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# THE TERRIBLE ABSTRACTIONS

THE fact that general or abstract ideas are the means of thinking about human progress, and at the same time can be turned, in the form of science, into instruments for a destructiveness that has no comparison in history, is almost certainly the source of the bitterest dilemmas of human life. And the evil done by men blinded by the self-vindicating righteousness of some abstract rule makes the offenses of ordinary selfishness or acquisitiveness seem niggardly pranks. Yet for this to be admitted apparently requires the kind of intelligence which belongs only to men who have outgrown ordinary selfishness, giving them an elevation where they can use general ideas without dehumanizing effects. Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Gandhi are illustrations of this capacity.

In *The Neuroses of the Nations* (Seltzer, 1925), Caroline Playne reviews the submission to the war spirit of both the French and the German people in the years before World War I. Her examination is thorough. Only a few Frenchmen understood what was happening. One of these, Romain Rolland, showed how the horror of war came to be accepted by Frenchmen:

> In *Jean-Christophe* Romain Rolland speaks of a French worker who was in a great state of mental conflict between an acquired belief in humanity and instinctive feelings of patriotism. After some sleepless nights he found a formula which reconciled the two: "France is the synonym for humanness."

This recalls an earlier period of European history when calling a man a Christian meant simply that he was a human being. During the years before World War I, in both Germany and France, the people with the power to shape public opinion and control what was taught in the schools were persuaded of more consciously partisan views. As Miss Playne relates:

> The Chauvinists of France . . . inculcated quite as confused ideas in the minds of French youth as the pan-Germans did in the minds of youthful Germans. Here are examples of lessons on a par with those of the pan-Germans. Indeed, in form as in mental conception they are identical with pan-German effusions:
>
> "Whom else must we love?"
>
> "We must love all men, even those who are not French!"
>
> "Can we love the Germans?"
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> "Those who have injured France, those who oppress the French of Alsace-Lorraine. We cannot think of loving them!"
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> "She (the country) lost two provinces. If your mother were ill, you would surround her with care and tender love. . . . Think that the country is your second mother, that she suffers and weeps over the children whom they have torn away from her bosom. Love her, my friends, and do not forget the comfort she expects from you."
>
> "What will you do when you are grown up? Sir, I want to be a soldier to go to war and kill a lot of Prussians. They killed my Uncle Peter, and grandmother always cries when they talk about him. You are a brave boy, and the Prussians will have to behave."

A French author of the period, Gustave Hervé, wrote:

> After schooldays everything reminds youth of the patriotic education received at school and nothing counteracts it. The theatre, so full of military exhibitions and bellicose tirades, the stall at the fair with its living pictures often representing warlike scenes, the illustrated supplements . . . whose reproductions are all turned to the exaltation of the army and the Country, the largely circulated newspapers, insisting with so much complacency upon armaments, the army and navy manoeuvres, the war-features and diplomatic incidents, the military pictures which are countless in our museums—everything is marvellously combined to impress still more deeply upon his brain the patriotism with which they have inculcated his boyish mind. There are advanced papers which violently attack religion; there

> is not one large daily paper that dares attack patriotism.

It is perhaps natural for the reader to keep saying to himself, as he turns the pages of such books, "But were not some of these claims *true?"* His problem, then, after deciding that the charges had some foundation, is to be able to ask himself just as insistently whether there was any justification for using this "truth" to perpetuate hate in the minds of children, who are totally lacking in defense against partisan emotion. Francesco Nitti, an Italian statesman of the early 1920's, described in *The Decadence of Europe* (Holt, 1923) his collection of the books widely used in French and Belgian schools after the war. In one of these it was asserted that the "teachings of the German universities are full of lies, hypocrisy and calculated falsehood, with the sole purpose of making an armed automaton of every being." To what extent, one wonders, did this become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Certainly, everything that was said of the Germans seemed to be justified by what happened in World War II. But how do you untangle the threads of actual historical causation, in order to assess "responsibility"? Even if this were possible, it is never popular to pursue such difficult tasks, since the nations care more about winning future wars than discovering what caused them in the past. If there is anything to which nations are indifferent, it is a conception of justice which blurs the driving necessities of the "national interest."

We must think of our future security, we say. And if the young are to fight our wars to preserve a future for all the world, their minds must be prepared. Since all peoples are betrayed by the misuse of general ideas, there is little point in picking out instances except for illustration. Meanwhile, a virtually "Roman" devotion to violent spectacle in the American people encourages the distortion of general ideas even when it is plainly against their interest. As George Harris, editor of *Look,* said of Stokely Carmichael (*Look,* June 27, 1967):

> Each time he tries to define his Black Power in terms of economic and political development, he finds himself shouting into deaf ears. But when, pacing like a panther, he twists himself into a trance, snarling terror, he makes the evening TV news for millions of very alert people, both races.

How can we hope to put an end to this sort of inflammatory agonizing, since nearly every expression of human anger, every claim of wrong and demand for rights and opportunities can be shown to have at least *some* supporting justification behind it? Obviously, at this moment of history, the non-white people of the world have far more evidence to justify their wrath than anyone else. If "truth" is the measure of right, the facts are monumentally on their side.

The answer can only be that the refusal to concentrate on facts leading to "blame" must begin with those who have the *least* excuse for blaming others for their troubles. The powerful logic of this proposal is illustrated by what a black prisoner in Alameda County Jail wrote to some pacifist demonstrators who were there for civil disobedience:

> The system has been designed to protect your best interest, and yet you reject it. It is not surprising that I reject it, for it was designed to hold me down. . . . I am really happy to see middle class educated white people whom I am able to identify with, because it shows that harmony is still possible.

This was of course but a single encounter—one that took place outside the social order, in a jail. But it seems not only possible but even likely that the forces which are going to change this society into something better are not forces which the society can originate comfortably out of itself. They will have to be *different* from the forces now known to our society, developed from general ideas of another order, in response to another vision.

More specifically, it has become clear that social harmony is simply not possible for the relationships of units of the size and dynamics of the nation-state; and evident, also, that the distortion of great general ideas by the

contradictions of the nation-state keeps them from being effective in other ways. When humane international organization is proposed, it is claimed that the sovereignty and power of the nation-state is needed to *guarantee* an isolated security. This makes it obvious that the very principles of national identity are opposed to all such ideal projects. As Thoreau said pungently in another connection: "It is impossible to give the soldier a good education without making him a deserter. His natural foe is the government which drills him." Which is a way of recognizing that governments will have to relinquish the power to destroy. Henri Barbusse saw this indistinctly when he declared, after the Paris Peace Conference, that Wilson "never understood what he had said." Wilson "never thought about the demolition and reconstruction which the integral implementation of his propositions would require."

The same devastating criticism could be made of the modern political promises of racial "integration" in the United States. These promises were made without thought about the "demolition and reconstruction" they required. Disenchanted liberals are shocked by the failure of "laws" to make integration come true; they are horrified by the inability of the "nation" to do what its leaders said and keep on saying *must* be done. But passing laws does not make men love their neighbors as themselves, which means, quite simply in this case, regarding black men as subjects instead of objects. Probably the only places where integration is *real* is in the "extreme situations" where simple survival is combined with daily contact, day and night, in every sort of human relation. This makes color insignificant.

Men who imagine that engrained formations of character can be altered by law have a tendency to be contemptuous toward the actual processes by which human attitudes do change. For example, in Brazil, by comparison with the United States, there is very little race prejudice. Brazil has many imperfections, no doubt, but not this one. The pasts of the two countries have been very different, of course, but it is quite possible to isolate some of the factors involved, and to make comparisons. Waldo Frank did this very well in his *South American Journey* (1942):

> The history of Brazil—its colonization, its slavocracy, its independence, its bloodless gradual freeing of the Negroes, its easeful shift from Empire to Republic—has been amazingly distinct from the processes of Spanish America and the United States. . . .
>
> Comparative lack of strain was the coefficient of the difference from our own slave South. We too bred with the Negresses; but fought the passion and ostracized its children. Hence fear, which is the fruit of the denial of human feelings.
>
> Fear marked the growth of our world, fear of different kinds, north and south. Want of fear marked the growth, through the first three centuries, of Brazil's mixed population. There was food for every child, there was at least one woman for every man. Of course, there was theft, there was cruel exploitation, there was murder; these at times are natural expressions. There was no rape; almost no case of it is known in Brazil's history.

Further along Mr. Frank says:

> Men of color, if they were men of value, not only occupied places of honor in all the professions, they were invited to the palace functions. At one ball, a lady refused to dance with the famous colored engineer, André Reboucas; the Empress Apparent, Princess Isabel, gave him her hand in the next mazurka. . . .
>
> Brazil with its slow organic process has been the most backward country to abolish servitude. But the process cost no blood, caused no fierce sectional conflicts or resentments. The big slave men of Bahia grumbled; and took their revenge by permitting the Empire, which had encouraged abolition, to fade into the new Republic. But the abolitionists inflicted no curse like our Reconstruction on half the country: a "reconstruction" from which our South has not yet by any means recovered.
>
> The following year, 1889, by the same blind process, the nation awoke to find itself a Republic. When the Princess Regent, Isabel, signed the Congressional Act freeing the last slaves, she smiled into the face of the Prime Minister. "We won the fight," she said. "Yes, Your Highness," he replied.

> "You have won the fight and lost the throne." This Prime Minister was the Baron de Cotegipe. He was a mulatto.

What was the prevailing factor in this achievement? Waldo Frank believes that it was the *tenderness* in the relations between the two races—something impossible to create by passing a law.

So it is no evasion of concrete social reality to argue that resolution of the conflicts which harry and divide the great powers of the West will never occur until the elementary lessons of peace-making are learned in authentically *human* situations where full and rounded application of the general ideas of love, trust, and human worth cannot be avoided. These qualities are never developed from the manipulative mandates of legislation. They depend entirely on the voluntaristic discoveries human beings make about one another.

We already know this well from practical experience in varied relationships. The sociologists speak of the importance of preserving the face-to-face community. The lifelong studies of Arthur Morgan made him the champion of the small community as the "seed-bed of society." Educators know that you can't have a good seminar if more than ten or fifteen people take part. Yet the nation with more power than any other society in history, and which has probably crowded the law books with more enactments than all the rest of the world put together, finds itself unable to get the size of the classes of its public schools down to a size where some real learning can take place.

The general ideas of our society—even the good ones—work poorly because the scale of human relationships has grown to a size which makes the deep meaning of these ideas inaccessible. For behind all great general ideas are profound moral intuitions, and these cannot be communicated by intellectual abstractions. Only very unusual men are able to *live by* abstractions.

Still another crucial element is missing in the life of modern man—a factor of self-control which, by reason of the vacuum it leaves, produces the reliance on naked power by all except a minority of anarcho-pacifists. This missing factor is faith in moral law. We know well enough how we lost this faith. It was a casualty of the war between science and theology. At first, its elimination was of obvious benefit, since it freed men's minds from the domination of tyrannical religious institutions. Michael Polanyi (in *The Tacit Dimension*) makes this apt summary of the achievements which scientific skepticism made possible:

> By battling against established authority, skepticism cleared the way for political freedom and humanitarian reforms. Throughout the nineteenth century, scientific rationalism inspired social and moral changes that have improved almost every human relationship, both private and public, throughout Western civilization. Indeed, ever since the French Revolution, and up to our own days, scientific rationalism has been a major influence toward intellectual, moral, and social progress.

What then happened? With the sudden rise of scientific and political power in what was now a moral vacuum, it was inevitable that an empirical theory of material human good should replace all other common objectives. The good was defined as material because injustice had everywhere deprived men not only of comforts but necessities, and a great moral resentment filled men who at the same time declared their total disbelief in morality. Given power, they promised, they would do *total* good, since science and political justice could combine to make it possible. Polanyi's summary of this development is brilliant:

> Scientific skepticism and moral perfectionism join forces then in a movement denouncing any appeal to moral ideals as futile and dishonest. Its perfectionism demands a total transformation of society; but this utopian project is not allowed to declare itself. It conceals its moral motives by embodying them in a struggle for power, believed to bring about automatically the aims of utopia. It blindly accepts for this belief the scientific testimony of Marxism. Marxism embodies the boundless moral

> aspirations of modern man in a theory which protects his ideals from skeptical doubt by denying the reality of moral motives in public life. The power of Marxism lies in uniting the two contradictory forces of the modern mind into a single political doctrine. Thus originated a world-embracing idea, in which moral doubt is frenzied by moral fury and moral fury is armed by scientific nihilism.

It is mere historical accident that this doctrine is called "Marxism." It really originated with Francis Bacon, in his teaching that only what arms man with power over nature can be called *knowledge.* As this idea became popular, it was inevitable that the world should come to be ruled by whatever combination of abstract ideas and political forms would win power. Marxism is but the rigidly logical development of nineteenth-century Utilitarian doctrine, freed of the squeamishness of already weakening notions of moral restraint. And in the West, as Polanyi points out, the parallel consequence of the loss of structured moral conviction was a full justification of rampant individualism—of getting, having, and holding, seen as quite consistent with the "natural" struggle for existence and the "law" of the survival of the fittest.

Today we feel rather than understand the portents of another great change. It may be difficult to take seriously the intuitive moral grounds of the young who "opt out" and relate only to one another, and who live, so to speak, on the largesse of an overfed, guilt-infested material culture which doesn't have any idea what to do about a generation that picks new moral ideas out of the air, and is as indifferent to science as to conventional religion. But these youngsters, almost to a man, are dreaming of "community." And whatever else we may say about their shortcomings, which plainly include disorientation and lack of disciplined striving, they know one thing very well: the only way to disarm the modern power-state is to refuse to admit that it is real. They simply ignore its general idea.

# *REVIEW*
## RESTORED PORTRAIT OF CAGLIOSTRO

AN elaborately detailed study of the life of Cagliostro, now published in English in the United States (Orion Press, $6.95), brings to light information found in previously unpublished documents which the author, François Ribadeau Dumas, came across while working on a history of magic. His *Cagliostro* does much to restore the reputation of a man of the eighteenth century who has been under a cloud of calumny for two hundred years. Yet Cagliostro remains essentially mysterious, despite the careful scholarship of Dumas. The main achievement of this book is a general refutation of lies that have been long repeated by well known writers, and tiresomely echoed in dozens of encyclopedias and works of reference.

Why should a scholar be attracted to a man like Cagliostro? One sees from this book that it is impossible to ignore the fact that Cagliostro, like certain of his equally mysterious contemporaries, exerted great historical influence. Dumas endeavors to show the impact of Cagliostro's life on European civilization, while resisting the temptation to "explain away" whatever cannot be accounted for by ordinary means. Take for example the familiar charge that Cagliostro was a medical charlatan. There is no evidence for this except the reports of his marvelous cures. Yet either the cures he effected were real or the people he treated were fools. Dumas finds that they were *not* fools; many of those whom he helped were respectable persons whose word was far more reliable than the claims of the healer's enemies. Cagliostro was distinguished by the fact that his most loyal friends and defenders included some of the most accomplished and eminent men of his time. His attackers were uniformly despicable, except for Carlyle, who wrote about Cagliostro at second hand.

For the modern reader, Cagliostro is best regarded against the turbulent background of the rising revolutionary forces of the eighteenth century. Because of the furious attacks on him, little attention has been given to his devoted efforts to revive the spirit of Humanism by working for reforms in Freemasonry, or to his deep allegiance to the principles of the French Revolution. His *Letter to the French People,* written in June of 1786, showed a lively appreciation of the meaning of imprisonment in the Bastille, where he had spent months on a false charge of having been involved in the Diamond Necklace affair. In his letter he wrote of the crimes that took place there, declared that "abuse of power is, in the long run, destruction of power," and predicted that a time would soon come when *lettres de cachet* would be abolished and the States General convoked. As Dumas says:

> That letter of June 29th clearly enunciated the demands of the French people for the following: suppression of inequality; an end to the monarch's arbitrary decrees; freedom for all the people; reform of governmental institutions, and especially of the law; reform of religion.

A French official claimed that Cagliostro's *Letter to the French People* hastened the Revolution. But this letter was probably only an incidental reflection of the humanizing concepts which had been stirring changes in the minds of the people through Cagliostro's work with the Freemasons of France. In a study devoted to this seldom mentioned but deep-flowing cause of the great revolt, Una Birch has this summarizing passage (in *Secret Societies and the French Revolution*):

> At the great Revolution the doctrines of the lodges were at last translated from the silent world of secrecy to the common world of practice; a few months sufficed to depose ecclesiasticism from its pedestal and monarchy from its throne; to make the army republican, and the word of Rousseau law. . . . The great subversive work had been silently and ruthlessly accomplished in the face of popes and kings. Though the Church spread the report that Illuminates worshipped a devil, and named it Christ, and denounced Masonry as the "mystery of iniquity"; though Saint-Germain and Saint-Martin were decried

by the Jesuits; though Cagliostro died in the Inquisitors' prison of Sant' Angelo, and Cazotte, Egalité, and many another agent of the secret service were guillotined; though Weishaupt was persecuted and the German Perfectibilists suppressed; yet the mine which had been dug under altar and throne was too deep to be filled up by either persecution or calumny.

The true history of the eighteenth century is the history of the aspiration of the human race. . . .

In both his Masonic reforms and his medical practice, Cagliostro represented a lost current of the Enlightenment—a quality of spiritual search which almost entirely died out after his time. Dumas writes clearly of this forgotten aspect of the revolutionary movement:

"Swedenborg, the visionary; Dom Pernety, the *'miracule'* of the Holy Word; and Cagliostro, the hierophant—all symbolized one of the aspects of that surprising eighteenth century in which scientific materialism was set in opposition to the tenets of the surviving mysticism of the Middle Ages."

The great difficulty in writing a book about a man like Cagliostro lies in giving an adequate account of abilities which seem beyond comprehension. How will they be described, when familiar experience offers no analogy? In his healing, Cagliostro was as much a doctor of the mind as of the body. Dumas is obliged to use language which recalls the modern sensitive, Edgar Cayce, although Cagliostro was no medium, nor even a "psychic," in the popular meaning of this term:

As he examined the patient, he seemed to look within himself, to interrogate his inner voice, to call upon his subconscious mind, uniting himself in deep thought with his patient for whom he displayed a talent for sympathy so necessary to the cure.

Through this gift of clairvoyance he analyzed the patient's personality, his mind as well as his body, in a union of the spiritual and physical which, according to the law of alchemists and of the Rosicrucians, he could not dissociate, and which he linked to Nature. In Nature he rediscovered the divine, seeking by a secret appeal to the transcendental to heal the patient. . . .

Here we may make an observation: it was the remembrance that Cagliostro sometimes hinted at, of a higher and a secret medical training, whose teachings he is said to have received in a mystical school either in Malta or Medina. . . . Certain people found in his statement symbolic images familiar to the Rosicrucians, . . .

The people of Strasbourg were surprised to hear him discourse for hours, with great ease, explaining and demonstrating his knowledge of life, revealing numerous secrets of Nature, and ever seeking to instruct and elevate his listeners. . . .

Never was Cagliostro seen to turn away a trusting patient. His benevolence became proverbial. He devoted himself to practicing generosity, standing ever ready to help suffering humanity, to assuage grief and alleviate agony. Never did he ask for or accept any money; on the contrary, he distributed alms and gave aid to the unfortunate. . . . the essential secret of that medical treatment appears to be connected with a formula of the great Paracelsus who revolutionized medical science, a formula Cagliostro administered with great care. When the famous Swiss pastor Johann Kaspar Lavater questioned Cagliostro one day about the secret of his art, Cagliostro replied: *"In herbis verbis et lapidibus"* (In herbs, words, and stones) .

Dumas provides a gloss on this formula, then repeats the general instruction of Paracelsus: "A physician who believes only in his science will accomplish little or nothing, but he who has faith in the divine power acting within him, and who employs that power intelligently, will do great things." It was Cagliostro's misfortune that he explained this aspect of his convictions all too clearly, so that the Inquisition turned it into a charge that he collaborated with *demons.*

It must be confessed that the learned author of this book functions more as a painstaking, conscientious reporter of Cagliostro's career and the wonders he performed, than as an illuminator of the meaning of his life. It would probably take another Cagliostro to do this justly; at present, honest if wondering description is the best we can expect. As for the "mystical" nature philosophy of Cagliostro, it seems pertinent to reflect that something of this spirit is now creeping into modern thought in a secular idiom. The feeling

that there can be no true health for man except in communion with nature is a modern psychiatric insight as well as an ecological intuition, and the rather sudden spread, in the West, of Eastern pantheist doctrines and conceptions of self-knowledge may be evidence that the merely scientific side of the Enlightenment, for all its associated social idealism, is not enough to sustain vision and moral striving in human beings. At the root of all the great classical civilizations there has been the profound philosophy of man's unity with Nature. This is clear from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, from Egyptian religion, and from Platonic doctrines, and it might have become the ensouling essence of Western civilization, had it not been for the great struggle between powerful religious institutions and the awakening spirit of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This conflict forced the rising energies of revolution into channels hostile to any sort of religious philosophy, as the only possible response to the ruthless methods of priestly power, which claimed martyr after martyr among the great innovators of the Renaissance. Cagliostro was saved from the executioner only by the intercession of an unknown stranger whose brief visit caused Pope Pius VI to commute Cagliostro's sentence to life imprisonment.

François Dumas' book can hardly lessen the bewilderment of the modern reader in contemplating the strange career of Cagliostro. But it rights many wrongs in putting the record straight. Cagliostro has had other champions—as, for example, W. R. H. Trowbridge, whose *Cagliostro* (Brentano, 1910 and 1926) began the exposure of the lies that have been told about this man. François Dumas has gone a long way toward completing the task.

# *COMMENTARY*
## MORE GOODMAN

AN interview with Paul Goodman appearing in *Plastic Bag* (issued by the students of Union Theological Seminary) and reprinted in *Renewal* for December, 1967, throws light on Goodman's view of the processes of cultural change. The interview begins with a questioning of the apolitical mood of the hippie "tribes." Goodman turns the question into a broad consideration of the difference between "planning" and "becoming." The initial question by *Plastic Bag* concerns young people who become discouraged by the apparent immovability of the status quo, and "drop out":

> Of course, the intentions of these people are beyond question because their integrity, sincerity, and honesty far exceed those who have crushed their political hopes. The problem is that if those with a strong moral commitment drop out of a corrupt system, they shouldn't be surprised when it becomes more and more corrupt.

Goodman replies that withdrawal from a society that dooms its future with smog and other pollutions is hardly unreasonable. Asked if he thinks this withdrawal is "realistic," he said:

> It could be; I don't say that I consider it so, but I wouldn't have any terribly strong arguments against anyone who does consider it so. Take something like smog. We know that sixty per cent of the smog is caused by automobile exhaust. Now this could be cured if, let's say, everyone had an electric car. Nevertheless, the big corporations say that they couldn't put out an electric car for thirty years. We *know* that they could put out an electric car right now. Yet the public as a whole takes this statement seriously. These people are doomed!

In this view, simple "escape" may be justified; but there is another view, which Goodman himself adopts:

> What I am saying is that if, on the other hand, one's interest is in political action, then act. But withdrawal is one way of coping with it. But if you are concerned with political action, you must be concerned with reconstruction of the present society. And the reconstruction of present society is going to have to be done by professionals. We search to find what the correct use of modern technology is, rather than the abuse of it in which case there ought to be more career motivation on the part of young people. Now I would prefer not to have to choose between these alternatives. But I would say that those who have a leaning one way, good for them. If you really feel political and you want to reconstruct society, that's fine, go reconstruct it. On the other hand, if you are despairing, that's all right; we want a kind of loose future anyway; we don't want a tightly geared future. Why shouldn't there be a place in our future society for a lot of monks? That's what it amounts to, isn't it?. Like the Benedictine monks in medieval society. They lived out there and they farmed, and good for them.
>
> The Diggers and the Warmth Committee trade things and the Benedictine monks farmed. Fine.

Question:

> Then you feel that the Flower People's life is consistent with an industrial society? Do you feel that an industrial ethic can grow out of the Flower People?
>
> *Paul Goodman:* I don't mean that it could grow out of them, but that the industrial ethic could include the Flower People. What I object to is the Students for a Democratic Society rejecting the professional aspect of dealing with the problem. Their interest in participatory democracy is fine, but they are not interested, for example, in the professional management of technology. If you are going to have technology, you can't say that somebody who studies technology, say a doctor or an engineer, is selling out.

As a communitarian, Goodman believes that constructive social forms must be *grown* rather than manipulated into being. He sees in the "tribalism" of the hippies a potential for decentralized community life:

> I am a community anarchist. And this is a view of how a free society can be, not constructed, but how it can come to be. The way it comes to be is by gradually finding out how to carry on those [conflict-reconciling] functions. But we don't know that beforehand; rather, we find out by the doing of it. Therefore, I think that the way we will find to reconstruct society is by trying to live as humanly as we can, and that includes the tribalism. Then we should have conflict. And out of the conflict will come answers. We don't have the answers before the conflict. I think the civil rights movement has shown

this again and again. You have the conflict *before* you have the program; it can't come before.

Question:

So you begin with the industrial society as it is, and you maintain a tension with it, you don't escape from it?

*Paul Goodman:* Yes. We have tribalism because we must have it, in order to be alive, in order not to be turned into machines. Then that leads to struggle, and the struggle is to be welcomed. You don't look for trouble, you look to live well. But you will inevitably have trouble. But that's good. And you hope that, and this is plain hope, and faith, maybe, that in the trouble we will find ways of taking what is good in modern society and doing it in a better way.

Goodman illustrated how this might work for people active in technology:

Suppose a group of TV cameramen, technicians and reporters decide that, as personnel, they can't practice their professions. Like, I'm a cameraman, I go out and get a story and the story is edited to please the top brass of CBS, and it's not my story any more. It becomes a lie, it wasn't what I saw. O.K. So I organize with a number of other TV people, and I say, look, we have two alternatives; either we strike unless they edit us fair, or we quit. You strike, you lose the strike. OK. Second, we quit. You strike first, because most of them are interested in the money, they're not interested in being reporters. But we twenty are interested in being reporters. So we quit. And we open a television station of our own. Why shouldn't we? You know, it's going to be honest reporting. Now a few groups do that, and you have radically changed American television. . . . That's why I'm urging the tribes to accept professionalism as one of their basic principles. Because that is a way of really making a change in the other society.

This isn't as improbable at it sounds. Pacifica Radio came into being more or less in this way.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves
### FACTORY-SCHOOLS?

THE evidence and expert testimony have been on record for a long time. Education in the United States is weak in areas where it ought to be strong. It is strong where it may be making its greatest mistakes. In some forceful paragraphs which appeared in his essay in the Los Angeles *Times* for Oct. 31, 1966, Robert M. Hutchins put the gist of this failure in a few words:

> The blight of specialism and vocationalism has settled on all our educational institutions. The colleges of the liberal arts, which by their name and tradition might be expected to carry the torch for liberal education, have long since come under the sway of the graduate schools. These colleges are not so much concerned with educating their students as with giving them specialized training that will push them along in graduate work.
>
> In one representative small college of the highest quality and the best reputation the dropout rate between freshman and senior years is 60 per cent.
>
> The reason is that the students, who have been lured to the college by its proclaimed dedication to liberal education, find on their arrival that the reality is quite different. In reality, the college is, except in size, the same as a university, devoted to training and not to education. . . . Unless the American university is completely reorganized and reoriented it can only mishandle and frustrate the students who reject the mindless mechanism of the academic assembly line; the students, in short, are looking for an education.

How many times must things like this be said before parents and other people recognize that they are true? Will the institutions of higher learning in America continue to be regarded as the country's precious investment in the future, deserving of earnest and sincere support, until their failures so litter the streets that even statistical sociologists feel obliged to announce that something has gone wrong?

And how long will it be before the critics of education themselves discover that no institution devoted to the formation of character, insight, and courage can obtain material nourishment from a status quo which is anxiously committed to exactly opposite qualities? Finally, what must we do about the lethargy which confronts genuine reform?

To answer this question, we must first dispose of the ambiguity of "we." In this case "we" can include only aroused and responsible individuals. They form no corporate body. They are not the state. They are not the school board nor anyone who imagines that school boards are likely to be responsible for anything important in relation to education. The "we" of this question are people able to realize that when the educational institutions of a highly organized society reach a point of no return in their loss of vision, it is a waste of time to talk about "changing" them. It remains for those who constitute this "we" to start something new. The only thing wrong with the uprisings of students on the campuses is that the students can no more "protest" the universities into ideal places of learning than administrators can manipulate the students into becoming passive containers of academic information. Neither process will work; neither has anything to do with education.

The answer seems simple enough: education must free itself of the state. Everyone who thinks now knows that the modern power state must go. It is obvious that this state is rapidly becoming anti-human. The state grows anti-human in individual terms by insisting that citizens blindly support whatever the state finds it militarily expedient to do. It is anti-human in collective terms from the genocidal consequences of its geopolitical undertakings. All humane men with a knowledge of history cry out for an end to this sort of state, and for a "rebirth" of the human spirit in new social relationships. What sort of social relationships? These can gain effective definition only through actual processes of social evolution—which means, initially, the creation of centers of education which are free of hypnotic control by the past. Education sponsored and

paid for by the state cannot possibly serve the future.

Accordingly, the argument about what is wrong with public education ought to be dropped. The people who recognize this must accept personal responsibility for doing something about education themselves.

Why couldn't there be factory-schools? Why couldn't men who want to teach combine education with making their living with their hands? Why couldn't businessmen who know from their own tough-minded practice the faults of modern education help to organize centers of work-and-learning? Why should all genuine innovations be left to adolescents who long to "return to the land," and who sadly discover that the family-size farm is the most clearly established economic anachronism of the twentieth century?

Already there have been various half-way and quarterway experiments in combining work and education. Antioch was an important step in this direction. The French Communities of Work had some success in uniting self-support with learning. Goddard now gives credit to students who go out and work on jobs. The fact that basic disciplines are acquired from hard work and self-sufficiency is hardly disputable.

What better way could there be to break up the stereotypes of ideological thinking? How do people learn the facts about human nature, and the differences between theory and practice, except by means of the daily reality-testing of work?

How will people ever get "ready" for the leisure-rich paradise of the cybernetic prophets without serving their apprenticeship in work that has to be done? Bellamy, the original architect of the vision of an automated society, understood this necessity quite well.

When the forefathers of the American society worked night and day to tame a physical wilderness, they did not ask for time-and-a-half from the local bosses, who were the wind and the weather. When the Founding Fathers decided to inaugurate a new scheme of social relationships, it did not occur to them to ask George III for a grant-in-aid. The Founding Fathers—the "we" of that epoch—were well schooled in the law of self-sufficiency.

There were not very many Founding Fathers, in contrast to the total population of the colonies. The effective "we" is always a small minority. It is a small minority today. But it is surely big enough. Its members probably need only to realize that they cannot expect anyone else to do their pioneer work for them. There *isn't* anybody else.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Paul (Revere) Goodman

ARE there, one wonders, some shy, silent Mirabeaus hiding in the interstices of the military-industrial complex of the United States? Men who, unlike the great French aristocrat, dare not make themselves heard, yet are filled with misgivings about the routine operations which make up their daily lives?

No other explanation seems able to account for a recent high point in the career of Paul Goodman, who last fall was invited to speak his mind before a captive audience of America's industrial military elite. Problem: Why was he asked to address the members of the National Security Industrial Association—an organization which, as Goodman says, was formed in 1944 by James Forrestal in order to "maintain and enhance the beautiful wartime communication between the armament industries and government"? This group includes all the giant aircraft, electronics, motor, oil, and chemical corporations, and even such firms as General Foods and Otis Elevators.

Goodman was one of seventeen speakers before a gathering of this "four hundred" of the country's industrial aristocracy. His assigned topic was "Planning for the Socio-Economic Environment," and he wondered if he was expected to behave like some sort of "pet radical." As he said in an introduction to the *Peace News* (Dec. 15) presentation of his address:

> What is an intellectual man to do in such a case? I agree with the Gandhian principle, always cooperate within the limits of honor, truth, and justice. But how cooperate with the military industrial club! during the Vietnam war 1967! It was certainly not the time to reason about basic premises, as is my usual approach, so I decided simply to confront them and soberly tell them off.

Paul Goodman is possibly the best-informed generalist in the United States, one of the few men who are able to see this enormous, sprawling and confused society *whole*, and to point with lucid specifics to what might be done at once to change things for the better. Goodman, in short, is a constructive radical. No angry nihilist, he has the designer's instinct for making wholes. For this reason he is sometimes understood by literate conservatives, since the conservative is devoted to preserving wholes, although often his loyalty is to old, unworkable ones. Goodman exhibits responsible radical intelligence, and this wins the respect of people who disagree with him. His book, *The Society I Live in Is Mine* (Horizon, 1962), probably explains better than anything else why he appeals to so wide an audience.

This is not to suggest that he pulls his punches. He started out by reproaching the sponsors of the conference for not inviting anyone under thirty, since the young will have to live in the society now being "planned." Then, concerning the subject assigned to him—"Research and Development for the Socio-Economic Environment of the 1970's"—he said:

> This is a bad forum for this topic. Your program mentions the "emerging national goals" of urban development, continuing education, and improving the quality of man's environment. I would add another essential goal, reviving American democracy; and at least two indispensable international goals, to rescue the majority of mankind from deepening poverty, and to ensure the survival of mankind as a species.
>
> These goals indeed require research and experimentation of the highest sophistication, but not by you. You people are unfitted by your commitments, your experience, your customary methods, your recruitment, and your moral disposition. You are the military industrial of the United States, the most dangerous body of men at present in the world, for you not only implement our disastrous policies but are an overwhelming lobby for them, and you expand and rigidify the wrong use of brains, resources, and labor so that change becomes difficult.
>
> Most likely, the trends you represent will be interrupted by a shambles of riots, alienation, ecological catastrophes, wars, and revolutions, so that current long-range planning, including this conference, is irrelevant. But if we ask what are the technological needs and what ought to be researched in this coming period, in the six areas I have

> mentioned, then the best service you people could perform is rather rapidly to phase yourselves out, passing on your relevant knowledge to people who are better qualified, or reorganizing yourselves with entirely different sponsors and commitments, so that you learn to think and feel in a different way. Since you are most of the R & D that there is, we cannot do without you as people, but we cannot do with you as you are.

Goodman charged these enormous industrial combines with immeasurable waste and laughed at them for claiming to contribute "socially useful items" as "spin-off" from their military inventiveness: "When you talk about spin-off, you people remind me of TV networks who, after twenty years of nothing, boast that they *did* broadcast the McCarthy hearings and the Kennedy funeral." Then, on the use of funds for research:

> . . . concentrating the grants, you narrow the field of discovery and innovation, creating an illusion of technological determinism, as if we *had* to develop in a certain style. But if we had put our brains and money into electric cars, we would now have electric cars, if we had concentrated on intensive agriculture, we would now find that this is the most efficient, and so forth. And in grabbing the funds, you are not even honest; 90 per cent of the R & D money goes in fact to shaping up for production, which as entrepreneurs you should pay for out of your own pockets.

Goodman's bill of particulars is searching and accurate. Yet the particulars never leave the arena of pertinent moral criticism. His level of generalization seems just right:

> These remarks have certainly been harsh and moralistic. We are none of us saints, and ordinarily I would be ashamed to use such a tone. But you are the manufacturers of napalm, fragmentation bombs, and the planes that destroy rice. Your weapons have killed hundreds of thousands in Vietnam, and you will kill other hundreds of thousands in other Vietnams. I am sure that most of you would concede that much of what you do is ugly and harmful, at home and abroad. But you would say that it is necessary for the American way of life, at home and abroad, and therefore you cannot do otherwise. Since we believe, however, that that way of life is itself unnecessary, ugly, and un-American, we cannot condone your present operations; they should be wiped off the slate.

These quotations give only the flavor of Paul Goodman's address, not its solid argument. We are writing to England for a few dozen reprints of the entire discussion (including Goodman's notes and comment, before and after) and will be glad to mail them to readers who write and ask for them, as long as the supply lasts. Reprints will almost certainly become available in the United States; meanwhile MANAS will supply the immediate demand without charge, but please send a little postage with your request.