

ECOLOGY PLUS

TWO themes come out clearly in an article by Lewis Herber in *Anarchy 69*, the November 1966 issue of the London anarchist magazine. They are (1) that this is a time in history when human thought has exceptional opportunity to break out of old molds—is, indeed, being forced to do so; and (2) that the new thinking must embody a revolutionary kind of wholeness as its goal, involving a more inclusive study of nature than social thinkers of the past have deemed either practicable or necessary. Mr. Herber sees an expanded use of the science of ecology as answering this need. His article is filled with illustrations of ecological insights turned into guidelines of future human development. We quote first from his conclusion, concerned with parallels between the present and the Renaissance:

Our age closely resembles the Renaissance, some four centuries ago. From the time of Thomas More to that of Valentine Andrae, the breakdown of feudal society produced a strange, intermediate social zone, an indefinable epoch, when old institutions were clearly in decline and new ones had not yet arisen. The human mind, freed from the burden of tradition, acquired uncanny powers of generalization and imagination. Roaming freely and spontaneously over the entire realm of experience, it produced astonishing visions, often far transcending the material limitations of the time. Entire sciences and schools of philosophy were founded in the sweep of an essay or a pamphlet. It was a time when new potentialities had replaced the old actualities, when the general, latent with new possibilities, had replaced the burdensome particulars of feudal society, when man, stripped of traditional fetters, had turned from a transfixed creature into a vital, searching being. The established feudal classes were breaking down and, with them, nearly all the values of the medieval world. A new social mobility, a restless, almost gypsy-like yearning for change, pervaded the Western world. In time, bourgeois society crystallized out of this flux, bringing with it an entirely new body of institutions, classes, values—and chains—to replace feudal civilization. But for a time,

the world was loosening its shackles, and it still sought a destiny that was far less defined than we suppose today, with our retrospective "historical" attitudes. This world haunts us like an unforgettable dawn, richly tinted, ineffably beautiful, laden with the promise of birth.

Today, in the last half of the twentieth century, we too are living in a period of social disintegration. The old classes are breaking down, the old values are in disintegration, the established institutions—so carefully developed by two centuries of capitalist development—are decaying before our eyes. Like our Renaissance forebears, we live in an epoch of potentialities, of generalities, and we, too, are searching, seeking a direction from the first lights on the horizon. It will no longer do, I think, to ask of anarchism that it merely free itself from nineteenth-century fetters and update its theories to the twentieth century. In a time of such instability, every decade telescopes a generation of change under stable conditions. We must look even further, to the century that lies ahead; we cannot be extravagant enough in releasing the imagination of man.

It is a part of the natural development of Western thought, one may say, that social thinking now converges from many directions on the ecological viewpoint. Ecology is concerned with the relations of organisms to their environment or environments, and since there is hardly a limit to what this may mean, ecological thinking grows naturally into both a science and a philosophy of all nature, with particularized reference to the interdependencies that may be discerned. It involves, inevitably, criteria of health and well-being. Mr. Herber expresses this well:

. . . ecology deals with the balance of nature. Inasmuch as nature includes man, the science basically deals with the harmonization of nature and man. This focus has explosive implications. The explosive implications of an ecological approach arise not only from the fact that ecology is intrinsically a critical science—in fact, critical on a scale that the most radical systems of political economy failed to attain—but it is also an integrative and constructive

science. This integrative, constructive aspect of ecology, carried through to all its implications, leads directly into anarchic areas of social thought. For in the final analysis, it is impossible to achieve a harmonization of man and nature without creating a human community that lives in a lasting balance with its natural environment.

Mr. Herber now launches an extended account of the critical perspective of ecology, taking the massive symptoms of the condition of both the planet and human society for his evidence. He describes at length the spoliation of nature—the creation of deserts out of once fertile lands, the poisoning of the air by "an incalculable quantity of toxicants," the pollution of "nearly all the surface waters of the United States"—bringing the questions: "What are the conditions that have turned man into a destructive parasite? What produces a form of human parasitism that results not only in vast natural imbalances but also threatens the very existence of humanity itself?" Turning to the imbalances in social structure, in the relations of man with man, he explores at length the ills of urbanization, the reductive, manipulative devices of mass management and control of human beings, and many of the half-calculated, half-unexpected results of acquisitive enterprise, so devastating in their effect on both the quality of life and the quality of man. In summary, Mr. Herber says:

Ecology derives its critical edge not only from the fact that it alone, among all the sciences, presents this awesome message to humanity, but because it also presents this message in a new social dimension. From an ecological viewpoint, the reversal of organic evolution is the result of appalling contradictions between town and country, state and community, industry and husbandry, mass manufacture and craftsmanship, centralism and regionalism, the bureaucratic scale and the human scale. . . . The modern city and state, the massive coal-steel technology of the Industrial Revolution, the later, more rationalized systems of mass production and assembly-line systems of labour organization, the centralized nation, the state and its bureaucratic apparatus—all, have reached their limits. Whatever progressive or liberatory role they may have possessed has clearly become entirely regressive and oppressive.

They are regressive not only because they erode the human spirit and drain the community of all its cohesive solidarity and ethico-cultural standards; they are regressive from an objective standpoint, from an ecological standpoint. For they undermine not only the human spirit and the human community but also the viability of the planet and all living things on it.

What I am trying to say—and it cannot be emphasized too strongly—is that the anarchist concept of a balanced community, a face-to-face democracy, a humanistic technology, and a decentralized society—these rich libertarian concepts are not only desirable but they are also necessary. They belong not only to the great visions of man's future but they now constitute the preconditions for human survival. The process of social development has carried them from an ethical, subjective dimension into a practical, objective dimension. What was once regarded as impractical and visionary has now become practical. And what was once regarded as practical and objective has become eminently impractical and irrelevant in terms of man's development towards a fuller, unfettered existence. If community, face-to-face democracy, a humanistic, liberatory technology, and decentralization are conceived as merely reactions to the prevailing state of affairs—a vigorous "nay" to the "yea" of what exists today—a compelling, objective case can be made for the practicality of an anarchist society.

The key to Mr. Herber's indictment of "the way we live now" is in his assertion that we have reversed organic evolution. By this he means that instead of contributing to the endlessly *differentiating* and individualizing process of which evolution consists, our methods of production, environment-formation, and social organization tend toward the crudely uniform, the vulgarly levelling, with normative values and controls arrived at by quantitative measures. "All that is spontaneous, creative, and individuated is circumscribed by the standardized, the regulated, the massified." Evolution, for man, means greater individuation, the strengthening of independence balance, private judgment, resourcefulness, and self-reliant decision, yet all such qualities are stultified or frustrated by the simplifying processes on which the "efficiencies" of the present must depend.

It seems important to recognize, however, that within all these mechanistic systems of control, organic life-processes still continue. They are, one might say, the hidden realities of true human relations and behavior—hidden because difficult to define, and almost totally ignored by ideological accounts of social organization. It is this systematic neglect of the human qualities of human beings which allows manipulative theory to gain so much unchallenged authority, and which, in time, generates in people everywhere a false feeling of dependence upon precisely those external rules, laws, and artificially derived conceptions of social identity which produce the dehumanizing effect.

For example, a scheme of social control which is intrinsically based upon the prevention of abuse of power is itself an ever-present system of indoctrination in the idea that human good is possible only through the attenuation or restraint of *abuse*. This is a theory of human relations in which *conflict* is recognized as the reality principle. A social system erected on this foundation must forever seek to shore up the *guarantees* against the evil in human beings. When people talk of the virtues of cooperation, of trust, of confidence in one another, they are told that these nice ideals are all very well, but that laws must be based upon their opposites—in *the extreme case*. Thus, theoretical anticipations of the worst set the publicized norm, determining by suggestion the common human expectation of the worst. We have a good illustration of this tendency, matured to a horrifying degree, in the present domination of foreign policy by military considerations. It is the assigned business of the war college to anticipate the worst, to imagine the ultimate of breakdown in international agreements, and to provide against the most diabolical hypocrisies and betrayals of which human beings may be capable. Now the more a nation comes to rely upon the military means for its "security," the more the "plan-for-the-worst" point of view will come to control policy. In time, the idea of *trusting* anyone at all is seen as

ridiculous. And if this attitude pervades foreign policy, how can it fail to spread in attitudes toward one another at home? It follows that extremes breed extremes, until, for an increasing number of people, the only ones who can be trusted are those who exhibit the mood of *total* suspicion of everybody else.

The whole idea of contracts, law, and legal punishments and penalties needs re-examination in the light of this experience. The fact is that ordinary, decent human beings do not live their lives according to these supposedly "natural law" principles, but in spite of them. The world is filled with men who make things for other people, for whom "selling" what they make is an embarrassment, something which has to be taken care of and gotten out of the way so that they can get on to the *real* business of making the things, and making them well. For far more people than we suppose, the "cash nexus" is a kind of civil religion to which they pay a public tribute, only because of the spurious sense of obligation created in them by propaganda, but in which, deep down, they do not really believe.

Trust, cooperation, and friendly expectation of the good in others survive—as the only sources of viability we have—somewhat in the same way that elements of "health" survive in human beings despite endless misuses of the body and tensions imposed by a great many abnormal conditions.

The tragedy is that even those who struggle against "exploitation," in seeking a sure-thing way to prevent it, have adopted a mirror-image of the psychology of the exploiters, so that, in the name of humanity and freedom and justice, they circulate a theory of the control of human nature which declares the supremacy of the exploiting tendency. The demand for coercive *power*, in the last analysis, always does this. And so a vast propaganda in behalf of power sweeps into every aspect of human life, corrupting the very sources of human resistance to this betrayal, generating debilitating ambivalences and feelings of weakness—"sinfulness," in a religious context—

until, at last, total submission on the one hand, and total nihilism on the other, seem the only remaining alternatives of "action."

It is, therefore, of the highest importance to discover the inward humanity of people behind the *mores* and ideological façades and to increase our awareness of it and reliance upon it. The practice of waiting until the accumulated violations of this humanity produce gross symptoms of social failure on a *collective* scale can no longer be followed, for it has become, as Mr. Herber shows, far too expensive. This waiting also means doing nothing until the inner resources of human beings are reduced to a point where, even though they may finally acknowledge that things have gone altogether wrong, it is too late to do anything about it, since they can now feel only the impotence of failure.

Well, what might be done? We need, first, individual criteria instead of social criteria of human good. This is now self-evident. And we need to devise patterns of human relationships which ignore the suspicion/coercion dynamics of the societies relying on external control. Certain forms of organization will doubtless grow out of such attempts, but they will be purely voluntaristic affairs, wholly innocent of the techniques of power, and they will have something of the quality of those familiar forms of human effort which have no ulterior aim—play, devotion, giving, learning, and common discovery. In the context of the riches of such a life, the cash-in tendency, the acquisitive calculation, and the manipulative device will be at once identified as stupid, vulgar, and juvenile—belonging to a barbarous past. The strength of such a movement would be in its "no guarantees" principle, founded upon the same basic integrity which has contempt for "loyalty oaths" and similar such contradictions-in-terms. It would bear the pains of false starts and over-optimistic mistakes with a good heart, being well-aware that after so protracted and habitual a reliance, in theory, on the worst in human beings, time will be needed to create the reflexes,

customs, and general *esprit de corps* which may be expected to develop from relying on the good.

What if such efforts should entirely fail? Well, apart from the fact that to expect this would be adopting war-college thinking, and siding with those who claim that the good throughout history have been impractical fools, it might be said that it is better to fail in trying to be a human being than to fail because we have tried only to be something much less.

It is obvious that we cannot have a perfect society all at once. It is obvious, also, that those who decide to take a part of their lives—as much of their lives as they can—and to order it according to voluntaristic principles of trust and cooperation, will not succeed if they show overt contempt and strike poses of moral superiority toward the mechanistic, externally controlled society which rules the majority in so many more-than-necessary respects. There is a lot of death and destruction and failure in nature. The relation of conscious, intelligent beings such as men to these processes is far from clear. Yet the fact is that in nature, these processes often seem also to release and foster a more abundant life. This is an aspect of nature we hardly understand at all, and our death-dealing capacities are plainly unnatural. The combination of strength and determination with an honest humility is not a common one for human beings, but it may be essential to whatever future is possible for the human enterprise.

REVIEW

ART AND THE TIMES

BOTH the simplicities and the complexities which go to make up a work of art are revealed in Ben Shahn's *The Biography of a Painting* (Grossman Paraphoric, 1966, \$3.95). The occasion for the book was the attack of an art critic, who claimed to see in "Allegory," a painting by Shahn, the themes of alien ideological propaganda. What may have started out as a kind of self-defense by the artist soon becomes something very different—an almost total recall of the broodings, memories, personal symbolisms, tentative feelings of direction, self-criticisms, and, finally, the confirmed and vindicated sense of what must be done. The silly charge of the critic falls away and is lost in the wonderful tapestry of the artist's affirmation.

Ben Shahn writes well, as readers of his book, *The Shape of Content* (Vintage), will remember. Perhaps the most interesting thing about this story behind a painting is its account of the changes in the artist's own attitudes—how, in time, he found himself repelled by "social" conceptions, rejecting statistical generalities, and cleaving to intensities which were entirely his own, and yet, by this means, evolving another order of generality—the free universals, you might call them, of the unconfined but disciplined activities of the human spirit itself. The following passage reveals a theme in Shahn's introspective searchings:

The subconscious may greatly shape one's art, undoubtedly it does so. But the subconscious cannot create art. The very act of making a painting is an intending one; thus to intend and at the same time to relinquish intention is a hopeless contradiction, albeit one that is exhibited on every hand.

But the great failure of all such art, at least in my own view, lies in the fact that man's most able self is his conscious self—his intending self. The psychological view can at best, even assuming it to be accurate, tell us what man is in spite of himself. It may perhaps discover those animal motives which are said to lurk beneath the human ones. It may unmask selfish purposes lying within altruism. It may even be able to reveal primitive psychological states underneath the claims and achievements of

philosophy—the brute beneath the intellect. But the value of man, if he has any at all, resides in his intentions, in the degree to which he has moved from the brute, in his intellect at its peak and in his humanity at its peak.

One has the impression, from Ben Shahn's description of the inner struggle of the artist to do the very best he can, that he is forever invoking the presence within himself of a double canon—some kind of merger or synchronization between a virtually unknowable law of universal proportions and his own, individual sense of basic symmetries—the result of this union, when successful, being an original, unduplicatable work of art.

Mr. Shahn speaks deprecatingly here of the psychological view, as well he may, if this view be limited to the analytical, anatomizing reductions of man to a centerless assemblage of psychic dynamics, but there is being born in psychology, today, a view of the human being which has much in common with the view disclosed by the artist by his own self-discovery, and in which the role of "objective science" is recognized as that of critic, as framer and some times the balancer of the creative surge, but never its master. As Frank Barron has put it, "The concepts of discipline, responsibility, and committed enduring attention are all too often left out of account in descriptions of the creative process," and this, we may say, results from the critical functions having been hidden by the *art*, which succeeds by resolving the contradiction between deliberation, the idea of limit, and freedom, inspiration, and spontaneity. This whole drama of resolution of opposites into artistic form is the subject-matter of Mr. Shahn's book. He lays great stress on the importance of the uncompromising critic within the artist mainly to press home the point that this is the principle of control to which the artist must hearken, as contrasted with the external limits set by the academy and the dictates of mediocrity and convention.

There seems a clear parallel, here, between the artist and the seeker for religious truth. As Irving Babbitt has remarked: "True religious vision is a process of concentration, the result of imposition of the veto power upon the expansive desires of the

ordinary self." The problem of what to veto, what to leave free, what to make sharp, what to make diffuse—how, in short, to make an act of restraint serve also as an act of release—is indeed the secret ordeal of the artist, the source of both his pain and his triumph. The very great have so successfully united discipline with inspiration that the two work together in a unity that seems entirely spontaneous, obliging us to recognize a climactic touch in the simplest, most unpretentious drawing. Here, we say, is the hand of a master, at which we may marvel, but can hardly explain.

One recalls, inevitably, while reading Mr. Shahn, the less organized and less self-conscious, but deeply moving writing of Marc Chagall in his essay, "Why Have We Become so Anxious?" (Reprinted in MANAS for April 14, 1965), the letters of Van Gogh, and certain prose passages of Rilke and Valéry—not because of any close resemblances in what is said, but for the enormous sense of human responsibility that seems natural to the practicing artist. At issue is the difference between the living ideas of disciples of the muse and the commentaries of "theologians"—the critics who make existential questions into matters of scholastic dispute. One longs for the day when, not by external rule, but from innate cultural consensus, only artists will write about art. A critic may himself be an artist, of course, and in this case his capacity will be evident.

Something ought to be said about the exceptional quality of the book itself. *The Biography of a Painting* is a large paperback with the text written in long hand by Mr. Shahn, illustrated by a color reproduction of "Allegory" and by dozens of other paintings, line drawings and prints by Mr. Shahn. There is a sense in which the exacting disciplines of modern lithography have been "internalized" into an extension of the artist's intentions, merging in his idiom and becoming as invisible as Mr. Shahn's "technique." This is in key with Buckminster Fuller's view of the right use of technology—when form *really* follows function, what goes into it attains to a kind of invisibility.

Similar virtues attend two other Paragraphic books issued by Grossman—one of which is a

photographic study of Pablo Casals at work, with a text made up of the comments of musicians who have worked with him for much of their lives (pictures by Vytas Valaitis, text edited by Theodore Strongin). Here, again, one encounters the moral sensibility, the principled life, of the great artist. It will be difficult for the enjoyer of these pictures to resist his impulse to hear, once again, or perhaps for the first time, the music made by this great cellist.

The third Paragraphic volume is devoted to the photographs of David Seymour, known to his friends and admirers as "Chim" (a contraction of the Polish pronunciation of his family name, Szymin). Chim was born in 1911; he died as a result of machine-gun fire at the crisis of Suez in 1956. All Europe and America were the field of his activities, and after you have looked at his pictures, the question of whether photography is an "art," if not settled, is rendered irrelevant. Someone has said that photography is the art of the "selective eye," and this seems exactly right. The text, by Elliott Erwitt, has this passage:

Though he was a true professional photographer and a painstaking one, Chim would often smile at the pretensions of some of his colleagues. He decried visual gimmicks in photography and illusions of grandeur on the part of photographers. When someone talked on for hours about his "art" Chim grew bored. "All you need," he once said as a noted photographer orated on the psychology behind one of his pictures, "is a little bit of luck and enough muscle to click the shutter."

The pictures, like an invisible, wandering eye, scan the wonder, the horror, the pathos, and the hope of the times. Chim knew many of the great and caught them in both action and repose, but most of all the human qualities of the humble, in all their diverse simplicity, attracted his lens. The last picture in the book, of a mother and child in a Kibbutz nursery, seems a well of all the tenderness and good in human beings.

COMMENTARY

THE RESTIVE PRESS

THE *Saturday Evening Post*, hardly a "radical" organ, had this to say in a recent editorial:

The essence of democracy is that the citizens of a nation shall have the right to vote on the major issues confronting them. The essence of our tragedy in Vietnam is that no such right has even been exercised, either in Vietnam or the United States. In South Vietnam, where the last elected leader was murdered three years ago, our 36-year-old protégé, Marshal Ky, recently presided over an "election" that provided only for "respectable" candidates to join in writing a still unwritten constitution. In our country, where the Congress has not been consulted about its constitutional duty to vote on a declaration of war, the inability of the people to express their free choice has been even more astonishing.

A contributor to the *Petal Paper* for last August devised a test to help citizens explore their own understanding of the Vietnam situation, preparatory to (1) thinking or (2) not thinking about the war. We reproduce two of the thirteen questions posed:

On July 4 of last year [1965] Premier Ky told a London *Times* reporter that he had only one hero—Adolph Hitler. At the Honolulu conference President Johnson called Ky a great patriot. In 25 words or less, reconcile these statements.

Premier Ky is the present South Vietnam leader supported by the U.S. How many previous leaders—capable of unifying Vietnam—has our government supported? (1) None? (2) Three? (3) Twenty-seven? (4) Lost count?

Finding the "essay" question difficult, we tried the other, even though it sounded catchy. We guessed wrong, as a partial answer (in a letter) in the Jan. 5 *Christian Science Monitor* showed:

The United States is spending almost two million dollars in terms of money every month (three thousand casualties in terms of human beings) in defending the tenth Vietnamese dictatorship in three

years. On the other hand there is India going to her fourth general election in February, 1967, in the best tradition of democracy, and we seem to completely ignore it.

In general, public opinion is turning against the Vietnam war. The growing impression, however guardedly expressed, is that the war is a folly and should be stopped. While patriotism, as the *Post* says, summing up, is "a great national resource," and "presidents and kings and generals have always exploited it to carry out their plans for good or ill," the fact remains that "patriotism is not a justification for everything, nor was the world designed to suit our convenience, and in due time we all learn to judge our leaders by the wisdom and the justice of their causes, not by the amount of blood they shed in their quest for shining victories."

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

THE IDEA OF A COLLEGE

PEOPLE who start schools, people who teach because it is a calling instead of a job, people for whom the meeting of minds is an ultimate experience, people for whom the discovery of meaning always involves reciprocity—all these, who are somehow one in their attitude toward others, and especially toward the young, sometimes find a way of putting the essence of what they prize into words. Often the words become a kind of poetry because of the resonance and ring of poetic expression. The choice, or rather compulsion, to give an art form to the expression of truth is a way of declaring that the truth is by nature endlessly self-reproductive, when given its head. The art form helps to show that any precise confinement, any formalizing definition, is likely to mutilate or suppress.

We have such a statement about the idea of a college, expressed by Peter Marin, the English teacher who, with Frank Lindenfeld, wrote the paper, "Reflections on Experimental Teaching," which appeared in *MANAS* for Sept. 7, 1966. (By more or less unmanaged coincidence, Mr. Lindenfeld contributes this week's *Frontiers* article.) Mr. Marin's idea of a college is the following:

Begin with nothing, begin with the idea of wanting a college, begin with the vision of a *place*, a condition, an open field: a space cleared in the world *in which the world will reveal itself*; begin with the idea of the world revealing itself as it passes through us and into the shapes of our lives.

Begin with a vision, a statement: the purpose of a college its formative idea, *is to enable us to inhabit the world of nature as it resides within and around us*. And go further: a college itself *is* the habitation of that world, the intelligent habitation of oneself in the world of nature, an indwelling in things and events, in process. Learning is participation, and a college—the *place* of learning, its condition—is ideally the place in which total participation takes place. A college is the arena and field in which one reveals,

becomes, the world in oneself and a self in that world. I mean that literally: a college is a place of meeting, of wedding, of community. Or: it is the habitation of one's wedding to the world.

But.

But.

There is no wedding to the world. A man *is* the world, he is the world distinguishing itself as *himself*, as "I," and a college, its ideal totality, is the discovery of oneself as the world, of the world *as* oneself. An act of learning is a meeting, and every meeting is simply the discovery in the world of a part of oneself that had previously been acknowledged by the self. It is the recovery of the extent of one's being. It is an embrace, an embrace of an eternal but elusive companion, the shadowy "other" in which one truly resides and which blazes, when embraced, like the sun.

A college is in its totality an act of love: both a protection and an entrance, a gesture in and toward the world through which the world is acknowledged and revealed—and *from which it is born again, recreated*.

A college is an embrace in which we merge and *emerge* endlessly and in which the other, the world, reveals itself ceaselessly as oneself born again and again. We are transformed in it *beyond recognition* into something *instantly familiar*, absolutely known; we disappear and, disappearing, reveal ourselves, undiminished, whole.

Or say a college is *here & now* in the midst of when & where. Say, it is a potential, a condition, a process which awaits us in the unrevealed: what *can* happen. It is not in reality a system or an institution but an open field, the *absence* of system: it is a field in which the participants recreate the world *as they become themselves in the recreation of the world*; in which the world reveals itself through its participants and becomes those participants residing in the revelation of the world.

Do you see?

Systems exclude, institutions are the systematized exclusion of parts of the world, they systematically exclude what cannot be exploited for their ends. But a college, its *idea*, seen clearly, has no ends, *it is*; *it is the recurring inclusive moment of revelation*, nothing more, nothing less:

It is that moment born of the moment created by its members in their recreation of themselves.

If, in this slow turning of the kaleidoscope of ideal becomings, the central subject were anything less than the climactic reality of self-discovery, the words could hardly be supported by generated meanings, yet what Mr. Marin does is successful precisely because he honors what is for many, many human beings the highest possible experience.

Although the apparatus of education as we know it involves many things—and they are indeed "things," which claim the saddle and ride the educational project into the ground—the need to make all these things subserve the ideal is so easily forgotten that a pure statement of this sort has manifest value.

The universe of a man's thought may be peopled with every imaginable inhabitant in the world, and to learn about the universe is to intensify the correspondence between seeming and being, to strengthen the flow of mind between subject and object, until one reaches into the other with the liquid ease of interchangeable life, while dispassionate awareness hovers above.

By the exquisite joy felt by the teacher when he teaches, and by the learner when he learns, at least one, and perhaps both, may know that something is happening beyond all reasoned management or appetite for "knowledge." Out of this experience in human relations are born all ideas of the dignity of man, all realizing conceptions of the strivings of Prometheus, of the emergence of a Christ.

There is more to it, of course, than ecstasy. There is the hard work, the encounter with resistance, with frustrating opacities, as well as with joyful splendors of the mind. But after the most careful accounting of the obstacles to education, if there has been even the slightest concession to failure, any agreed-upon reduction in the primary vision, something serious has gone wrong. Someone, most probably someone young and defenseless, is being betrayed.

Education, we must say, is man in the service of man. And only a misconception of man can succeed in distorting the educational process, in turning the functions of educational-institutions to purposes which have a calculating confinement, a suspicious regulation, an exploiting misdirection, for their principles of control. These things are done, of course, in semi-innocence by people who are themselves betrayed. They use the language of love and respect for man, but follow the practices of unwitting expediency. And so it is that the young, subjected to compromise in the name of education, are seen to strike back blindly. Observers sometimes forget that to be able to move through a sea of pretentious authority, past shoals of error so ancient that they seem simply the secular "facts of life"—to do this with the nimble skill of people who know what they want and are determined to get it, is the prerogative and capacity only of those possessed of a vast sagacity, people whose education is well-nigh complete.

So, besides the vision, we need time, and knowledge of the requirements of the growth of vision *in* time. This means patience, and development of that tough resilience which grows out of an understanding of limitation and past mistakes—an understanding as penetrating, in its way, as the vision which sees and cleaves to the ideal.

FRONTIERS

"If Not Now, When?"

OVER the last few years, a social movement has been emerging among American youth, which has been called the New Left. Some of its beginnings and much of its tactics and emotional tone can be traced to the struggle for racial equality in this country. It has found expression in such groups as SNCC and SDS (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Students for a Democratic Society), and in ephemeral explosions like the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. It is above all a certain mood, which finds its expression now in one organization, now in another. Currently one of its main manifestations is in the movement to end the war in Vietnam and in the "new politics" movement.

The new left is in large part the revolt of pampered middle class kids who have come to understand that the world they were being groomed to take over is not the kind of world they want at all. This movement is sparked by a reaction to the dehumanizing qualities of contemporary bureaucratized life, to its impersonality and its disregard for peoples' feelings. It has a strong moral flavor, and a concern with overcoming hypocrisy. The movement has an implicit vision of the good community in which men act as brothers, and of the possibility of a more satisfying life in the here and now.

Many people in the movement tend to reject the belief that the advance of technology must spell progress. They feel that rationality unconnected to human values often spells decreased freedom. They agree with C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse that the answers to human dilemmas cannot be found in increased rationality. That road leads at best to an administered existence within such institutions as the multiversity, and at worst to concentration camps, nuclear weapons, and megadeaths.

Certain main characteristics of those connected with the new left stand out clearly:

1. They tend to be non-ideological, without a dogmatic adherence to a systematic world view;
2. They emphasize direct action, including civil disobedience, which grows out of their concern for building the good community *now*.
3. They emphasize participatory democracy—a goal of trying to make it possible for individuals to share in the social decisions that determine the quality and direction of their life.

The non-ideological nature of the new left is in large part a reaction against the shortcomings of the old left, in this country, and socialism in Eastern Europe. Many of the students feel that a world run by communists might be just as rotten a place as a world run by capitalists. Thus some of the people in the new left lean toward socialism, some lean towards anarchism, some believe in the possibility of obtaining a humanized welfare state, but most are not sure. They are sure that there is a strong connection between means and ends, and that the world they want cannot be obtained by using morally unjustifiable means. This is part of the reason for the nonviolent spirit which pervades the movement. The people in it want men to stop hating each other one day, and know that you can't get much of a world through a movement filled with hate. But in spite of a general antipathy towards Stalinism, there is little red-baiting within the new left, and there is an open-hearted tendency to work with anybody who is willing to work on a project, regardless of his other political beliefs. The new left has a large amount of built-in immunity to manipulation. I think that the people in the movement sense this in spite of their lack of strong ideological commitment, and for this reason are not at all afraid to work with so-called Communists.

The direct-action emphasis grows out of the experiences of the civil rights movement, in which it was found that a minority that is willing to face jail or death in its attempt to bring about social change will often be able to force an unwilling majority to grant concessions that could not

otherwise be obtained. The tactics and flavor of the civil rights movement have tended to pervade the whole of the new left, so that organized mass civil disobedience is now accepted as one of the tactics for bringing about change.

The prior involvement of many of the Berkeley students in the civil rights movement, for example, helped them to dare to stage a sit-in on campus, and to challenge campus authority with a direct confrontation. The emphasis on direct action reflects a desire to bring about immediate social change without waiting to go through established legal and political channels. This accounts for the flavor of distrust of conventional politics that can be found in the new left. Perhaps most typical is the motto, "If not now, when?"

This impatience can be seen especially among students involved in the civil rights movement. Most of those who lead or participate in sit-ins and other forms of direct action are not opposed to the existence of civil rights laws. It is just that they know that to bring about a free society, you must do more than just lobby for better laws or better interpretation of laws, as the NAACP has tended to do. You have to live free. The essence of the direct action philosophy is that it involves the insistence of a determined minority to act as though it had certain legal rights, instead of merely trying to change the laws by writing to their congressmen. These tactics of direct action were used in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement as an alternative to trying to work through student government for changes in the rules governing political expression on campus. Similarly, one possibility in a militant anti-war movement would be to organize mass draft refusals.

What is stressed by the people in this movement is that people should be able to have a say in decisions that determine the shape of the social institutions with which they are involved. The emphasis on participatory democracy is a direct reaction to the bureaucratic paternalism which pervades our society. This paternalism is part of the schools, jobs, and government

programs that affect most people's lives deeply. Our school systems, for example, are viewed by many in the new left as largely a set of pre-arranged hurdles and mazes over and through which students must pass to get educated. Students are processed in giant education factories, and sent along their way with cumulative record cards, gradepoint averages, and assorted IBM cards. And the structure of power is set up in such a way that the sham of democratic participation covers their real powerlessness.

The basic tension in the new left is between reform and revolution. Some of the people in the student movements are willing to settle for some minor adjustments in the basic social institutions, while others are in favor of wholesale and sweeping changes. Some of the latter feel that revolution is so far in the future that they must try to obtain reforms now. In one way, those who favor reform might be said to be more realistic, for minor changes can certainly be brought about by student pressure.

Reform means getting more equal justice under the law, adding to the benefits to be received from the welfare state, getting some of the courses taught in college put on a pass-fail basis, voting for the lesser of the two evils, etc. Reform means going the road of coalition politics in the hope of obtaining political power. It should be stressed that most of the participants in the student protest movements are reformers at heart; they may be turned into revolutionaries by the turn of events, *i.e.*, when they see their attempts at reform rebuffed; or when they see them put into practice without curing the evils they sought to cure.

The revolutionary conception of the good community leads in at least two different directions. On the one hand are the socialists who would like to see the abolition of private control of the means of production and distribution, and the substitution of public political control. On the

other hand are individualist and communist anarchists.

The latter are furthest removed from the reformers, although many of them share socialist vision about the desirability of abolishing private ownership and control of industry.

The basic criticism voiced by the anarchists is that large scale bureaucratic organizations tend to be dehumanizing and that the only way really to reform them is to abolish them and to substitute other things in their place. This leads to the demand to establish various kinds of parallel institutions which could eventually replace existing ones.

Participatory democracy for example works best when you have small decentralized social units rather than large ones. This means that there is a tendency among some of the people in the new left to favor the break-up of large universities, large factories, large hospitals, etc. Thus a central administration deciding policies that will affect 20,000 students may be replaced by 100 separate and semi-autonomous social units of 200 students, each of which will decide its own policies.

People in the new left tend to assume that human tastes differ, and that the top people in big hierarchies tend to be less sensitive to the problems of the people on the bottom. Because of this, they tend to feel that decentralization would lead organizations to be more responsive to the needs of the people in them.

The romantic reaction to the dehumanization and depersonalization found in large social units is similar in some respects to some of the right-wing arguments against the growing power of the bureaucratic state. Parts of the student new left movement thus tend to have a quaint old fashioned right-wing air about them in their opposition to compulsory military conscription or compulsory education.

The tension between reform and revolution in the student movement can be seen in innumerable

situations. Generally, this tension has not been resolved. Some of those who are interested in ending the war in Vietnam think that this can be done by influencing one of the major parties. Others see such measures as involving too much compromise, and hope for the establishment of a social climate within which people cannot be persuaded to take any part in the war machine. Some of them would counsel refusal to cooperate with the draft, with taxation, or with any kind of work related to the military. They see the problem as not so much military intervention here and there as the fact that the concentration of military power in the hands of the state makes such intervention possible. Thus they seek to build a movement in which local areas become self-governing, in which communities organize themselves to solve their problems by local effort whenever possible.

So far as production and distribution are concerned, the reformer would add to the benefits of the welfare state perhaps by a bigger war on poverty, or perhaps socialize various industries. Thus the guaranteed annual income can be seen as a type of social reform which would stabilize the capitalist system by putting a floor under the income of the poorer segments of the society and thus taking away some of their revolutionary potential. The alternative envisaged by some communist anarchists is the type of society within which work in the conventional sense is not necessary. Certain types of basic commodities could be made in mass quantities by automation, for example, and distributed free to all who wish them: while at the same time people would be free to make luxury items by hand and to trade them.

In education the reformer would make classes smaller, and would pay more attention to including in the curriculum such neglected aspects as Negro history. The revolutionary outlook questions the need for pre-determined curricula, for required courses and degrees, for compulsory education in lower grades.

I am not sure whether the tension between reform and revolution can ever be entirely resolved. People in the student movements seem to want both, which is why their actions are sometimes so contradictory. At the present time, the balance seems to be in favor of reform; thus most of those who are against the Vietnam war would not go so far as to oppose all militarism; those who want greater social equality would not go so far as to espouse communist anarchism, etc.

In practice, this means that the students are not quite sure where they are going. What to do in the next election, for example. Support a political candidate, or abstain? What if abstention means the election of the worse of two evils? The problems to be solved seem almost too great: On the one hand, the attainment of political power is not within the range of realistic possibilities, within the near future, barring some major upheaval such as that caused by a war on American soil. On the other hand, the creation of alternative or parallel institutions is difficult work; and it is hard to imagine these being able to survive as islands in a generally hostile environment.

The natural tendency for young people is to become more revolutionary in philosophy as they find that the reforms they put their faith in don't really work because they leave the system-produced evils unchanged. But young people also marry as they grow older, and they take jobs in the system, which makes it seem unlikely that the tension between reform and revolution will be resolved by the current student movement.

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