

THE SEARCH FOR A "LIMIT"

ONE of the most impressive achievements of the eighteenth-century revolution was the elimination of the will of God as providing a limit to the exercise of power. Metaphysical arguments aside, this idea of limit didn't work, or rather it worked mainly in behalf of the interest groups responsible for interpreting the divine will. A number of other ideas went out of fashion with the will of God. Chief among these was the claim that the highest human good was to be obtained by *pleasing* God—which, according to the eighteenth-century rebels, amounted in practice to no more than pleasing (obeying) His interpreters. This meant that a new idea of man must gain currency. The human being was now to be understood not as a child of God, but an evolution of Nature. A man's good was no longer defined in terms of Salvation, but of Happiness, a kind of pleasing of oneself. And happiness was to be achieved by the exercise of his new-found freedom, to which no limit would be set save by Nature, and by what men might devise in the form of social compacts.

A fundamental faith grew out of the eighteenth-century revolution: That it is better to trust to the judgment of the common man to order his life and create the forms for achieving what he wants, than it is to allow him to be controlled by others. History shows, it was argued, that there is no limit to the excesses of external control, so that, whatever the defects of a free society, they are never as bad as those of authoritarian rule. Moreover, we have Nature, which we are learning to understand through Science, to limit whatever excesses may have a tendency to appear.

What was man in this new world of freedom? From a soul to be saved he became a pursuer of happiness. How is happiness to be achieved? By getting what man has been largely denied throughout all the remembered past—a plentiful supply of goods. The equation is a simple one—

Good equals Happiness equals Goods. A side-effect of this equation is that economics becomes Queen of the Sciences.

In a recent Occasional Paper of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, entitled "The Rise and Fall of Liberal Democracy," Harvey Wheeler gives an account of the prevailing socio-economic system, which he calls "participational democracy." He begins:

There were assumptions that the average man was wise; he could find solutions to his and society's problems; he would participate actively in politics; and he was more incorruptible than those in authority.

Next was an implicit theory of common goals and how society should realize them. The better statement might be that participational democracy implied a theory of "anti-goals." For it was held that the best way to produce political goals was not through explicit government policies but as a cumulative result of the people having been freed to develop, institute, and express goals individually and autonomously. This was the political counterpart of the unseen hand of classical economic theory. It yielded a counterpart of economic competition in the form of pressure group politics. This was radical pluralism at its deepest level. If society refuses to make explicit its goals and values, the right ones are sure to appear as the result of free men and institutions struggling against each other to achieve their own interests. Every conflicting interest and goal will somehow eventually be harmonized as organized groups battle it out in legislative chambers and lobbies. . . .

The best way to get the public work done was to see that political offices were filled only by average Americans. The wisest governors would spring from and automatically reflect the wisdom of the people. . . . The American doctrine was that politics and government were intrinsically simple from an administrative point of view. Nothing would have to be done in government that was above the comprehension or the ability of the average American.

. . . Americans trusted a kind of democratic Providence to guarantee them that the culture and the world would not confront them with problems so complex as to require specialized theoretical ability to solve them. . . . This also involved an anarchistic assumption about formal education. . . . Men should not take collective thought or action for the over-all shape or direction of their culture, their social institutions or their system of values. Certainly the government should not be concerned with the nature of the family system, the economic order, the religious system, the direction of science, and so on. Everything would be done best if nothing were done about it

. . . . The nature of man plus ingenious participational mechanisms would release man to develop his highest potential (and he would do so), while the government would be prevented from controlling any of society's cultural functions.

This is a description of the traditional American Way, although shorn of the self-flattering rhetoric which usually accompanies such statements. Its accuracy may be measured by the uncomfortable feelings it produces in the reader. But even Americans who are willing to accept in full the implied criticism are hardly ready to stand these principles on their heads and try their opposites. The basic response, as Mr. Wheeler says, is "visceral"—a painful wondering if it is really possible that "Nature" has let us down.

Yet full credit must be given to this reluctance. It may come from something far sounder than irrational fear of "change." Inadequate as Nature has proved in providing a Limit, the problem of a proper alternative remains. There is an entirely reasonable suspicion that the weaknesses of both God and Nature in setting a limit to power did not arise in these august sources at all, but came rather from the State masquerading as the one or the other. Even if there is candor in arguing that since the state is going to set the limits anyhow, it might as well be done openly, without pretense, and with some chance of doing it well, this proposition has small appeal. Almost nobody is ready to believe that by some miracle the State can become wise, impartial, and just. When did it ever do this?

Is it absolutely certain that we can't get Nature back into the picture? The answer must be that it seems so. When we look at the fruits of our freedom in terms of the all-encompassing technological arrangements that have grown up around us, and the ensuing complexity in laws and methods of regulation, one has the feeling that Nature has been forced off the scene, and will probably never return—not, at any rate, garbed in the familiar apparel of the eighteenth-century dream. And as though this dilemma were not melancholy enough, Mr. Wheeler has the following diagnosis to add:

. . . on none of the major issues of today's political problems can we look to the common man for a rational solution. The problems are too complex for his inevitably limited knowledge; the deeper issues involving prudence and wisdom never reach him. The contemporary picture of the American electorate is one of a vast, amorphous reservoir of mass political emotion. The state of this emotion can be tapped accurately by public-opinion polling devices. The reservoir can be manipulated by suitable emotional appeals, channeled through the mass media. As an issue arises, each candidate jockeys for primacy in the opinion-formation process in an effort to see that the mass media reflect his own position. This cannot be achieved through rational appeals, and so it must be achieved emotionally. The method is to stigmatize as fearful, dangerous, and alien the position one opposes; to give emotional patriotic coloration to the position one supports; and to do everything possible to see that the mass media express this bias. If this happens the post-audit opinion polls will successfully record these carefully instilled prejudices and policies. The successful candidate then triumphantly announces them as the rational democratic will of the people.

A more devastating degradation of the democratic dogma would be difficult to find, for what the process achieves is of course precisely the opposite of our democratic belief. It enhances the position of those willing to resort to this new style of mass-media demagoguery and works to the suppression of rationality in politics. The responsible candidate who wishes to present the issues rationally is faced with a cruel choice. He must choose between his personal integrity as a responsible democratic leader interested in enhancing the rationality of the democratic process and his conviction that the

interests of the people can be served only if he emotionalizes the position he believes to be sound, inducing them to follow the course of reason by manipulative appeals to the irrational. To be a successful democratic leader he must, like his opponents, become a demagogue.

For a man who has a socio-political remedy in mind, in the form of intelligent planning with constitutional changes to accommodate and guide, Mr. Wheeler seems pretty adept at painting himself into a corner, for it is difficult to see how any intelligent political reforms can get under way if the situation is as he describes it. Yet the analysis is completely impartial, putting all the rest of us there in the corner with him. Not only a law of diminishing returns, but one of entropy from the misuse of reason, has overtaken the political process. What else can you say about a politics in which ignorance and naïveté are dubbed in to take the place of freedom?

Mr. Wheeler has a further illustration of how Nature nods. Under the benign tolerance of the Happiness through More Goods principle, Detroit has generated the capacity to make about nine million cars a year. This means that the marketing and servicing facilities of the nation must adjust to Detroit's maniacal production. Purchasing power must be maintained to keep up with this extraordinary feat of Nature's; and not only this—

. . . streets, highways, freeways, and parking lots must be changed and expanded in perfect unison, as if they were the last stage in Detroit's assembly lines. This means that cities and suburbs must be of a certain type. Houses must have half as much room for cars as they do for people. Air pollution intensifies and with it the death rate from respiratory diseases rises. . . . In making individual purchases of personal automobiles Americans are engaging in actions that add up to a "decision" to have an auto-based culture. This was a decision that no one made. It is the other side of the "unseen hand." Ours is an economy that produces a chaotic cultural system automatically, "as if misguided by an unseen hand."

Well, Mr. Wheeler sounds completely right again, but you can hear the swelling chorus, "My family *needs* three cars—I don't care *what* Mr.

Mumford says—and I'd like to see anybody take them away from me!"

Maybe not tomorrow, but soon, is conceivably the right answer. Expropriation may come, not by the reformist machinations of either city or economic planners, but from some inglorious kind of total collapse. And maybe planning will finally come in the same way that it often comes in private enterprise—in the form of a state-appointed receiver in bankruptcy.

The question that no one seems willing to ask—and is probably, therefore, of the greatest importance—has to do with the assumption that we have been working to death ever since the eighteenth century. It is the validity of the equation—Good equals Happiness equals Goods. Suppose it is wrong, not true, or only true up to a point, and that freedom to decide what that point is survives only when people find the *right* point for themselves. And that if they don't or won't, they cannot possibly remain free.

This is an openly metaphysical question. It suggests that Natural Law may not have failed us, but that we have read only half—the lesser half—of the Book of Nature. If we are suffocated by a superfluity of goods, embarrassed by a maldistribution of them, and dragooned into a neon-lit production/consumption line that breaks down unless everybody keeps in step, then it is just possible that our Happiness Boys ideology is what is really at fault. (Planners, alas, can do practically nothing with this conclusion, and are inclined to ignore it entirely.)

If you add to Mr. Wheeler's analysis the well-nigh endless discouragements of the cultural sociologists, the social psychologists and various other brilliant but unclassifiable scholars, including, say, Riesman, Fromm, Kahler, Marcuse, Henri, Maslow, Goodman, Holt, and dozens more, you get the overwhelming impression that people are not only put upon by their "system," but that they are also very sick of themselves and what they are doing with their lives. A more efficient "management" isn't going to help them

much; while, on the other hand, offers by planners to take charge of their "happiness" and dole it out according to some wise collective rule will only add rage to their *anomie*. Plain living and high thinking has not been a bureaucratic counsel since Calvin's Geneva, and the *or else* mode of persuasion has never worked very well. It doesn't even work in Vietnam.

This is a way of saying that if we want our freedom, we shall have to find a "limit" in ourselves. And if, today, the choices we have to make as free men are too complicated for anyone but master-mind specialists to solve, and if these specialists, when they get around to it, will probably ask the Computer what God or Nature would recommend in a fix like ours, why, then, we shall have to begin to boycott all choices which are not humanly scaled. The instinct to have things simple was sound enough; we just didn't give any attention to keeping them that way. Nature will only limit those who limit themselves.

And that's what the planners might try to do, if they are serious about helping the human race. They might exert themselves to learn how to set problems that other people will be *able* to solve, instead of trying to prove that things have gone too far in the wrong direction and the experts must now take over.

This would be the most starry-eyed of utopian moralism, were it not for the fact that a lot of people are beginning to think along these lines. And it isn't moralism when you start living in your own way because you feel you must, and not because anyone says you ought to. Gradually, the pursuit of happiness is getting some new definitions, and they are not of a sort you can put into the machine.

How can planners plan without getting ahead of the individual decision-making process? We don't know. We only know that that's the only kind of plans human beings can use and remain human beings. But some things—maybe you can call them "plans"—are crystal clear. First, we must get rid of war. We must work seriously to

abolish national sovereignty, decentralize government power, and put all the money we'll save from doing this into the kind of education people will naturally want when these major accomplishments are on the way. By that time, most likely, some intelligent planning won't be a threat to anybody, because people will be using their freedom so fully that it will have become quite impossible to take it away.

REVIEW

GERMANY—EAST AND WEST

IT is probably not as easy as one thinks to determine the impartiality of a writer from the internal evidence of what he writes, yet since this is often the only means available, you do what you can. On this basis, Peter Lust's *The Two Germanies* (Harvest House paperback, Montreal, Canada, 1966) gets a pretty high mark. A German-born journalist who works for a German-language Canadian newspaper, Mr. Lust sounds like that old-time breed of reporters who, when they go to work, have allegiance only to the principles of their craft.

Canada trades with East Germany. Mr. Lust's paper, the *Montrealer Nachrichten*, has long been subject to economic pressure because its editor, Mario von Brentani, a man "brought up in the old German social-democratic tradition," insists that Bonn does not have the exclusive right to speak for the German people. As Mr. Lust put it:

He was the only German language editor who had for many years printed news stories from both East and West Germany. He had accepted advertising for the Leipzig Fair, East Germany's largest annual trade exhibition. His editorial policy raised eyebrows in West German circles. It started many heated phone calls from the West German consulate to the *Nachrichten* editorial desk. Business concerns controlled or influenced by the West German Government would dangle lucrative contracts before Brentani's eyes, then abruptly withdraw them. But the *Nachrichten* policy remained unchanged. Reports from both states; refusal to join the fashionable one-sided lament about the Berlin wall; rejection of the Federal Republic's claim to sole German representation.

Apparently because of this policy an invitation to visit East Germany came to Mr. Lust in June of last year. He decided to go, and to spend the same amount of time—three weeks—in West Germany. The East Germans made no objection to this, so, on July 4, 1965, he flew to Frankfurt, West Germany's port of entry. Any

idea that this writer is out to sway his readers toward the East German criticism of West German policies soon dissolves. The main claim against West Germany is that it is a neo-Nazi state that has given employment to many former Nazis. Mr. Lust is not overly impressed by this charge. He shows that there is more than one way to look at the undeniable facts of the case, yet also shows understanding of East German feeling. An entire chapter is devoted to looking at the past and present of Erwin Schule, a former Nazi Party member who now heads the West German War Crimes Investigating Office. Mr. Lust interviewed him and reports what the liberal *Der Spiegel* had to say about him. On the general question of neo-Nazism, the author says:

West Germany is a basically conservative state using Anglo-Saxon principles of self-government, slightly altered to fit German needs. A few Nazis and Nazi-infested areas remain; they are not strong enough to exercise any appreciable influence on the conduct of the government. Bonn is not ruled by the principles of Adolph Hitler. It is ruled by the principles of the old Weimar parties of the centre and the conservative right—by ideas that could have stemmed from the brains of Bruening or Hugenberg, the leaders of the pre-Hitler Centre and Conservative parties. The amazing lack of political imagination of present-day West Germany is the consequence of the unspoken cooperation between the three political parties for the purpose of conducting a firm, uncompromising policy against the GDR [East Germany].

A few highly-placed officials do have a Nazi past. Most of these men are opportunists; they had served the Weimar Republic; when Hitler came to power, they became Nazis. When the Allies set up their military government, they put themselves at their conquerors' disposal. Today they work for the Federal Republic. A few of the older officials had served the Kaiser in their younger days. Should there ever be another change of government, they would undoubtedly change their position again. Since Nazism has fallen into disrepute, most of these men are desperately anxious to hide their Nazi past. The danger that these men could work openly for a re-establishment of Nazi aims or principles is remote. East Berlin's hysterical reaction against their very existence appears unjustified. The employment or non-employment of these "old Nazis" therefore

becomes an issue of political ethics, but its bearing on everyday political events can be exaggerated.

Mr. Lust remarks that there are unrepentant Nazis in West Germany, but mostly in small towns and villages. Their influence, he says, "remains strong in the expelled organizations, and only in connection with these groups does Nazism remain potentially dangerous." A broader comment gives ground for pessimism concerning a unified Germany:

The shrill dialogue between the two German states reaches crescendo force every time the Nazi issue is mentioned. One of East Germany's major complaints is that Bonn has never denazified its civil service. This complaint is basically correct. I mentioned that the former Nazi association of these civil servants is rarely dangerous to the cause of democracy. But the constant reminders from the East fill the hearts of these ex-Nazis with fear and apprehension. They are afraid of East Berlin's revelations of their past. They had done their very best to hide their political skeletons in their closets. The GDR's very existence constitutes a mortal danger to these people. Their collective fear gives further strength to Bonn's wish to eradicate the GDR.

It might lend perspective on this situation to imagine a smaller, independent Russian state as existing on the borders of the USSR, which angrily keeps reminding the Soviet rulers of the now admitted crimes which they agreed to and participated in while under Stalin's thumb. They now condemn Stalin, of course, just as the West Germans condemn Hitler, but how does one prove one's "sincerity" in such cases? Proof is quite impossible, creating a situation which lacks rational measure, a problem that only time can solve.

In his Foreword, Mr. Lust says:

After I had completed my trip I disagreed with both Western and Eastern public opinion. Both states are still basically German with all the good and bad qualities associated with the German character. Each government fears the allegedly aggressive attempt of the other and these fears are real, the two parts of a once united country have started a cold war of their own. . . .

During the seventy-five years of its existence, a unified Germany started two world wars. The German people have contributed much to man's progress—whenever the country was divided. The golden age of German letters, the era of her greatest philosophers and composers reigned before 1870, the year of German unification. German unity has indeed been an unhappy experience for mankind. This is the reason why the two German states may not be reunited in our lifetime.

One suspects Mr. Lust believes we're all better off because they're divided, but whether or not this is so, one may question the habit of thinking that divided states ought to be rejoined on some vague moral principle of "national unity." In a period when most intelligent people want nationalism to decline, what is the advantage in "national unity"?

The section on East Germany is by far the most interesting part of this book, mainly because Mr. Lust converts the abstract "East Germans" into human beings. There are moments of high humor—mostly the author's, since he was involved in an extremely humorless situation—but he certainly succeeds in giving an extremely humanizing portrait of the East Germans. In addition, one learns how flexible economic arrangements can be under the stereotype of "Communism," and it may come as a surprise to some readers to learn that East Germany is now moderately prosperous, causing many who had fled to the West to return. "Their main reason for defection," Mr. Lust says, "was the higher West German wages which they accumulated and saved." Then they went back to "the GDR where in terms of the low controlled prices of consumer goods they had a small fortune."

An interchange between the writer and the manager of an East German agricultural cooperative (LPG) shows the importance of going behind ideological stereotypes. After the manager had answered various questions about the workings of the co-op, he said that through it the farmers' average income had been tripled. Proudly he asked Mr. Lust, "What do you think of our socialist community now?"

This was the reply:

"I think it is great. You have applied Western economic principles with excellent results. Your LPG is neither socialist nor is it a commune. It is an efficient joint-stock company run almost entirely by standards acceptable to any Western businessman. Naturally, it is efficient!" The manager looked at me with an air of astonishment. "What are you saying? We exploit nobody. We are a socialist enterprise!" "I did not say you were exploiting anybody. On the contrary. But you have organized many individual owners into a more efficient cooperative organization. This enables you to make better use of existing facilities. Because your individual owners have pooled resources you have become more successful. My compliments, sir! Your farmers will probably be happy. They still own their land and their income has risen—thanks to your adaptation of our systems of combines and trusts. Your socialist commune *Neues Leben* is a miniature joint stock company based on the West's proven methods of raising production." "I won't even answer this absolute nonsense!" My host withdrew into silence. But I sensed that my remarks had not entirely missed their mark.

COMMENTARY TO CORRECT RIGIDITY

THIS week's "Children" article, concerned with how rigid children are shaped by authoritarian parents, goes to the core of most of the major problems of mankind. It illuminates, for example, the origins of the *apartheid* madness of the South Africans, as described with thoroughness and understanding in a recent issue of *Time*, and it applies equally to the roots of racism in the American South and wherever else it appears. The key to the extreme difficulty in altering rigid attitudes lies in their close association with righteousness and "morality." As Penelope Leach says:

Authoritarian parents are not unloving, rejecting, or cruel. Like the vast majority of parents, they do what they consider best for their children. But the authoritarian adult is the kind of person whose view of the social world is extremely highly structured, and the structure is very much based on considerations of power, of strength, of in-groups and out-groups.

The education of a child, Francisco Ferrer once said, must begin with his grandfather. So, to get rid of rigidity in adults, it is necessary to eliminate the shaping influences which are likely to produce these attitudes in the next generation. The mandate is clear: Loose, flexible views of the social world, solutions in which power plays a secondary and ever-diminishing role, and little or no reliance on group-attitudes, group-beliefs, and good/bad group distinctions. Movements which these policies weaken are movements which *should* be weakened, since they can produce only rigidity. And whatever expedient arguments may be made in behalf of rigidity, the main criticism is not reduced at all: Rigidity turns every anticipation of evil from others into a self-fulfilling prophecy, since it spawns a counter-rigidity wherever it turns. And so the seeing of matured evil and the wars to put an end to it go on.

No sudden illumination will make the men of the world recognize this. No more than a rigid

child can they change all at once. That pushing them only hardens them seems the most painful truth of all. That they must be pushed, or we shall seem to do nothing, is the natural response. A kind of pushing that will do the least harm in creating counter-rigidities was what Gandhi sought, and found, in the idea of non-violence. This is action which, while uncompromising, labors unceasingly for a more enlightened view of what men "consider best."

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

THE RIGID CHILD

[This article by Penelope Leach is reprinted (somewhat condensed) by permission from *Anarchy* No. 64. *Anarchy* is a monthly magazine published by Freedom Press, 17a Maxwell Road, London, S.W. 6, England. Annual subscription, \$3.50.]

I HAVE been studying intellectual, social, and emotional rigidity in children who have had a certain kind of upbringing which I will call authoritarian upbringing.

Rigidity is really a pathological form of a normal human mechanism. All human beings select and filter the stimuli that they take from the outside world. We have to do this; otherwise we could not function at all. If you walked into a room and you actually perceived everything about that room, you would be so busy perceiving it that you would have no time to function as a human being. But there is a particular pathological kind of selection and filtering which is what we call rigidity. The "rigid" individual goes through life using only a minute part of his environment, refusing to accept, to see, to hear, to recognize many of the things which go on around him. What makes this pathological is that, rather than being something which the individual does in the interests of efficiency, this is something that he does in the interests of defending himself against stimuli which he finds alarming, upsetting, frightening in some way. Most rigid individuals do not know that they are rigid: you cannot know that you are ignoring something if you do not see it.

Psychologists have studied various aspects of rigidity. Some of them have said that rigidity does not exist as an entity; others have implied that it does. So what I did was to use, and in some cases to devise, testing situations for assessing this kind of reaction in emotional situations, in social situations, in problem-solving, and so forth. One of the tests involved presenting eleven-year-old

children with a large number of everyday objects—things like matchboxes, tins of soup, or balls of knitting wool. The children were asked to sort these out to make groups in any way that seemed to them logical. Most children started by sorting these objects according to their functions: they would put toys together, eating utensils together, and so on. When they had done this I would say "Right, that's fine—that's a perfectly good way of classifying them. Now think of another way." The point was that these objects could also be sorted by such things as colour, material, other abstract classifications; but only by cutting across the sorting by function. The non-rigid children tended to have no difficulty with this at all. They would at once put the red objects together, and so on. The extremely rigid children not only could not do this, but in some instances could not even recognize it. I would put a red apple, a red ball of knitting wool, a red tin of soup together, and say "Do these go together in any way at all?" One child said: "No, they can't go together—I mean the knitting wool must go with mother's things. The apple is for eating."

Another test concerned the making of moral judgments. Here I used a series of rules which I established from the pilot work were general in the lives of these children. One, for instance, was the rule that you must not talk to strangers in the street, which is almost universal among London primary-school children. I presented cartoon pictures to the children which showed a child of roughly the same age-group breaking this rule for a reason which any parent in the sample would have ratified. This particular picture was of an old lady who had fallen down in the street and dropped her shopping all over the pavement, and a child saying "Can I help you pick them up? Are you all right?"—a piece of behaviour to which any mother would have said "Yes, that's right, that's nice considerate behaviour." Rigid children would tend to say "Oh, she shouldn't have done that. You mustn't talk to strangers in the street! It's a rule!," where the non-rigid children would say

"Ah, but this is different: this is a poor old lady who has fallen down. She's harmless."

As far as general life situations go, obviously rules for behaviour have a value, particularly with young children. But—this is a personal view—I do not think you can give children rules which will genuinely cover every behavioural situation. You may be able to give them rules for ways of thinking about things which will cover every situation. But if you try to teach them a rule for everything, the system is going to break down. They must generalize.

The origins of this kind of rigid behaviour seem to lie in early upbringing. In the normal process, by which a child turns from a purely egocentric being into a socialized person, the system seems to work something like this: Gradually, in the first few months of life, he begins to realize that some of his gratification, which is the only thing he is concerned with, is dependent not only on his mother but, through his mother, on his own behavior. In other words, there are some kinds of behaviour in him which lead her to behave in a way that he likes. This is, if you like, the beginning of differentiation of himself from his mother. In a normal situation, where the relationship between the two of them is close and affectionate, he will gradually maximize those behaviours which have this effect, and gradually minimize those that work the other way. Extremely rigid children seem to experience something slightly different. Mothers of rigid children tend to set for the child expectations of behaviour which are much too high for his own development level. They tend to present the child with concepts which he is not sufficiently mature to understand at all. For example, a mother who tries to teach a two-year-old to be "clean" is presenting him with something impossibly difficult to understand. She is really saying: "I would like you to use your pot, rather than your pants. I would like you to try to keep your clothes clean, which means something about play. I wish you would not throw sand all over the kitchen floor,

but"—for some extraordinarily incomprehensible reason—"I mind much more when I've swept it, than I do when I haven't." She is linking all these into an amorphous concept, which is cleanliness.

For a child, whose greatest anxiety—and this is important to remember—is to please, this means that he has to strive to come up to this kind of requirement from his mother. If he cannot meet what he wants because he does not understand it, then her love, which comes through pleasing her, begins to seem unattainable for the child, which increases the anxiety level. Probably the only way that he can cope with this situation is to learn to dichotomize each individual thing that he does into what she likes and what she does not like, and this becomes what is right and what is wrong, what is black and what is white. He loses the ability to generalize, to understand a concept rather than a specific action.

This kind of upbringing goes with a syndrome which we call authoritarianism. Authoritarian parents are not unloving, rejecting, or cruel. Like the vast majority of parents, they do what they consider to be the best for their children. But the authoritarian adult is the kind of person whose view of the social world is extremely highly structured, and the structure is very much based on considerations of power, of strength, of in-groups and out-groups. It is a very black-and-white picture of the social world, so that there tends to be a complete acceptance of the *mores* of his own group, and, with that, a complete rejection of those of other groups. One of the manifestations of this is prejudice: colour-prejudice, anti-semitic prejudice—all these things tend to go with authoritarianism.

Such a personality, which rejects what is different—what does not have its own values—brings its attitudes to child-rearing, as well as to everything else. If you have this preoccupation with power, and with what is socially right and wrong, this extreme conventionality, you tend to see your children as something very different from yourself in the first place, and as something which

must be moulded in a deliberate way, to be as like you as possible as quickly as possible. You are teaching them how to behave, rather than teaching them how to make their own little space without impinging on the space of other people.

One mother, for instance, said to me, quite kindly: "In bringing up children obedience is the first essential. I'm older than the children. They must learn to respect what I say. They must learn to do what I say. This is the only way I can save them from the world." If you think about this, it is like somebody leading a pet dog through a dangerous jungle; it is not like one human being talking with another human being. Whereas another mother from a non-authoritarian group said: "It's very difficult to say what you should do with children, because really anything you can find that makes things easier and pleasanter for you will be good for them. I just take it easy with my children, and it works."

I have tested a great many children for rigidity, and it was the rigid children who tended to have highly authoritarian mothers; and vice versa. It therefore seems as if the kind of upbringing typical of authoritarian parents tends to produce children who use these rigid defence-mechanisms. While we are not sure what results we are trying to achieve in child-rearing and are therefore seldom in a position to tell parents exactly how to bring up their children, I think it is fair to assume that both authoritarianism and rigidity are undesirable.

It is difficult to say what can be done about this. Authoritarian and rigid individuals are the very ones that you cannot reach by reason. I have seen a kindergarten teacher faced with a very rigid five-year-old, who has been taught to keep her clothes clean and cannot paint or play with clay, kindly reassuring her that "really, Janet, nobody will be cross, if—" and so on: without realizing that by doing this she is simply putting herself further and further beyond the pale. The child knows that it is wrong to get dirty. It is saying to itself, "This is an adult. Why is she telling me to

do wrong things?" A much more gradual process has to take place. Some research going on at the moment seems to show that although the foundations of rigidity are in the early family, the school environment can have some effect on the extent of rigidity in the children. In other words, a very child-oriented, liberal school tends to produce fewer very rigid children than the more normal authoritarian kind of school. This makes a certain amount of sense in this way: authoritarian parents tend to set great store by school performance; rigid children are therefore encouraged to do well at school, to adopt the school, to accept it. Therefore, it may be that if they are being encouraged to accept a very liberal atmosphere, this will gradually have some effect in weakening the rigid boundaries of their thinking. And, of course, the fewer rigid children we have in our schools now, the fewer authoritarian parents we shall have producing rigid children in the next generation.

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FRONTIERS

The Psychology of Social Morality

IGNORING or trying to ignore—the color of another man's skin in behalf of the social ideals of justice and equality may be a very fine thing to do, but ignoring the psychological effects of attitudes which have accumulated in both white- and dark-skinned peoples over two or three centuries may be a blind and even a self-righteous folly. This is a conclusion likely to be reached from a reading of the "Black Power" position paper of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), portions of which were published by the *New York Times* for Aug. 5. The paper contains fundamental insights which can hardly be identified as "black nationalism," unless nationalism means a striving for integrity and wholeness by people who happen to be black, and who have been denied the circumstances under which these qualities are commonly realized or expressed, only because they are black. The "racial" character of this declaration is a function of what, historically, has been done to black people. Following is a passage from the SNCC paper:

If people must express themselves freely, there has to be a climate in which they can do this. If blacks feel intimidated by whites, then they are not liable to vent the rage they feel about whites in the presence of the whites—especially not the black people whom we are trying to organize, i.e., the broad masses of black people. A climate has to be created whereby blacks can express themselves. The reason that whites must be excluded is not that one is anti-white, but because the efforts that one is trying to achieve cannot succeed because whites have an intimidating effect. Oftimes the intimidating effect is in direct proportion to the amount of degradation that black people have suffered at the hands of white people.

It might be argued that this may be true enough for whites who think their security depends upon intimidating blacks, but how can it apply to the whites who really want to help? One answer to this might be that the whites who want to go into the South to help the Negroes to

organize are not, despite their profound sincerity, quite the Christs they would like to be. For it takes a Christ—or someone like a Christ—to no longer feel grateful, deep down inside, that he is white. In other words, to be able to completely obliterate racial memories and cultural instincts from oneself amounts to a capacity for identification that probably only a handful of people in the world are equal to; and meanwhile, to expect others not to be weakened by this failure of identification, however inward or subtle, is to ask *them* to behave like Christs. They can't do it either, and it is foolish to expect it and arrogant to ask it.

Such an argument may seem to have the flavor of ingratitude for the support the Negro movement has had from deeply concerned whites. This would be a misreading of the position paper, which is not concerned with the trivia of who owes what to whom, but with the psychological necessities of Negro Americans. There is also the point with which the following argument begins:

It must be offered that white people who desire change in this country should go where that problem [of racism] is most manifest. The problem is not in the black community. The white people should go into white communities where the whites have created power for the express [purpose] of denying blacks human dignity and self-determination. Whites who come into the black community with ideas of change seem to want to absolve the power structure of its responsibility for what it is doing, and to be saying that change can come only through black unity, which is only the worst kind of paternalism. This is not to say that whites have not had an important role in the movement. In the case of Mississippi, their role was the very key in that they helped give blacks the right to organize, but that role is now over, and it should be.

People have the right to picket, the right to give out leaflets the right to vote, the right to demonstrate, the right to print.

These things which revolve around the right to organize have been accomplished mainly because of the entrance of white people into Mississippi, in the summer of '64. Since these goals have been accomplished, their [the whites'] role in the movement has now ended. What does it mean if

black people, once having the right to organize, are not allowed to organize themselves? It means that blacks' ideas about inferiority are being reinforced. Shouldn't people be able to organize themselves? Blacks should be given this right. Further [white participation] means in the eyes of the black community that whites are the "brains" behind the movement and blacks cannot function without whites. This only serves to perpetuate existing attitudes within the existing society, i.e., blacks are "dumb," "unable to take care of business," etc. Whites are "smart," the "brains" behind everything. . . .

Indigenous leadership cannot be built with whites in the positions they hold now.

These facts do not mean that whites cannot help. They can participate on a voluntary basis. We can contract work out to them, but in no way can they participate on a policy-making level.

The charge may be made that we are racists, but whites who are sensitive to our problems will realize that we must determine our own destiny.

The foregoing is only a small part of the New York *Times* version, but sufficient to show that the position paper is a treatise on educational and cultural psychology, founded in experience and inspired by necessity. One could without much difficulty take the view that the initial help given by whites was a kind of "pump-priming" activity, and that along with the integrity of genuine Negro self-determination will come that sense of freedom and uncompromised decision which will make it possible for both Negroes and whites to forget the past and what has divided the races in the past. Obviously, this cannot result from moral sentiment, but only because the new present will be filled with so many independent, self-vindicating activities that the past will be pushed out of sight.

The nonviolent solutions to unjust situations to which so many men of all races aspire are not panaceas which make it possible to ignore the basic psychological understanding this paper reveals. A nonviolent man is a man who comes very close to total psychological independence. For the moral strength of nonviolence to be real, it has to be an expression of free choice. As a resort

of weakness, a new kind of piety, or as a cover for unexamined insecurities, it will hardly have the qualities of which Gandhi spoke. A man has to feel his own human dignity before the high meaning of nonviolence can be embodied in his life, and the steps to realization of human dignity involve practical activities of which Gandhi was well aware and of which he spoke as "constructive work." But however all this applies to the Negro movement, its need to test and use its own strength is at issue in this paper, and the question of collaboration between the races to create a better society can be settled only on the basis of a realized equality.

The "black power" paper is concerned with the need of Negroes to develop out of the struggle of the present a sense of independent being which is entirely their own—a specific rejection of the reason for the isolation imposed on them by others. Obviously, they have to make this rejection by themselves, or it won't count. This is not "anti-white," but plain common sense. We don't have to worry about men who prove to themselves their integrity and independence becoming anti-anything.

Meanwhile, the whites have their own kind of "proving" to do. The position paper states:

It must also be pointed out that on whatever level of contact that blacks and whites come together, that meeting or confrontation is not on the level of blacks but always on the level of the whites. This only means that our everyday contact with whites is a reinforcement of white supremacy. Whites are the ones who must try to raise themselves to our humanistic level. We are not, after all, the ones who are responsible for a genocidal war in Vietnam; we are not the ones who are responsible for neo-colonialism in Africa and Latin America; we are not the ones who held a people in animalistic bondage over 400 years. We reject the American dream as defined by white people and must work to construct an American reality defined by Afro-Americans.

This criticism must be accepted, even though nobody knows what "black power" organized into powerful national states might have done, or will do, in respect to "genocidal wars" or even

colonialism. There is a sense in which the blacks have not been tried in terms of the historical initiative which the whites have assumed and which they so bitterly misused. The position paper is the work of leaders who do indeed stand at the "humanistic level" where the terrible evils of history as made by the white race are plainly seen; and it is certainly true that such leaders of the awakening dark-skinned races want no copying of white men's crimes. As Fanon, a Negro psychiatrist, says at the end of *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove, 1966):

So, comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her.

Humanity is waiting for something other than such an imitation which would be almost an obscene caricature.

If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.

But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.

If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe.

Moreover, if we wish to reply to the expectations of the people of Europe, it is no good sending them back a reflection, even an ideal reflection, of their society and their thought with which from time to time they feel immeasurably sickened.

For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.

These are brave words and black leaders have every right to utter them. Even if the language and the vision have in them something of the language and vision of the best men of Europe, this sharing of common humanistic ideals creates no enormous debt of Africans to "European" civilization, since it is a currency of dream, not of

historical achievement. The white thinkers and visioners have never been numerous or strong enough to determine the policies of the nation-states in which they were born. All that white men can now say to themselves is that responsibility without power is emptied of opportunity for growth, and on a par with the moralizing rhetoric which presumes to tell other people what "sacrifices" to make, how much injustice to endure, and for how long.