.
>
> —I'm not a citizen of the United States, Amos answered easily.—Do you bribe foreigners? Or what do you call bribes?
>
> Lodge was struggling to control himself. This man, this one-armed rebel was playing with him . . .
>
> —I am not asking you to be an informant, Lodge said hoarsely,—and I am offering you no more than consideration for your assistance. There are other men in town who may view the preservation of their freedom and property more seriously.
>
> Amos met the colonel's frown with a tight-eyed expression of his own. The bantering tone of his voice was gone.
>
> —The kind of men you can buy in Shreveport will be useless to you. The kind of men you need will not be for sale.
>
> Lodge smiled without humor.—After a few weeks with the Treasury agents, I suspect there will be a surplus of reasonable men in this city.
>
> Amos looked at him wonderingly. —You really believe that? You really believe that a few cotton thieves and chicken-snatchers will break these people down to a size you can use? You would, I suppose.
>
> —I would?
>
> —I expect you've not had much experience with men who valued their good names and the opinion of their associates over property and advancement. I reckon you're going to get an education here.
>
> —If anyone is educated, Lodge shot back, his voice rising—it will be you. It will be the people of this parish. I have the authority, the force . . .
>
> —You do, Amos agreed. —All you have to do is decide how to use them without firing off a local war all over again. That could happen, you know.
>
> —Don't you people know when you're beaten? Lieutenant Raisor put in.
>
> —Can't you see all your airs are no good now?
>
> Amos smiled at him kindly. —We know exactly to what degree we're whipped. And we can live with defeat—to that degree. But if you press us beyond that degree, attempt to reduce us to peonage . . . then

> we would have nothing whatever to lose by starting guerrilla war again.
>
> —Nothing but your lives, the lieutenant sneered.—We'd eradicate you.
>
> —Our lives, if you have bare existence in mind, mean a good deal less than you seem to think. The only life that matters to most of us is the kind of life we choose to lead. If you effectively deny that, you'll have to go all the way. . . .

All the way . . "you'll have to go all the way." . . . They compelled us to go all the way. . . . Our cause was just, but now that we have gone all the way, there is no justice anywhere, only the terrible silence of death and failure. . . . The heroism in the modern war novel is seldom the heroism of a soldier fighting in a just cause, but the heroism of a lonely man fighting to preserve his humanity.

How, where, when, do these causes lose their " justice"? At which point, by what means, do healers turn into butchers? Where do the over-simplifications of "evil," the delusions of "righteousness," begin? If we knew how ignorant we are of the answers to these questions, we might be able to make some definitions of a freedom that would never seek protection in power. Meanwhile, we have only our consciences to tell us and the arts to show us that we have failed.