Man and Structures

JENS J. WILHELMSEN

GROSVENOR BOOKS · LONDON

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 1977
BY GROSVENOR BOOKS
54 LYFORD ROAD, LONDON SW18 3JJ

ISBN 0 901269 25 5

COVER DESIGN BY LARS WANGENSTEN-BERGE
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
LONSDALE UNIVERSAL PRINTING LTD, BATH

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Foreword

I have had the good fortune to get to know several countries well. For three years I slept on a sofa in a German coal-miner's living room. The best part of my five years in Japan was spent working with leaders of the Seinendan, the nationwide organisation of rural youth. Some weeks amid the misery of Calcutta deeply affected my outlook on life. Two years in the United States were divided between the port of New York, the steel mills of Pittsburgh and the halls of Congress in Washington. During six months in the southern part of Africa I met some of the leaders, both black and white, who are in today's headlines.

The long periods in these and other countries were the result of a decision I took at university in my native Norway. I was confronted by the question: What are you living for? At the end of a painful reassessment, I concluded that my aims were too small and too selfish. I decided to let the needs of other people and nations wrench open my heart and mind. The subsequent twenty years I spent abroad trying to play a part in answering those needs.

Do I see any results? Yes and no. This book is not written to prove that easy solutions are available. Its purpose is rather to query certain preconceptions in both

East and West, and to stimulate the search for a fresh approach.

In several countries I became a friend of Marxists, some of them with a lifetime of experience in revolutionary movements. Their global thinking, commitment and willingness to sacrifice challenged me. During long hours of discussion it emerged more clearly where we could not agree, and where disagreement was simply a result of misunderstanding, inadequate knowledge and prejudice. These discussions have provided most of the raw material for this book.

All the social systems have proved to have their flaws. Capitalism has been a force for economic growth, but has failed to secure a just distribution of wealth, at home or abroad. Communism has captured over one-fourth of the earth's population, but has not found the way to limit the power of the few or to answer divisive nationalism in its own ranks. Democratic socialism has produced cradle-to-grave security, but scant reason for living and little solidarity with the less fortunate.

Far-reaching structural changes are needed in all camps. New barriers to man's inhumanity to man must be erected. But what about man himself? So far no structures have proved a match for his ingenuity in furthering his own advantage at the expense of others. Mao Tse-tung, who set out to change the acquisitive side of man on such a vast scale, concluded that "in classless society the struggle between truth and falsehood will never end".[1]

It is often difficult to differentiate between the

1. *Quotations from Mao Tse-tung*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1966, p. 203.

reactionary and the progressive, and easy to end up defending dogmas and institutions which have had their day. It happens to the Left as well as to the Right, to men of faith and men of no faith. The established thinking of our epoch, milieu, class, nation has a dangerous grip on us, twisting our perceptions of reality and closing our minds to new ideas. In our fast-moving age, with the threat of nuclear holocaust ever present, the willingness to question our assumptions and doctrines has become a matter of survival.

Is the world moving towards some cataclysmic event, some unparalleled catastrophe? Or are contradictions and upheavals the birth-pains of a new and better order? If we are to wrest progress from chaos, we must try to identify the growth points of this new order and set out to achieve a breakthrough for them.

JENS J. WILHELMSEN

1. Solidarity

Modern man finds himself in a hostile world. This is true not only for those who starve in some countries or bleed in others. It is true in the big cities of the affluent West where crime and violence take a growing toll. It is true for millions who have inflation eating into their pay packets or unemployment knocking at their doors.

To meet such vast problems, men need each other's help. There is a growing note of urgency in the appeals for solidarity between men and nations. "In this interdependent economic world, the doctrine of 'every nation for itself' is as dangerous a philosophy as the doctrine of 'every man for himself' here at home," said a British Prime Minister.[1]

But what reason tells us and what we actually do are two different things. When the oil boycott was on, each nation scrambled to fill its own quotas, if necessary at the expense of friend and ally. Western trade policies towards developing countries illustrate the same point. Third World leaders complain that industrialised countries use their economic power to impose low prices on the raw materials exported by developing countries. Though professing the will to help, the rich nations do the opposite.

1. Harold Wilson, speaking at 106th Trades Union Congress, September 1974.

The West, however, has no monopoly on national selfishness. The battle for a better deal for Third World countries is hampered by their own divisions. Attempts to create a united front of developing countries producing the same raw material repeatedly fail because each nation prefers its own short-term advantage.

The Communist world seems equally incapable of practising the solidarity it preaches. In times of scarcity the Soviet Union has bought millions of tons of grain on the free market with little consideration for the needs of Third World countries. In 1972 it even tried to sell some of it to India at a higher price. In China in 1960 Soviet aid and experts were suddenly withdrawn at a point when China was having serious economic difficulties.

"Soviet Marxism," writes Herbert Marcuse, the Marxist philosopher, "has never succeeded in reconciling the contradictions between its own nationalism and Marxian internationalism – either in its strategy or in its ideology. . . ."[1]

Has China? In 1970 China supported Pakistan in her war against Bangla Desh. There can be little doubt that Bangla Desh was waging a genuine struggle for independence. With an eye on Soviet support for Bangla Desh and India, however, China concluded that my enemy's enemy is my friend.

The Danish Foreign Minister, K. B. Andersen, returned from China impressed by the social system, but worried that the Chinese seemed automatically against

1. *Soviet Marxism,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, p. 158.

whatever the Soviets were for.[1]

At the moment the world power balance rests on the triangular relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union and China. On one aim the Soviet Union and China still agree: the need to hasten the downfall of the United States as the citadel of capitalism. But the fulfilment of this goal leaves a major question unanswered. What would happen after a return to a bi-polar world with China and Russia as the Big Two?

As Professor Georg Picht of Heidelberg University recently stated, "Until we succeed in dissolving the obscure complexes of prejudice which are cemented into the foundations of sovereign nation-states, rational planning on a global scale has no political chance of success."

We are quick to blame our leaders for what is wrong. But do not leaders usually reflect the characteristics of the people? The contradictions, hopes and fears of ordinary people raise leaders to power and are their incentive. Large or small groups recognise themselves in their leaders. We cannot expect leaders to be models of solidarity if most of us fight tooth and nail for our own advantage.

Not everyone can share the high expectations of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who during the election campaign exclaimed, "Imagine if we could get a government as idealistic, compassionate and loving as the American people. What a wonderful change that would be!"[2]

As nationalism is such a strong force, solidarity with

1. Addressing a seminar on Southern Africa, Aarhus, 1974.
2. *Expressen,* Stockholm, 3 March 1976.

one's own countrymen might be expected to come naturally. But in Norway, a far-flung and sparsely populated country, we have discovered that it does not. Feelings of mistrust and blame often divide the people of the Arctic north from the more comfortable population of the south. Vital decisions concerning northern Norway are taken in Oslo, nearly 2,000 kilometres away. Remote control from a distant guardian with a passion for social uniformity is hard to take.

Such problems are aggravated for ethnic minorities fighting for the survival of their race and culture. North of the Arctic Circle in Finland a small ethnic group – the Skolte Lapps – is disappearing as this book is being written. Its people and their culture have been swallowed up by the surrounding nations: Finland, the Soviet Union and Norway. Must the dominant cultures always cannibalise the smaller and weaker? Must small peoples always choose between isolation or obliteration? With global integration proceeding at an overwhelming pace, these are decisive questions.

A leader of the European Community said recently that the nation-state is out of date, and that continents are the natural units for the future. On the surface the growing integration, for instance within the European Community, and the separatism of ethnic minorities seem to be contradictory. In reality they may be complementary. The increasing interdependence of men and nations must be matched by a strengthening of cultural and ethnic roots. Otherwise the loss of identity becomes unbearable. For a tree to grow big, the roots need to be deep.

A minority's search for identity and justice can contribute

to the larger unity of mankind. Where chauvinism and hatred come in, this search becomes part of a pattern of division. Purified, it supplies an indispensable element in a world becoming one.

The way a minority is treated is a test of the majority's motivation. The passion for control issues in insensitive policies of integration or assimilation. The drive for efficiency and economic gain produces intolerance of cultures which give priority to other values. Real concern, on the other hand, encourages the particular contribution which an ethnic minority can make because it is different.

Minorities sometimes preserve values which the majority has repressed. North American Indians and Nordic Lapps, for instance, may have something to tell Western man about his relationship to Mother Earth. According to a leading American Indian intellectual, the Indians hold that civilised life means "that man should be able to use lands, animals and whatever and leave as little trace on them as possible. The universe was conceived and understood as an organic unity. When anyone used the different parts of it, he had a responsibility to replace, placate or restore what he had used."[1]

Our sense of solidarity must cover the whole of created life, including the most defenceless part of it. When landscapes are polluted or animal species become extinct, something dies inside man as well. There is an inner reality inside us which corresponds to the outer reality around us.

In his poem *Snow and Spruce Forest*, the Norwegian Tarjei Vesaas expressed this oneness of man and nature:

1. Vine Deloria Jr, *Himmat Weekly*, Bombay, 31 October 1975.

From the first moment
they are ours.
Before anyone has told us
that snow and spruce exist
they have a place in us
and continue to be there
all the time.

. . . wherever we are
we turn towards them.
And in us lives a promise
of coming home.
Coming home
walking into them
bending branches
and suddenly knowing
what it means to be where you belong.[1]

A new sense of solidarity with our environment and with our fellow man must grow naturally, beginning with the individual. It must include those who suffer in far-away places, but it is hypocritical if it is not equally concerned with those nearest to us. There are countless parallels to the recent story of an old woman in her apartment in the middle of a big European city. She became too sick to move, no one bothered to investigate, and she starved to death.

One hopeful sign is the growing concern among young people in the West for the losers, the homeless and the

1. *Dikt i samling*, Gyldendal, Oslo, 1969.

handicapped. It represents a longing to break with a success-oriented and over-competitive life style. Under the surface we want to serve and not only to climb.

The fact that many families are selfish and exclusive is no excuse for withdrawing solidarity from one's own kin. How many sons and daughters write off their parents as hopelessly old-fashioned and shut them out of their lives? How many parents hide their failures behind a smoke-screen of parental righteousness, but judge their children when they get into trouble?

Genuine solidarity means identifying with others in their need and weakness. Of course parents often lag behind and young people often ignore the lessons of the past. With life moving at such a pace, how could it be otherwise? But this is the very reason why the generations need each other. If we do not judge, a creative process of mutual learning becomes possible. Such a process represents the best hope of avoiding the pitfalls ahead of us.

"To me, nothing human is alien," said Goethe. If society is not to disintegrate into groups of self-righteous and hate-filled zealots, this sense of identification is essential. Of course it does not mean condoning those who exploit, cheat or terrorise their fellow man. The assault on such evils needs to be more passionate, not less. But it does mean having the humility and the realism to admit that the capacity for evil which I condemn in others is also in me. It is the indispensable foundation of the brotherhood of man.

As the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko writes in

The Conscience:

> In the wide world
> where no one is without sin
> as long as there is still one
> who whispers: What have I done?
> it is still possible to do something.

I have a friend who was condemned to death during the German occupation of Norway. He escaped death, but was heavily tortured. A deep contempt for his tormentors grew in him. Immediately after the German capitulation he was guarding a group of German prisoners. He put them through some harsh and exhausting exercises, and suddenly realised that he was getting a deep satisfaction out of tormenting them. He was honest enough to recognise that sadism existed in himself as well. From that day he no longer hated the Germans.

Solidarity means carrying each other's burdens. For the opulent West it means carrying the needs and problems of developing countries as a fully responsible partner. The challenge is directed not only at our purse-strings, but at the way we live. We should be able to share a quality of living which produces incorruptibility, discipline, co-operation and a spirit of service.

This has nothing to do with cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism imposes its values and ideas on another society. Solidarity, on the other hand, seeks for answers which are universally applicable, which can move from East to West or from West to East. One aspect of it is being humble enough to tell others what we are learning from our own failures.

It is not beyond the power of ordinary people to build such bridges of solidarity between nations and continents. But there is a price to pay. It involves a costly expansion of our personal field of responsibility as well as a militant battle for the policy-makers and public opinion.

2. The new man

In the calculations of ideologists and social planners, man remains the most elusive element. Again and again he upsets paper plans, sometimes confounding the optimists, at other times the pessimists.

Many have given up trying to change man. Some concentrate on building structures to protect the weak and limit the excesses of the strong. Others use man's acquisitiveness as fuel for economic progress. Some have lost hope altogether and concluded that man must be put in a social straitjacket; but who applies the jacket to whom?

The Communists believe that man must be changed. A resolution of the 22nd Congress (1961) of the Soviet Communist Party states: "The Party considers the creation of the new man as the most difficult part of the Communist transformation of society. Unless we can root out bourgeois morality and educate people in Communist morality, renewing them morally and spiritually, it is not possible to build a Communist society."

Christianity also proclaims the vision of a new man. "If a man is in Christ, he becomes a new person altogether," wrote St Paul. "The past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new."[1] But it is

1. 2 Corinthians 5.

rare to hear the leaders of the Western nations proclaim this renewal as a cornerstone of a better society. Pluralism and pragmatism have pushed the new man, as a central objective of social planning, out over the sideline. It is a paradox that the advocates of historical materialism sometimes put more emphasis on the renewal of man than the leaders of the West with its Christian roots.

What should the new man be like? Mao Tse-tung wrote: "We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness . . . A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people."[1]

A leading Soviet ideologist describes the builders of Communism as "people who have renewed themselves with a new attitude towards work and social duties, with new moral standards, with a high measure of discipline and moral purity, with harmony between word and deed".[2]

The harmony between word and deed, however, leaves a lot to be desired in both East and West. The point is how, in the interest of our common future, we can begin to close that gap.

Lenin said that Communist morality was subordinate to the interests of the class struggle.[3] The legitimation of this moral relativism was the overriding objective of bringing down the capitalist order. Within this order, he

1. *op. cit.*, p. 171.
2. Leonid Ilyichev, member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, in a speech before the Central Committee, 18 June 1963.
3. Speech to Third Congress of Communist Youth, 1920.

reasoned, the achievement of high moral standards was impossible. The need for revolution justified the means necessary to bring it about.

Subordinating morality to a political objective, however, raises the question of who will decide what is right and wrong. Stalin could maintain that the great purges in the thirties were necessary to defend the revolution against traitors. "A straight road seems to lead from Lenin's notion of the centralised authoritarian party to Stalin's personal dictatorship," writes Herbert Marcuse, "a road on which 'scientific determination' gives way in practice, if not in ideology, to decisions on the ground of shifting political and even personal objectives and interests. Subjective factors prevail over the objective factors and laws."[1]

To give a man or a party the right to decide what is moral or immoral is to overrate man's infallibility.

The Watergate affair illustrates this point. The conspirators in Washington subordinated morality to a political objective, in this case the re-election of President Nixon. One can imagine the excuses which helped them to live with their consciences: "What we do may not be legal, but it is in the best interest of the country. If Nixon is not re-elected, what will happen to his policy of detente? We must make sure he's elected whatever the means."

The supreme human value, however, is not a political objective, but respect for the dignity of man. An action which subverts the integrity of individuals, like the

1. *op. cit.*, p. 145.

Watergate burglary and subsequent attempts to cover it up, may appear to be in the national interest. In fact it fosters a mentality which creates mistrust, recrimination and ruthlessness throughout national life.

In both East and West an examination of the order of values is necessary. Unless social and political life is subordinated to a binding moral code, nations find themselves on a slippery slope.

Fortunately all the world's great religions seem to agree on the nature of such a code. So do most Communist thinkers. "In going through the enumerations of the highest moral values given in Soviet ethical philosophy," writes Marcuse, "it is difficult to find a single moral idea or syndrome of moral ideas that is not common to Western ethics."[1] The accumulated experience of mankind has crystallised these concepts as the indispensable traffic rules for man and society. Where they are ignored bottlenecks, collisions and crashes are inevitable.

A moral code should consist of standards which are unambiguous and resistant to misinterpretation. Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, put the word 'absolute' before the standards he propounded: absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. The human will is strong and devious. Relative honesty, relative unselfishness, easily lend themselves to opportunistic interpretations, while absolute standards draw a clearer line between right and wrong.

Some hold that absolute standards ask too much of man and result in a guilt complex which destroys joy and

1. *op. cit.*, p. 232.

freedom. Professor Victor Frankl, successor to Freud's chair in Vienna, is one psychologist who says that this supposition is a fallacy. The nature of man is such, he maintains, that he is at his best when living in the field of tension between an unreachable ideal and his actual performance.[1] If we trim our ideals and standards to what we can manage, stagnation and frustration are the result.

What does living by such standards mean in practice? Take honesty, which is widely held to be a necessary attribute of the new man. "Without an honest attitude it is absolutely impossible to accomplish anything," said Mao.[2]

Honesty has far-reaching social and personal implications. Its relevance to problems like corruption and trust between social groups is obvious. It is also a key to making people resistant to manipulation. As long as we have not honestly faced the destructive forces in ourselves, we become easy victims. Hitler played with virtuoso skill on the hates, hurts and pride of the German people, leading them to an end they did not want.

Most of us do not want to admit that forces like hate or revenge hold power over us. To keep a picture of ourselves which is less damaging to the ego, we do not call a spade a spade. In addition, these forces are masters of camouflage. "The mind is an iceberg," said Sigmund Freud. "It floats with only one-seventh of its bulk above water."

Our ability to be guided by "pure reason", or even

1. *Man's Search for Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1963, p. 106.
2. *op. cit.*, p. 243.

enlightened self-interest, is strictly limited. But it grows if we have honestly faced the underlying drives which a manipulator can appeal to.

This goes for our buying habits as well. If we see through the ambition to keep up with the Joneses, or call greed by its right name, we will not be so easily manipulated by advertising.

It is still a valid concept that 'the truth shall make you free'.

Another fruit of honesty is genuine relationships between people. This is the story of a young Norwegian I know:

"I often felt frustrated that my parents couldn't understand me, and I blamed them for being old-fashioned. But when I was confronted with the concept of honesty, I realised that so much of my life went on behind their backs, carefully hidden, that it was impossible for them to understand me. Lies and half-truths over a long period had built a wall so high that we could no longer reach each other. To re-establish communication and trust, I needed to sacrifice my pride and be honest about the things I was most ashamed of. I hesitated for a whole year. It took more courage than anything I have ever done, but the result was amazing. I was not judged as I had expected to be. On the contrary, a few weeks later my father came to me and was honest about a failure in his own life. I was flabbergasted. Suddenly he came off his pedestal and became as human as I felt myself. We were equals and could begin to bring out the best in each other on that basis. The next part of the story was that he was honest with my mother about some things which

had stood between them, and it renewed their love for each other. I have often since been tempted to turn my back on honesty, but this experience left me convinced that it is the natural and right foundation for human relationships."

"As long as a man departs from truth, he continues to remain a stranger to himself and others," writes Clark Moustakas, an American psychotherapist.[1] Many of us wear masks to cover up real or imagined weakness: the mask of toughness to cover fear, the mask of independence to cover a longing for affection, the mask of "I don't care how I look" to cover inferiority about appearance. It is a liberating experience to drop pretence and decide to be what we are. As a hillbilly song goes:

> Be yourself, be yourself,
> how simple life can be!
> If I was supposed to be somebody else,
> then why in the heck am I me?

Unselfishness, or the ability to practise solidarity, is another attribute of the new man. This challenge has a special relevance for the affluent West. The U.S. magazine *Newsweek* estimates that Americans waste up to twenty-five per cent of the food they buy.[2] The situation in other rich nations cannot be very different. At the same time about forty million people die each year from under-nourishment. While the average Indian earns £42 a year, the average German smokes £58 a year.

1. *Creativity and Conformity*, Van Nostrand, Princeton, N.J., 1967, p. 79.
2. *Newsweek*, New York, 11 November 1974.

Callousness marks not only our attitude to distant nations. It takes its toll of our own families, neighbours and compatriots. A Czech student in a Western country told me, "What I find most difficult here is the lack of friendship between people. Ordinary people are much closer to each other and help each other more in Czechoslovakia."

Everyone is too busy to talk, to be a friend to people. Those who do not have a great deal to do start looking around for ways to prove themselves or increase their standard of living, instead of using their privilege of relative leisure to meet one of the most acute needs in our busy world: having time for people.

The philosophy of self-realisation has its points, but many pursue it with a selfish one-sidedness which leaves others out in the cold. Of course each of us has a unique contribution to make, and it is our responsibility to make the most of our talents and opportunities. But it is also our responsibility to help others to do the same. To live so that the other person grows is a part of unselfishness. Sometimes it can mean letting go our own opportunities so that another person can find his or her destiny – husband or wife, child or colleague.

Political views are no certificate of unselfishness. Cuba has campaigned for more women to take jobs and for more men to do housework. But there is resistance: "I sacrificed the best ten years of my life for the revolution," says a Cuban officer. "I fought from the age of fifteen to twenty-five. I'm damned if I'm going to do housework."[1]

A revision of our attitude to woman's role in society is taking place. But the challenge is even wider: do we help

1. *International Herald Tribune*, February 1975.

other people, whatever their sex, to grow and develop, or do we just build up ourselves?

The man who loses his life will find it, said Christ. It is in laying down our lives for great and unselfish aims that our own talents develop to the fullest and we are stretched towards the ultimate limits of our capacity.

St Francis of Assisi is a saint for our times. Without the aid of mass media, he started a trend which made hundreds of thousands turn from the worship of wealth and status to the service of their fellow man.

"You liberate man from the illusion of power and possession," writes Roger Garaudy, until 1970 chief ideologist of the French Communist Party, "if you affirm the paradox of God's presence in Jesus crucified, in the depths of wretchedness and impotence . . . God is not the Roman Emperor or the Greek's man of beauty and strength. Faith is not a promise of power. It is the conviction that it is possible to create a qualitatively new future only if one identifies himself with those who are the most naked and downtrodden, only if one ties one's fate to theirs to the point that it is impossible to conceive any real victory but theirs.

"This love is the hope of resurrection, for love exists only when a human being is irreplaceable for us and we are ready to give up our life for him. When we are really prepared to make this gift for the least of men, God is in us. He is the power to transform the world."[1]

There can be no unselfishness without love. Love is the force which makes us want the best for other people

1. *The Alternative Future*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974, p. 85.

and helps us to understand what they need. It is the indispensable basis of all ethics.

Love has been badly misrepresented by many who say they believe in it. Their practice has suggested that it is something sugary, sentimental, and tolerant of evils which should not be tolerated. As a result many turn their backs on love as a relevant force for social change.

The false idea of love makes us prefer peace to clash, the status quo to the hazardous ways of change. In clubs, movements, churches, unions, offices, the friendly pat on the back is seen as evidence of love. Of course it can be. But love can also be to speak the truth which no one wants to hear, and to run the risks which that involves.

"I love you as you are, but I am going to fight that you become the man you are meant to be," said a wife to her husband. Such love is costly, and contains corrective and vision as well as affection.

The sugary version of love usually has selfishness behind it: I want to be loved, so I do and say things which will make people like me. This form of peaceful co-existence usually breeds stagnation.

Many Communists think love should be practised only towards those who share their ideas or belong to a certain class. Enumerating the virtues of the young soldier Lei Feng, the periodical *China Today* writes that "he was bitter against the enemy, had deep proletarian feelings for the people and was constantly looking for new ways to serve them."[1]

1. *China Today*, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Oslo, October 1974.

Of course it is right to hate evil, to hate man's callousness to man. But a different element comes in when we begin to hate people. This kind of hate is not like a laser beam which you can direct with accuracy towards the enemy. It invades every area of your personality and affects your relationship to all people – including those you love. An inner hardness grows.

This may be one reason for the many splits between revolutionary groups which use hate as an incentive. The vituperation between the Soviet Union and China may come from the same root.

Love's great ally is forgiveness. To be able to ask forgiveness and to forgive is the sign of a mature personality. What prevents forgiveness is mostly our innate self-righteousness, which makes us focus on our own virtues and the other person's faults. The imbalance can only be corrected by realism: none of us are saints, all of us need forgiveness for something.

In his poem *The Struggle*, the President of Angola, Agostinho Neto, writes:

Violence
steel voices in the sunlight
set alight the land

Dreams break
against a wall of bayonets

A new wave rises
and hopes dissolve
over graveless bodies

A new wave rises up for the struggle
another and still another
and the violence
will leave behind only our forgiveness.[1]

Love can also help us to recover our lost innocence in relation to sex. Sex has been taken over by the Western consumer mentality, says psychologist Erich Fromm.[2] We demand instant satisfaction of all desires, and ever new sensations must be tried.

Marxist thinkers maintain that the commercialisation of sex is encouraged by Western establishments in order to secure their control and survival. The pursuit of sex, they say, distracts from the repressive features of present society and neutralises potentially dangerous dissent.

Whether the preoccupation with sex is the result of conscious manipulation or not, one obvious effect is that more and more attention becomes focused below the belt, at the expense of a society which needs our care and battle. It is symptomatic that Western life is marked by a combination of sexual permissiveness, people's callousness towards each other and a sense of alienation from each other.

"I was passionately opposed to all forms of exploitation," a man told me. "One day I realised that I had been using women sexually without giving a second thought to their dignity and destiny as human beings. If that is not exploitation, what is?" This can happen inside marriage

1. Copied from the wall of a students' hostel in Lisbon University, spring 1975.
2. *The Art of Loving*, Unwin Books, London, 1964, p. 64.

as much as outside it. Sex is one of life's greatest gifts and must consciously be defended against the pollution of impurity.

Purity poses the question of our innermost intentions. Its challenge is not just directed at the realm of sex. It asks what we really want for the other person. It points a searchlight at our attitude to power. It challenges both domination and subservience. It is a quality of giving and serving.

Through sex some of the deepest human drives find expression. Our attitude to it is decisive for our over-all contribution to society. Unselfishness in the realm of sex brings our sense of compassion and identification alive, inspiring us to do our best for the other person. It gives warmth and humanity to otherwise materialistic and soulless relationships.

But it is easy to debase it. "What we today call (sexual) liberation is precisely the main obstacle to personal release," writes Norwegian author Stein Mehren. "Which of us has not slipped and taken liberties now and then, thereby diverting the longing which should have led us towards ourselves and one other fellow human being?"[1]

The unthinkable thought in the West today is that a person should be able to do without sexual enjoyment. We read with a mixture of awe and incredulity about young Chinese who are expected to live for the fatherland and abstain from necking and flirtation until marriage, usually in their late twenties.[2]

1. *En rytter til fots*, Aschehoug, Oslo, 1975, p. 80.
2. *To Peking and Beyond*, Harrison E. Salisbury, Arrow Books, London, 1973, p. 120.

There is no need to idealise this kind of moral discipline. Totalitarian regimes have sometimes used it to mobilise their populations for revenge and aggression.

For Western man today, however, it might be a liberation to discover that life can be stimulating and fully satisfying without sexual activity. The precondition is that the motives for such renunciation be right. Conformity, a sense of duty or tradition will not do. Purity is a by-product of having a selfless aim in life, of staking heart, brain, muscle, imagination, will and creative power on uplifting one's fellow man. This is neither repression nor prohibition, but the ability to renounce which bears rich fruit both in one's own personality and in society.

Today it is common for people considering marriage to go to bed together to discover if they suit each other. It can be argued that it is better to discover sexual incompatibility before marriage than after. But there is another side to the coin: the emotional involvement which sexual intercourse creates can make one blind to other sources of incompatibility, sources which may prove decisive long after the uniting force of sex has worn thin.

Marriage needs a foundation stronger than sex. Love and sex are not identical. They can even be opposites. Could abstinence before marriage help to distinguish between a real and a fake basis for a lasting relationship?

Purity, of course, is not identical with abstinence. It cuts much deeper. "The mingled, the confused is impure," writes a leading European intellectual. "Not the transparent but the transcendental is pure. Purity lies in the direction . . ."[1]

1. *Theophil Spoerri persönlich*, Caux Verlag, Luzern, 1975, p. 83.

Today people often say that man has come of age. We have subjugated the earth and are on the way to the stars. But it is not the mastery of our environment which is the true test of man's coming of age. It is the mastery of the forces in man himself.

The standards I decide to live by decide what kind of man I become. To become a new man, however, needs more than standards. It demands an experience of renewal.

"The world fears a new experience more than it fears anything," writes D. H. Lawrence, "because a new experience displaces so many old experiences .... The world does not fear a new idea. It can pigeon-hole any idea. But it can't pigeon-hole a real new experience."

A new experience is not available on the cheap. It often involves a tumultuous struggle. Most of us resist an insight which destroys the image we have of ourselves or challenges the wrong we have become comfortable with. But the only way to become a new man is to face the truth about the old man, whatever one's ideology, faith or background.

Some of us have reduced truth to what we can grasp with our brains. But truth has other dimensions which open up when we are humble enough to search for them. The brain can tell us that we have harmed another person, but only the heart can make us feel it so deeply that our attitude changes.

For me this change was also linked with the question of faith. I was an agnostic, but decided to make the experiment of listening to my "inner voice" or my conscience. This gave me some clear ideas on where I was not living what I was talking about. My social and

political views were, at least in my own eyes, quite progressive, but the way I was living had not matched my theories. Now for the first time I came to grips with this contradiction. It meant, among other things, making restitution to some of the people I had harmed. The results convinced me that I was on to something which was sane and right and natural.

At the same time I decided to experiment on the basis of the hypothesis that there is a Higher Being. The following months were characterised by much doubt and wavering, but also some striking affirmative experiences. I began to believe. As Erich Fromm writes: "Faith is based on our experience of living, of transforming ourselves. Faith that others can change is the outcome of the experience that I can change."[1]

A faith in God, however, is not a precondition for dealing with dishonesty, selfishness, hate in one's own life. Karl Marx considered "the alteration of man on a mass scale"[2] essential for the creation of the classless society. What is needed now, in the East as much as in the West, is for such an alteration to become the experience of millions of people.

1. *The Revolution of Hope*, Bantam Books, New York, 1968, p. 14.
2. *Karl Marx: Essential Writings*, Harper and Row, New York, 1972, p. 201.

3. Change in man, Change in structures

The experience of our century has made obsolete the debate over whether man or the system should change first. The development of capitalism has demonstrated conclusively that drastic structural changes are needed. The development of Communism has made it equally clear that man must be changed, whatever the structures.

In this context it has been pointed out that Marx was not as one-track-minded as many of his followers. In his third thesis on Feuerbach, he wrote, "The materialistic doctrine that man is a product of circumstances and upbringing and that changed men will be the product of different circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets the fact that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs to be educated."

Engels complained that some of their followers underestimated the factor of man: "Marx and I are ourselves partly responsible that the young people sometimes put too much emphasis on the economic factor. Towards our opponents we had to stress the main principle which they deny, and there was not always time and opportunity to do justice to the interaction of different relevant factors."[1]

1. *Marxismusstudien,*. Volume 2, I. Tetcher, Tübingen, 1957, p. 207.

Just as the followers of Marx have often ignored the human factor, so the followers of Christ have often ignored the social implications of their faith. "They wade through the bloody swamp of history in the ballroom shoes of personal virtue," writes a Polish author.[1] The failure of Christians to apply Christ's message to social reality helped to launch Marx and Engels on their search for alternatives.

Since then there has been an awakening of social responsibility, and many Christians have been in the forefront of the battle for improved conditions. But some have jumped from one ditch to the other. "The trouble with some Christians," a well-known leader of Germany's New Left told me, "is that once they become interested in Marxism, they go overboard and become Stalinists. They should realise instead that it is on the basis of their Christian faith that they can make their major contribution."

The faults of capitalism, however, are rooted not only in human attitudes, but also in wrong structures. In making self-interest the motive-power of development, capitalism fosters indifference to the less fortunate. "It is a pagan thought that the urge to make money is the only thing which can stimulate people to give their best," says a Norwegian bishop.[2] The emphasis on economic profitability is pushing non-material values into the background. The uncontrolled race for money and power is making us pollute the earth and overtax our resources.

1. Leszek Kolakowski, *Mennesket uten alternativ*, Gyldendal, Oslo, 1966, p. 45.
2. Bishop Alex Johnson, *Aftenposten*, Oslo, 4 September 1975.

Capitalism seems to lack the capacity for self-limitation. The maxim that everything which *can* be produced and sold *ought* to be produced and sold is emancipating production from moral criteria. Technology and profitability are becoming the basis of ethics.

To master the future, we need new structures which protect the weak, secure just distribution and preserve our planet for the sake of future generations.

Structures can further and use man's selfishness, or they can reward care and solidarity. They do have an impact on human attitudes. But many people have become disillusioned because they overrated this impact.

Scandinavia is an example. Many of us believed that a better standard of living and more social justice would produce more unselfish and responsible citizens. The moment our own stomachs were full, however, our interest in creating a better world for all men cooled. We have settled for smaller and more comfortable aims, thereby robbing the younger generations of something great to live for. The misuse of drugs and the growing juvenile crime rate are among the results.

"Solidarity, the fundamental idea of the Labour movement, was stronger when poverty marked our society – selfishness grows with prosperity," writes a leader of the Norwegian Labour Party.[1] There is an underlying unrest in the welfare state – a dawning recognition that affluence, economic growth and social security are not enough. Some are off on the search for new values, but many are

1. Ronald Bye, *Synspunkter og vurderinger*, Tiden Norsk Forlag, Oslo, 1975, p. 30.

unwilling or unable to break with old patterns of thought and draw fresh conclusions.

The East European nations seem to be struggling with similar problems. The Communist leaders of Hungary worry because growing affluence is turning Hungary into a petty bourgeois society where economic inequality is increasing.[1] Sholokov, the Soviet Minister of Interior, calls juvenile delinquency in his country "a major problem" and thinks it is due to "disintegrating family life."[2]

China's effort to root out the petty bourgeois mentality has fascinated the world and given new hope to those who were disillusioned with the Soviet Union. Mao's cultural revolution is surely history's biggest attempt to spread a new motivation by indoctrination and organisational means. He seemed to be more realistic than Western Communists about the fact that capitalists have no monopoly on selfishness. Sending officials and intellectuals out to work on farms or in factories doubtless enhances solidarity between different social groups. But it remains to be seen how long this form of "enforced unselfishness" can deal with man's ingenuity when it comes to securing himself a place above his fellow men. The ups and downs of the power struggles preceding and following Mao's death are a warning, as the mutual accusations of opportunism and deceit show.

According to Communist theory, criticism and self-criticism will become the sources of lasting change in a classless society. But how reliable will this source be?

1. *Arbeiderbladet*, Oslo, 18 July 1974.
2. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 November 1974.

Criticism can be used as a weapon by factions or individuals out for personal power. Self-criticism can be genuine and lead to a changed attitude. It is then akin to what Christians call a conviction of sin. But it can also be a tactical manoeuvre to get out of a tight spot.

The pivotal point is the nature of man himself. Is there such a thing as inherent evil? When Mao said that the struggle between truth and falsehood would continue for ever, even in the classless society, he seemed to think so. Ultimately, the key to realism about man's nature is realism about oneself. I have always had a strong desire to be number one and to be looked up to. For my colleagues it has sometimes made me a very difficult man to work with. Of course I can blame this on my upbringing in a capitalist society. My conclusion is, however, that the roots go deeper.

"We too belong to the devils – we too," writes Max Horkheimer, a leading figure of the Frankfurt Marxist school of philosophers. "Radical evil is asserting its mastery over all creatures all over the world. Whatever comes, we cannot complain. We sit peacefully and comfortably in our armchairs, we dine and we discuss, although we know that all hell is let loose."[1]

What a contradiction to Trotsky, who as a young man could write, "As long as there is breath in me I shall fight for the future, the glorious future in which man, strong and beautiful, shall master the torrent of history and lead it towards the limitless horizons of beauty, joy and happiness."[2]

1. *Notizen 1950-69 und Dämmerung*, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt, 1974.
2. *Morgenbladet*, Oslo, 11 December 1974.

Nor does German playwright Bertolt Brecht seem to think that evil is a part of human nature. "On my wall hangs a Japanese carving," goes one of his poems. "The mask of an evil demon, painted with gold lacquer. / I watch with sympathy / the swollen veins on the forehead, revealing / what an effort it is to be evil."[1]

The reality of evil is a bitter pill to swallow. But our century has seen ample evidence of it. We believe in education and enlightenment. But one of the most educated and gifted nations on earth fell prey to the madness of Nazism. The Russian revolution sparked hope in millions of people. But in Stalin it lifted to power a man with a paranoid suspicion and passion for control. "Trust is good, control is better," was one of his slogans. Svetlana Alliluyeva, his daughter, writes about his relationship to Beria, the head of the Secret Police, "They became spiritually inseparable. The spell cast by this terrifying evil genius on my father was extremely powerful and it never failed to work."[2]

Some people maintain that the change in man is something we can worry about after the new system has been established. They think that moral standards will be an obstacle to an all-out revolutionary struggle – that changing yourself will make you less militant and less intolerant of evil.

The experience of countless freedom fighters – for instance during the German occupation of Norway – trade union representatives and political activists shows that this is not so. On the contrary: 1. A man who tolerates

1. *Die Maske des Bösen.*
2. *Letters to a Friend,* Hutchinson, London, 1967, p. 149.

dishonesty, hate-affairs with fellow revolutionaries, misuse of power in his own life is less effective in achieving his goals. 2. A man whose life corresponds to his ideals attracts more followers. 3. Values kept unsullied during periods of struggle have a much better chance of survival after the battle is won.

There is a saying that the revolutionaries of today become the reactionaries of tomorrow. Power does corrupt. It is wholly unnecessary to postpone the battle for a personal integrity which will be a foundation stone for the new society.

When men face evil in their own lives squarely, their will to deal with social evils is strengthened. In this sense, a change in man's motivation and attitude is often the key to getting the necessary structural changes launched. There are countless examples. Realising that he had put profit before people, a French jute industrialist fought through a stabilisation of prices for raw jute which benefited the jute growers of India and Pakistan; seeing that inter-union rivalry and corruption were hurting the workers, bitter enemies among the dockers' leaders of Rio de Janeiro joined forces and built a united union; facing the need to end unilateral control, a German plastics manufacturer introduced a level of workers' co-determination in the running of the firm which went beyond what the law demanded; putting right his relationship with a political enemy, an Italian Member of Parliament helped to build a united front which secured new rights for the German-speaking minority of South Tyrol.

In his book *The Yogi and the Commissar*, Arthur

Koestler points out that humanity in its search for answers moves like a pendulum from one extreme to the other. The Yogi withdraws from this vale of tears to seek peace of mind in the realm of the transcendental. As a reaction the Commissar turns his back on the spiritual and tackles the reorganisation of this world with soulless zeal. The human tragedy, says Koestler, is that we do not manage to combine the two.

"When men change, the structure of society changes. When the structure of society changes, men change. Both go together, and both are necessary," says Hans Böckler, a past chairman of the German trade unions.[1] It is lunacy to regard the two as alternatives, the more so as time is short, and every available initiative and resource are needed to beat our problems before they beat us.

When the two do get together, an explosive force is born. Instead of disillusionment, men begin to see a realisation of hope. In the climactic period of history which this century represents, it may be our task to show that a synthesis between the Yogi and the Commissar is possible.

1. *The World Rebuilt*, Peter Howard, Blandford Press, London, 1951, p. 150.

4. Violence

"To shoot down a European is to hit two birds with one stone ... there remain a dead man, and a free man," writes French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre in his foreword to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth.*[1]

But there also remains a legacy of revenge. One of the fatal questions facing mankind is whether rich and poor countries can co-operate to overcome the wretchedness of millions. To accept a violent showdown as the answer is to choose a blood-drenched detour which will prolong suffering on all continents. It is also the final capitulation to evil, to man's inability to rise to a challenge and pursue a sane course.

Many of us have suppressed the reality of the hydrogen bomb. We put it out of our minds, some because of fear, some because it upsets dogmas and strategies which have become our security and our hope. We prefer the illusion of living in a pre-nuclear age to the painful reassessment which the bomb forces on us.

Some nations may be paper tigers, but the bomb is not. We talk about feeding and housing the whole of mankind, but a nuclear war could set our efforts back a few centuries. The Soviet Union and the United States peered into the

1. *The Wretched of the Earth,* Frantz Fanon, Macgibbon and Kee, London, 1965, p. 18.

abyss during the Cuba confrontation, and seem to have concluded that there can be no victor in a nuclear showdown.

It is not only the super-powers which decide whether the bomb will be used. It is easy to overlook the cumulative effect of violence practised on a smaller scale. "The practice of violence . . . changes the world; but the most probable change is to a more violent world," writes Hannah Arendt. "The danger of all violence, even if it moves consciously within a non-extremist framework of short-term goals, will always be that the means overwhelm the end."[1]

Marx's criticism of the methods adopted by the anarchist Bakunin shows that he was wrestling with the same question. Shlomo Avineri writes, "Marx's theory of practice easily suggested to him that such a revolutionary practice will substantially determine the nature of future society. A revolutionary movement based on terror, intimidation and blackmail will ultimately produce a society based on these methods as well."[2] Roger Garaudy deals with the same point: "One cannot first conquer power and change structures by any and all means, and then, from the height of conquered power, bestow liberty. How can we find the means which correspond to the aim we pursue?"[3]

Of course violence cannot be written off under all circumstances as a vehicle of change. If an oppressive

1. *On Violence*, Allen Lane, London, 1970, p. 80.
2. *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 238.
3. *op. cit.*, p. 182.

regime keeps a population under its thumb and refuses to take steps to set the people free, violence may be the only way. A regime which controls a population against the will of the majority is already practising violence, although everything may look peaceful from the outside. Some who are quite tolerant of this oppression are quick to condemn rebels who take to arms to rectify the situation. Misunderstanding the Christian commandment of love, Christians throughout history have too often considered militancy on the part of the oppressed as illegitimate, and thereby directly or indirectly supported the oppressor.

However, having to resort to violence always represents a defeat – a defeat for reason and better ways to achieve a goal. Take the situation in South Africa. Of course the black man cannot let himself be sat on for as long as it pleases the white man to do so. But the cost of an armed uprising would be terrifying. It would also divide the world more deeply than Vietnam ever did. Smouldering race conflicts would burst into flame in countries with white or black minorities. The racism in the United States, for instance, would be severely aggravated. So would the difficulties in countries with large immigrant populations, like Great Britain. Most nations would be exposed to a wave of growing racial antagonisms. It could even be the issue that triggered a third world war.

Does this mean that the black man in South Africa must forego his freedom for humanity's sake? Of course he cannot. The suppression of man's right of self-determination in any part of the world is wrong, and will remain a potential source of war.

But there is a better way than violence. When I visited

South Africa in 1961, I attended a performance of *The Ladder*, by British playwright Peter Howard. In the cast were people of all races who had found a common task beyond race. One was a member of South Africa's Supreme Court, another a militant leader of the blacks in Johannesburg. One had been the Government prosecutor when Nobel Prize winner Albert Luthuli was on trial for treason. Now this prosecutor shared the stage with people of all racial backgrounds. Everyone in the cast had faced and dealt with the superiority, hate, fear and selfishness in their own lives. They were not saints, but they had realised that the value of a person is the same whatever the colour of his skin. Their own experience had taught them that men can change and had given them hope. They were so convinced about the importance of this discovery that they were prepared to work on the basis of complete equality with anyone to spread the good news.

When I visited Chief Luthuli in his home in Stanger, I showed him a list of those acting in *The Ladder*. After a long silence he said. "This is a hope. How can you spread it further?"

You can say that what has happened in South Africa since has proved that the hope was an illusion. But I have not the slightest doubt that what I saw in *The Ladder* represented an embryo of a solution, and that it can be made to work if more people get behind it. Many who took part in *The Ladder* are today at the heart of a growing interracial group which is working for radical but non-violent change.

Our prospects would be dismal if the alternatives were violence or the status quo, in South Africa and elsewhere.

We tend to underrate one factor: the power of an idea to move people. We underrated it when Mahatma Gandhi launched his amazing and inspired campaign to liberate India. "My life is my message," said Gandhi, and millions followed him.

We have become cynical in the West. We have bet our lives on so many causes and seen our hopes fail so often. Cynicism takes its toll, even among those who believe in God. Our sense of expectancy shrinks, we do not believe that the God we serve can be an effective force for change.

The churches have been discussing if and to what extent they should support a liberation movement using violence. There are no easy answers. But it is a betrayal if such support, or the resistance against it, is allowed to replace the churches' real task, which is to deal with selfishness, fear and hate in men and thereby open new possibilities for non-violent solutions.

There is satisfying evidence that people do face the evil of their ways and have an impact on seemingly insoluble social and political problems. Some examples were mentioned in the last chapter. Such evidence gives hope to the many who instinctively feel that violence must be replaced by more up-to-date methods of battle.

Mao Tse-tung once said that power grows out of the barrel of a gun. In building the new China, he must have realised that this kind of power is insufficient. In his presence later the Red Guards were told, "If you fight them (the counter-revolutionaries) with violence and power, only their bodies will be affected. If you use common sense, their souls will take notice."[1]

1. *Maos siste revolusjon,* Aschehoug, Oslo, 1970, p. 82.

There is one area where violence should be used: in tackling the aggression and destructiveness in oneself. "No society, however much care it takes of people, can free individuals from the task of mastering their own aggression," writes German psychoanalyst Alexander Mitscherlich. "A productive . . . sense of guilt can only be born when the lust to destroy is recognised as a reality in ourselves. Only then can man begin to free himself from its mastery."[1]

The permissive society is the highroad to violence. "Thrills have become the alpha and omega of our time," writes Stein Mehren. "Every thrill breaks old taboos, and ever new taboos must be conquered. 'Liberation' and 'thrills' will finally end up in violence, because violence is the final boundary they come up against when all earlier experience has lost its appeal."[2]

The refusal to do violence to one's lower nature invariably produces the social coercion we do not want. Moral anarchy provokes an excess of law and order. Most of us cannot take the insecurity of living in a society with no clearly defined rules, and finally choose a prison life where we know what our duties are.

"Why can't the nations get on like one big family?" sighed a father reading his newspaper. "The trouble is, they do," answered his son. War and violence appear to be vast impersonal forces which most of us cannot do much about. Fresh hope is born when we see where we ourselves are part of the problem and begin to take action about that.

1. *Die Idee des Friedens und die menschliche Aggressivität*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1969, p. 827.
2. *op. cit.*, p. 87.

5. Class war

Class war is a fact. But it is one thing to recognise the fact, and another to advocate the intensification of class war as the key to a better future.

A hundred years ago the final consequence of the class struggle was that the working class and the bourgeoisie of a nation confronted each other on the barricades. Today the final consequence will be atomic war between the Communist and the capitalist worlds. It is hard to believe that the bomb will not be used if the very survival of one of the systems is at stake. It is even harder to believe that the ruins left by an atomic war can be the basis for a better future. The Soviet professor Fyodor Burlatski, in a semi-official commentary on his country's foreign policy, states that a nuclear war would be qualitatively different from all former wars. "The economic potential everywhere would be ruined, the devastated territory practically valueless," he concludes.[1]

The men in the Kremlin themselves seem to have reservations about intensifying class war under all circumstances. Boris Ponomarev, a candidate member of the Politbureau responsible for relations with foreign Communist parties, says that the crisis of capitalism is a powerful encouragement in the class struggle, but adds a warning:

1. *Soviet News*, No. 37, Oslo, 1971.

In the atomic age a strengthening of Fascism would make it an even greater danger for humanity than it was before the Second World War.[1]

The question is not limited to the field of international relations. "Two key categories of Marx's theory, namely class struggle and ideology, can no longer be applied unconditionally," writes German philosopher Jürgen Habermas.[2] One reason, he maintains, is that in the West today protest emanates more from different underprivileged groups than from social classes. Most of the initiative comes from students who are themselves children of the privileged. Because this protest lacks class character and does not represent genuine material interests, its chances of achieving a breakthrough are limited.

Nor does Marxism have adequate explanation for certain developments in Eastern Europe. One straw in the wind is the current debate among Western Marxists whether the new power elite in the People's Republics should be considered as a "class" or a "caste".[3] Marx's thinking gives no clear directions.

It is crucial to find your bearings in reality and not in dogmas, said Marx. It is clear that the fight for a more just order within and between nations must be intensified, but there is every reason for a critical review of the means.

The strike weapon must be kept intact. Conflicts of interest are real, and strikes, pressure campaigns and

1. *Aftenposten*, Oslo, 29 January 1975.
2. *Technik und Wissenschaft als "Ideologi"*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1968, p. 84.
3. *Über die Bürokratie*, Ernest Mandel, I.S.P. Verlag, Hamburg, 1974, p. 52.

political action can be necessary to secure justice for groups or individuals. As a German student leader said, "In Germany the existence of dissenting minorities is not even noticed until they engage in provocation."

Our complex and cumbrous Western societies are not easy to move. "The huge party machines have succeeded everywhere in overruling the voice of the citizens, even in countries where freedom of speech and association is still intact," writes Hannah Arendt.[1] Those who do not raise their voices and fight are too often ignored or exploited. The nurses in Norway are an example. To care for the sick is a high calling, but few people were concerned that the nurses had been grossly underpaid for a long time. They were finally driven to strike action to improve their wages and conditions.

But there are also instances of privileged groups striking to increase their privileges, while revolutionary groups support them in order to intensify the class struggle. A recent example was a strike for better pay by Scandinavian Air Lines pilots, who were already earning about £16,000 a year. Both the pilots and the revolutionaries who supported them ignored the fact that such action fosters a grab-what-you-can mentality with its accompanying indifference to the less fortunate. A struggle for better conditions based on solidarity might in the West focus on bettering the lot of the low-wage groups, increasing participation and improving the environment. And further, as the battle for better conditions has often been internationalised within an industry, like shipping or the docks, could more effective ways be found to fight for the

1. *op. cit.*, p. 81.

interests of the lowest-paid of all, the poor and unemployed of the Third World?

Maybe it is unfair to spotlight the pilots when most people – left, right and centre – are out to grab what they can. Though less apparent, class war from the right is as much of a reality as class war from the left. When privileges, power or the cherished order which gives them security are challenged, most people react by trying to strengthen control. Fear shoots adrenalin into the bloodstream, and action is taken to subdue the challenger.

Class war cannot be done away with artificially. The clash of interests can only be lifted to a more constructive level where a revolution in men's minds has taken place. This revolution involves accepting an aim beyond profit and narrow class interests, making work and production serve a moral purpose: the meeting of both the material and the spiritual needs of men.

Some do not expect this kind of revolution to take place. "Shrimps will sooner start to whistle than capitalists to change," said Khrushchev. But it is too superficial to believe that all the reactionaries are in one class and all the progressives in another. A more fundamental battle line runs right through every class and each individual: Do I serve self or my fellow man? In all classes there are people who stubbornly pursue power, money, comfort, status. There are also people in all classes who are ready to face what is wrong and are open for a new departure.

The danger of the international situation and the suffering of millions are so great that we cannot waste opportunities to enlist progressive forces in all classes. Our view of reality gets twisted when we automatically

attribute certain characteristics to members of a class or social group. We no longer see the individual, we see the stereotype. In his poem *I do not forgive them*, the Finnish poet Pentti Saarikoski writes:

> I do not forgive them, for they know what they do . . .
> They are businessmen.
> You always have to pay them more than they themselves pay,
> But I will pay them back in the same coinage.
> They have poisoned the wind, killed the bird and the tree, all my joy . . .
> They spoil heaven and earth rather than relinquish their property.[1]

Surveying the present world, Saarikoski's lament is understandable. But there is a short-circuit in his thinking. Is it just the businessmen who are responsible for poisoning the wind and killing the bird? What about the greed of the rest of us? Placing the responsibility on one class certainly activates people to destroy it. But denying that all men are the same fosters illusions which crumble after the new system has been established. The growth of class differences in the Soviet Union is an example.

Hitler made enemy stereotypes of people of other races or nationalities. The road from this kind of thinking to the gas chambers is not long, as the fate of the Jews shows. On the other hand many "good democrats" labelled all Germans as devils. The stereotypes become a focus for our aggression.

Some will rightly protest that they are not fighting the

1. *Jeg ser over Stalins hode og ut*, Gyldendals Forlag, Oslo, 1970.

capitalist as a person, but the system he represents. This distinction is crucial. A wrong system needs to be fought, and it can be done without assigning its representatives to the garbage heap of history.

Christ was an uncompromising enemy of evil, but he did not discriminate. "I did not come to invite the virtuous people, but the sinners," he said,[1] and sat down for a meal with collaborators of the Roman occupiers. He did not differentiate between left-wing and right-wing, branding some as worse than others. He believed anyone could become a new man. It should be acknowledged, however, that his followers have often failed to follow his example, mostly by castigating the rebel rather than the powerful.

Seeking to change and enlist individuals in all classes is no substitute for a continued battle through trade unions, political parties or other mass organisations. But the results can be far-reaching when members of a nation's political or economic establishment find a new respect for the dignity of all men.

One example is the manager of a large German coal company whom I got to know well. There was enmity between him and the chairman of the works council, dating back to the war years. In the hope of creating a better atmosphere, the manager proposed that they both attend a Moral Re-Armament assembly in Switzerland. The works council chairman refused, and the manager travelled alone. At the gathering he faced the fact that he had given a dishonest reason for firing three miners whom he had considered troublemakers. On his return he invited the works council chairman to his office, apologised

1. Mark 2, 17.

for having lied and offered to take the dismissed men back. A relationship of trust was built between the two men, and later expanded to include other works council members. The result was a degree of works council co-determination which was revolutionary at that time.

Anyone who wants to help another person to find this kind of change needs two qualities: care and vision. Resistance to change is a powerful force, and different defence mechanisms are immediately activated when change is suggested. Where bitterness will only harden resistance, care can sometimes open a person's mind and heart. Vision has the same effect: if a person believes in me and the role I could play in building a better world, it is like an infusion of hope. And hope is a powerful initiator of change.

There are people who think that care and vision for someone on the other side have no place in the relentless struggle between conflicting interests. They think that softness is creeping in, and a readiness to sweep social evils under the carpet for the sake of peace and harmony. And they are right in thinking that some people try to use appeals for understanding and teamwork to blunt the attack on vested interests.

But real care has a hard-nosed quality and is not easily fooled. If you care about people you do not leave anyone undisturbed in their prison cells of small, selfish or irrelevant aims. Nor do you tolerate that others be used in a way which violates their rights or human dignity. You are spurred on to tackle structures or systems which stunt people and reduce their possibilities for growth and happiness.

People with a passion have an impact on society. Care is a source of passion and a force for change with no less potential than bitterness. But it lacks the divisiveness which characterises bitterness and hate.

A social struggle based on care furthers the unity of all those who genuinely want a better world. It creates a new kind of popular front, open for people of all classes, races and nationalities. It is in itself an embryo of the new order, accelerating the process of change on all levels: in man's consciousness, in the formation of better structures, in overcoming prejudice and discrimination, in furthering international solidarity.

Marx saw the classless society as the goal of history. He believed it would come to birth after a period of education under the dictatorship of the proletariat. But is dictatorship, even on behalf of the majority, conducive to the new attitudes which are a precondition of genuine equality? "To co-ordinate rather than subordinate, to awaken rather than command" is a form of human relations which meets a deep need in our age, writes Garaudy.[1] "We have never believed, even in 1945, that one single party – or single class – can solve the problems of our country," says Enrico Berlinguer, the leader of the Italian Communists.[2]

The forward thrust towards equality may today take new avenues. Decentralisation of power, sharing of responsibility, the extension of self-determination may be the larger theme played by history at this juncture.

1. *op. cit.*, p. 179.
2. *Time*, 30 June 1975.

6. Bureaucratisation

If any one of the social systems had a convincing answer to bureaucratisation, it would be an irrelevant subject in this book. Adequate structural remedies would be available.

When systems as different as those of the United States and the Soviet Union both complain about the same affliction, however, it indicates that structural anomalies are not the whole problem.

The importance and influence of bureaucracies are likely to keep increasing. The complexity of modern life makes a growing army of experts necessary. To most ordinary mortals it is not given to penetrate the bewildering maze of technical or economic data. They have to leave it to the expert and hope for the best. This is a powerful source of alienation. At the same time expertise will inevitably bring power to those who possess it.

"At the present time, the President of the United States is largely a captive of his own bureaucracy and the Congress is a captive of its own committees," writes Professor Niskanen of the University of California, who has held key posts in the U.S. Government.[1]

1. *Bureaucracy: Servant or Master?*, William A. Niskanen, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1973, p. 62.

In Eastern Europe, the bureaucracy has become "the real consumer of surplus value", comments a disillusioned German Marxist. The inner group that makes overall decisions on behalf of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe, writes British International Socialist Chris Harman, "is comparable perhaps to the board of directors of a capitalist company – except that they have concentrated in their hands not merely economic decisions, but also control over the police, the enforcement of law, the use of military power".[1]

A British Member of Parliament complains that all but a tithe of policy decisions and almost the whole of the administration never comes near the Ministers. "With 700,000 bureaucrats and 70 Ministers it could hardly be otherwise," he concludes.[2]

Whether these assessments of bureaucratic power are correct or not, the problem of keeping ultimate control in the hands of the elected representatives of the people is real. It is becoming ever more difficult to see who is making the decisions, says a Norwegian Cabinet Minister.[3]

Bureaucratisation, however, is only partly the responsibility of the bureaucracy itself. The Dean of the California Graduate School of Public Policy writes that "government is increasingly getting a skewed distribution of problems that are insoluble precisely because people demand of

1. *Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe*, Pluto Press, London, 1974, p. 147.
2. *Bureaucracy: Servant or Master?*, essay by Nicholas Ridley, M.P., p. 88.
3. Bjartmar Gjerde, *Aftenposten*, Oslo, 24 February 1975.

government what government cannot do".[1] U.S. Senator Hart of Colorado puts it more succinctly: "You can't get the Federal Government off your back until you get your hand out of its pocket."[2]

There are ways to counterbalance bureaucratic power. Elected representatives can have sufficient and independent expertise at their disposal. Power can be decentralised, shifting decision-making closer to those affected by the decisions. The processers of policymaking can be made more transparent, exposing plans and projects to public scrutiny from their very inception.

An American economist, in the best American tradition, suggests introducing an element of competition between different departments and a financial reward system to encourage economy and efficiency. A British colleague thinks that a direct allocation of taxes by the taxpayer to departments of his choice would force them to make themselves more efficient in the taxpayers' eyes. Suggestions like these, whether realistic or not, will get a sympathetic hearing from anyone who has fought a losing battle against the inflexibility and sheer deafness of a bureaucratised institution.

A strong body of Trotskyite opinion sees workers' control and workers' self-management in industry as the main answer to bureaucratisation. Bureaucratisation in Eastern Europe is considered the result of the leadership's betrayal of this idea. "The historical tragedy of the Soviet Union is that the majority of the leaders of the Party at

1. *U.S. News and World Report*, Washington, D.C., 16 August, 1976.
2. *ibid.*

the decisive moment did not recognise the phenomenon of bureaucracy," writes Ernest Mandel. "If the Bolshevik Party had understood the problem in time, in the beginning of the twenties, and allowed the formation of fractions within the party, if at the same time certain forms of workers' control had been introduced in industry, the resistance against bureaucratisation would have been much stronger." But even these reforms, he continues, could not have prevented the victory of bureaucracy, unless they had coincided with "a more rapid industrialisation, a voluntary and expanding collectivisation of agriculture and a victorious completion of the international revolution in China and Germany".[1]

The number of 'ifs' can make even the optimistic apprehensive about the chances of overcoming bureaucratisation in the future. Will workers' control really do it? Ernest Mandel himself reports a case from Yugoslavia where the democratically elected workers' council (Arbeiterräte) suggested that 25 per cent of the firm's workers should be dismissed in order to increase the wages of the 75 per cent who stayed on. "The common interest of the proletariat as a class is not automatically identical with the interest of individual groups of workers," comments Mandel.[2]

The question is whether any amount of structural safeguards will be effective if they are superimposed on a selfish motivation.

"Bureaucracy possesses the state's essence . . . as its private property," Marx writes, branding the bureaucracy's

1. *op. cit.*, p. 31.
2. *op. cit.*, p. 45.

apparent concern for humanity as a cover-up for its own materialistic interests.[1] But his cure failed. In professed Marxist nations, the weed is in full bloom.

Hitler was aware of the problem. In *Mein Kampf* he wrote, "If a movement is organised mechanically from the top downwards, there is great danger that a person who gets a post he is not suited for, out of envy will try to keep abler people from advancing. The damage caused in a case like this can be fateful for a young movement."[2] Awareness, however, was not enough. The organisation he created was thoroughly bureaucratic.

The Chinese effort to cure bureaucratisation may be more promising. They seem determined to do something about basic attitudes, exhorting people to serve the nation rather than self-interest. It would be a great achievement if they succeeded.

The Cuban leaders, according to one observer, view bureaucratic tendencies as a mystical affliction with an unknown cause.[3] The mystery may simply be that no system, however perfect, has found how to deal with man's instinctive drives for power and control.

Something happens to man when power, position and privilege come his way. With power comes the fear of toppling from power, and with fear the desire to keep everything under control. Decentralisation always involves a loss of control, and is consequently resisted. Colleagues are seen as competitors, and those who

1. *op. cit.*, p. 33.
2. Chapter on "Propaganda and Organisation".
3. Martin Albrow, *Bureaucracy*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1970, p. 92.

disagree become a threat to our nimbus of omniscience.

Immovable establishments and fossilised structures are partly a fruit of selfish motives. If we want to get to the top for our own sakes, and we do get there, then we have arrived. We are established. Changes become a threat to our place on the peak of power, or more modestly, at the fleshpots.

Seeking power because I want to serve, or to improve or change something, is a different matter. One fruit of such motivation is readiness to risk my position for what I hold to be right. It attacks one of the roots of bureaucratisation: conformism.

I conform when I think or do what I believe is expected of me rather than what I think is right. The most common reasons are fear, ambition and wanting to be in somebody's good books. In the process I sell my freedom. "But who doesn't want to get rid of that?" writes Professor J. Sloek of Aarhus University.[1] "Especially when you find someone who is willing to buy it. The security of a group instead of the insecurity of standing alone! Then you willingly accept the authoritarian and oppressive aspects into the bargain."

A Swedish employer I talked to was exasperated by the toll that conformism is taking in many firms. Subordinates withhold unorthodox ideas which might be resented by their bosses and adversely affect their careers. Controversial issues are avoided. The creativity of a real give and take between conflicting views is lost. Power gets more and more centralised and dictatorial tendencies are reinforced.

1. *Berlingske Tidende*, Copenhagen, 19 July 1974.

The problem is not limited to the higher echelons. In a letter to a Gothenburg newspaper a Swedish worker asks, "Whose guilt is it that individuals don't dare to speak up, even when they sense that the majority is on their side? Like a flock of sheep they let themselves be led by a few upstarts. What kind of democracy is this?"[1]

The cost is a lack of balance and corrective. Groups gallop off in the wrong direction, when one man's honest conviction could have initiated a process of rethinking.

Recent Soviet pedagogy is wrestling with this problem. The educator Vassily Sukomlinski writes, "A man who has never taken an important step from his own conviction cannot be a conscious creator (of Communism). He is at best a disciplined executor of another's will . . . Communists are men who are not led by the opinions of other people, but by their own conscience."[2] Whether this insight represents the real aim of Soviet education is another matter. The rough treatment given to dissenters indicates the opposite.

It is no doubt in response to deep feelings in the population that political parties are increasingly making debureaucratisation a part of their platform. In the years ahead many of the structural remedies mentioned earlier will be applied. But the spirit and attitude of the bureaucrats themselves will continue to be a crucial factor. "No rules apply themselves," writes sociologist Martin Albrow. "They are applied by people who have the double task of interpreting their meaning and evaluating whether the

1. *Göteborgstidningen*, 15 March 1975.
2. *Über die Erziehung des kommunistischen Menschen*, Volk und Wissen, Berlin, 1965, p. 34.

empirical conditions justify their application. In other words, one has to act by discretion, and all rules depend on the spirit in which this discretion is exercised."[1]

Mao pointed to permanent revolution as the answer to opportunistic attitudes and fossilised power structures. But permanent revolution goes against the grain of human nature. We prefer security, comfort, peace. The will to risk new departures has to be born deep in the human heart.

1. *op. cit.*, p. 135.

7. Satisfaction

"I can't get no satisfaction – I try and I try," sing the Rolling Stones in one of their hits.

Though pampered by a high standard of living, protected by social security, entertained by art and media, man in the affluent West can't get no satisfaction.

Some are driven to drugs. Others just quietly eat too much, drink too much or fornicate too much. Some drown themselves in work. Others do as little work as possible and spend their evenings passively imbibing whatever television pours into them. And some just drop out.

The reason why we get no satisfaction may be that we are so engrossed in pursuing it. We have forgotten that satisfaction is a by-product of living by the right values.

The old recipe for keeping a nation happy was bread and circuses. Obviously a lot of people still believe in it, among them many of our leaders. The merry-go-round of increased consumption keeps turning. Criers in the desert warn that our resources are limited, that obesity is bad for us, that millions are starving on other continents. But most of us keep pursuing affluence for all we are worth.

One reason may be that we do not see what else could give content to our lives. A false sense of values cannot be

replaced simply by pointing out that it is false. It must be replaced by a better alternative.

Herbert Marcuse maintains that Western man is becoming one-dimensional, that there is no cellar and no attic to the house he is building for himself. His diagnosis is reflected in the words of Norwegian author Sigbjørn Hølmebakk, a co-founder of the Marxist Socialist People's Party: "The deepest question for man must be: What about myself? This is an existential question. I am. What do I actually want of my life? We have come to a point where we understand a lot, except perhaps the things which are most important. If we want to take responsibility for the future of humanity – and that is indeed the aim of Communism and socialism – these questions cannot be left to the bourgeoisie."[1]

Suppressing such questions means amputating some of our humanity. In his book *Small is Beautiful*, E. F. Schumacher speaks of our need to become whole men: "The 'whole man' . . . may have little detailed knowledge of facts and theories . . . *but he will be truly in touch with the centre*. He will not be in doubt about his basic convictions, about his view on the meaning and purpose of his life. He may not be able to explain these matters in words, but the conduct of his life will show a certain sureness of touch which stems from his inner clarity."[2]

This inner clarity is the only alternative to the attraction of false values. The question is how to find it.

The search will inevitably lead into the realm of beliefs

1. *Dagbladet*, Oslo, 22 March 1976.
2. Sphere Books, London, 1974, p. 77.

or faith. Religion does not have a monopoly on faith. To believe that Communism will lead to a classless society is very much an act of faith, not least in the light of developments in many countries with Communist regimes. The anarchist who believes that the world will become a paradise when the oppressive state is abolished has a very strong faith indeed. Even the average consumption-minded Westerner has faith: that getting more and more is the fulfilment of life.

Marx called religion the opiate of the people. This is true if people allow religion to be an escape from the bitter realities of the world and from the responsibility to do something about them.

But is this necessarily a characteristic of religion? The lives of some men show that it is not. Drawing strength from their faith, Mahatma Gandhi achieved the liberation of India, Wilberforce ended the slave trade, Keir Hardie pioneered the British labour movement.

"The true alternative to a religion that is the opium of the people is not positivist atheism," writes Garaudy. "Because positivism is not only a world without God, but a world without man. The true alternative is a militant and creative faith, to which the real is not only what is, but includes all the future possibilities that appear impossible to one who does not have the ability to hope."[1]

It is understandable that many write God off as a gigantic delusion. The crimes committed in the name of religion, and the way many religious people live, make it hard to believe that there is a higher source of integrity

1. *op. cit.*, p. 83.

and wisdom. When man perverts an idea, however, it sometimes says more about man than about the idea.

To avoid the traps of arrogance and onesidedness, it is necessary to be aware of our limitations. Those who are rigidly convinced that they already see the full truth close the door to further insight.

"Marx's dialectics is based on a critical conception of knowledge that considers it to be not a reflection but an act by which we move toward a verifying experience with hypotheses or models that are constantly open to revision," writes Garaudy. "Just as (the theologian) Barth said, 'Everything I say about God is said by a man', a Marxist can never forget that 'everything I say of nature and history is said by a man'. Without this critical and relativising element theological and revolutionary thought can only produce inquisitorial clericalism or despotic Stalinism."[1]

We must not, however, relativise our convictions to a point where life consists mainly of doubts and question marks. Man cannot live on such a diet and be satisfied. We have to search for the highest truth and then decide to live by it. We have to make a choice. As Solzhenitsyn says: "There are no loopholes for anybody who wants to be honest. On any given day, any of us will be confronted with one of the choices: either truth or falsehood, either a choice towards spiritual independence or a choice towards spiritual submission and servitude."[2]

But what is the truth? Marx thought that religion was nothing but a projection of man's longing to transcend

1. *op. cit.*, p. 78.
2. *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record*, Penguin Books, London, 1974, p. 378.

himself, that man created God. On the other hand some of those who have penetrated the furthest into the secrets of the universe, like Einstein, believed the opposite.

When it comes to the very meaning of existence, however, it is not sufficient to let other people do the thinking for us. The road of experiment and discovery lies open to anyone.

In my own case, I decided to abandon faith in God when I was in high school. One reason was that I could not reconcile the way I was living with the moral standards inherent in my faith. To be honest with myself, I either had to give up some things I rather enjoyed, or drop my faith. I decided in favour of the second.

The road I took back to faith started while I was at university. I had become fed up with living in a no man's land of scepticism, aimlessness and compromise. Without preconceptions, as a grown man I had to reach clarity on what I was going to base my life on.

Many Communist thinkers besides Sukomlinski emphasize the importance of the conscience. For me it became a stepping stone to faith. There are two voices speaking inside us, one telling us to do what we think is right, the other to take the selfish or easy way. I took ample time to review my life in the light of what this "inner voice" told me, partly writing down my conclusions. It was a process of becoming more realistic. I saw what my shabby way of treating certain people had done to them, not least within my own family. I was forced to draw conclusions about my own character which had consequences for my philosophy of life. The discovery

of what I could only call evil in myself changed my perspective on both personal and social problems. I saw that the battle between good and evil had to be fought, and that the front line goes through every person, class, race and nation.

The question of the existence or non-existence of God can only be answered by experience. To gather evidence it is necessary to have an open mind and to experiment. In my case the experiment was to act on the supposition that there is a God who can make himself known to me; that this God has a plan which I can discover and carry out; that God speaks to me when I am quiet and listen. The experiment was preceded by a decision. I said to a God whose existence I doubted: "If you are there, I will do what you tell me."

A mute God would be of little help in man's search for meaning. My experiment convinced me that God is there and speaks to man. Carrying out the thoughts I had in these times of quiet produced the evidence: I was able to help people I could not help before, and found myself having an impact on problems which I had considered insoluble.

Many people have become alienated from society and world events because they cannot see how individual effort will make a difference to either. They withdraw to the private sphere and leave the battle of shaping the future to others. In doing so, they condemn themselves to a life without meaning.

When the dimension of faith comes in, new possibilities open. The Creator has a plan and destiny for his creation, and every person can be shown his or her part in realising

it. Individual effort becomes part of a coordinated whole, of the master builder's design for the future.

Through this collaboration we discover the true potential of the individual. Human dignity is enhanced. And we have the satisfaction of knowing that what we are and do makes a difference.

8. Commitment

The aim of this book is to enlist people in a double task: on the one hand the attitudes and values of men must be changed on a vast scale. On the other a restructuring of crucial aspects of economic and political life, both within and between nations, must be conceived and put into effect.

Equipping oneself for the task takes hard work and unwavering commitment. It cannot be done on the cheap. It means streamlining your life and abandoning everything which runs counter to your purpose. It affects where you live, what job you take, whom you associate with, how you use time and money.

It also involves study. Being of good will and having unselfish motives is not enough. "It has been said that you cannot make a good omelette out of bad eggs," writes F. J. Sheed. "This is true. But many people – I for one – could not make a good omelette even with good eggs. For there is a matter of skill in cookery ihvolved. Similarly with the construction of a society. Economic laws without moral laws will fail; but whoever proceeds to the making of a concrete social order for men to live under here and now, and in this task has no equipment save a knowledge of moral laws, will produce a well-intentioned mess. The production of a sound social order is a task of terrifying

difficulty, beyond the power of any one man or any one generation. In this matter 'good will' does not mean merely relying upon God; it means the most intense effort to do man's part . . . It is the business of men to construct a social order in which economic laws and the moral laws are harmonised."[1]

Because the task is beyond any one generation, the study of history is also essential. "It would not be an exaggeration to say," writes Professor Herbert Butterfield of Cambridge University, "that those people who study merely nineteenth-century history, and see the nineteenth century running by apparently natural processes into the world of the present day, are liable to fall into a routine of thinking which actually incapacitates them for any appreciation of the profounder characteristics of our time."[2]

One characteristic of our time is our increasing global interdependence. Unsolved problems in any part of the world inevitably affect all parts. For an independent-minded Norwegian it is a stretch to realise that his future may be decided in some distant country he knows little about, and not in Oslo. But, as the facts of science, economics and politics combine to show, all men do "indeed belong to a single system, depending for its survival on the balance and health of the total system".[3]

Gearing our lives to this reality and discovering how to act

1. *Communism and Man*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1951, p. 190.
2. *Christianity and History*, Collins, London, 1964, p. 96.
3. Barbara Ward, René Dubos, *Only One Earth*, Penguin Books, London, 1972, p. 297.

relevantly in the light of it is part of a realistic commitment.

It often involves sacrifice. At a time when I was planning a well-ordered life in Norway, I received an invitation to live and work in Germany, which I had hated and fought against during the war. The invitation came in 1948, when Germany's cities were still filled with ruins and its people with a sense of isolation and hopelessness. The thought that a new Europe could not be built without Germany challenged me. After a struggle, I went, and stayed for five years. I learned some invaluable lessons, and was also able to contribute something. In the process I began to love Germany as a second home.

The challenge of commitment extends from the global to the intimate. There was a period in my life when my interest in a girl pushed most other considerations into the periphery. Being in love is one of life's great gifts, but I had let it come before my calling. When I put my commitment first, I discovered that she was not the right girl for me. It was painful, but it also set her free to find the road she was meant to take. At the same time it was a step towards finding my wife, with whom I share a happy though not always tranquil marriage. We now live in Oslo and have two daughters.

Commitment can also mean that good and interesting activities which do not further my purpose have to go; so may gadgets which unnecessarily consume time and money. One reason why we get busier and busier is that maintenance of all the things we own claims so much of our time. It was a wise man who said: Why be so afraid of losing your life suddenly, and yet have no regard to throwing it away by parcels and piecemeal?

Making your life count, however, does not mean becoming a revolutionary robot. "In the 'unnecessary' there is a reserve of humanity," writes Stein Mehren. "Turning away from 'necessity' for a while is important – in order to love a person, to receive another's sorrow or confidences, to read a book, look at a flower, suckle a baby, dream a dream. In this return to ourselves . . . lies a seed of new visions, of a new understanding of what we are."[1]

What parents are committed to decides how they bring up their children. For some, keeping their children out of trouble becomes the supreme aim in life. Their fears and ambitions are a bond which the children either become subject to or rebel against. Parents who are committed to an unselfish aim convey a sense of direction by the way they live and can dispense with much of the protecting and controlling.

"No man is worthy of me who cares more for father or mother, son or daughter than for me," said Christ.[2] For many people a decision to give everything for what they believe in has involved a painful break with relatives or friends who thought otherwise. It has also cost people their reputations or jobs. But where such actively selfless and responsible people are missing, a society becomes tolerant of wrong and stagnates. In the long run it becomes the seedbed of violence.

A crucial part of commitment is creating a team. Because they do not know how to build and work as part of a force, many well-meaning individualists are stopped or silenced before they achieve any results. One more

1. *op. cit.*, p. 65.
2. Matthew 10, 37.

martyr, shrugs the world, and moves on in the same old direction.

A united group of people with a common aim are not so easily shrugged off. They stand the chance of breaking through. That is why opposition to them is even more determined. In fact, the absence of persecution is a sure sign that what you are working on is harmless.

Creating a team is difficult. "We all believe in the same thing," a member of a Marxist group once told me. "But I don't know what to do about the rivalries and back-stabbing among us." The same problems are well-known in other groups, including religious ones. It is one reason why so many avoid the challenge of having to work closely with difficult people. But society pays a price for this kind of escapism.

Learning to make the other person great is one key to creating a united group. It means being as concerned about the growth and destiny of other people in the group as I am about my own.

Another key is to respect the independence and integrity of each person. In the effort to make a group march in step, it is easy to trample on diverging convictions. There is the temptation to manipulate men's fears and ambitions to secure a united front.

This may work, but it is not in the best interest of the work to be done. Of course marching in step makes you strong. But if it happens at the expense of the individual's integrity, the strength is more apparent than real. If each person is not firmly rooted in his or her sense of right and wrong, a vital source of direction is lost. The group's vulnerability to error increases.

To build an effective force involves being a shepherd as much as a leader. It means caring for the whole man, for spiritual as well as material needs. And it means being a real friend.

Most people quickly sense whether the care and attention given them are genuine or tactical. One test is faithfulness. If the care ceases when the person ceases to be of use, its genuineness is in doubt.

Genuine friendships are doubly important in groups tackling social evil. They take heavy punishment from ruthless men determined to run the world their way. Only a deeply united and committed group can stand up to it and break through.

The most dedicated and united group, however, is ineffective unless it works with a strategy, with a concept of how to achieve a breakthrough. This strategy must include reaching the centres of power. Too many are satisfied with doing a good job in their corner of the ship, while others are on the bridge and decide the overall direction. People who mean business fight for those on the bridge to share their ideas, or else get on the bridge themselves. St Paul had the passion to get his message to Rome, the capital of the super-power of his age. Lenin was not satisfied with forming revolutionary cells all over Russia. He wanted Russia to be run by Marxists. Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, had a similar passion. "I want the world to be governed by men who are governed by God," were his last words.

In our polycentric world, defining and affecting the centres of power is a difficult task. The power of the establishments is not what it was. The potential of the

grass-roots and committed minorities has been amply demonstrated. An ideologically motivated caretaker may have more power in a school than the headmaster. And Moscow and Washington are not as obviously the power centres of the world as they have been.

Pursuing a strategy usually means going where the stones are rough and tackling the thorny problems which most people shy away from. It may be corruption in places high or low, the infiltration of a subversive ideology, the social or racial prejudices of a community, the selfishness and bitterness at the root of an inflamed conflict.

To find the nerve-centres we need a higher source of direction than the human brain, however well-informed. Today no one knows where we are heading. Many threats are on the horizon: the bomb, the population explosion, the shortage of food and resources, pollution, a society dehumanised through science. No leaders in Washington, Paris, Moscow or Peking have things under control. If anyone can stake a safe course it is the Creator of it all, who has a purpose and destiny for his creation. By listening we can discover what it is. When man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts.

Anyone, a professor or an illiterate, a fisherman in the Arctic or a farmer in India, can receive instructions from the same source and become part of a coherent attack on the world's ills.

9. Conclusion

Protest is a mark of our age. We are anti-establishment, anti-Communist, anti-American, anti-white or -black. And indeed there is much to protest about.

But the "antis" usually have a weakness. They condemn what is wrong, but their alternative is not convincing. One reason may be that they apply double standards. They measure injustice and exploitation in their own camp with one yardstick, and wrongs in the opposite camp with another. It reveals that what they are against is not wrong as such, but the other camp.

The self-righteousness of the opposing camps is an obstacle to progress. Many people in the West are shocked by the Soviets' use of injections to break people opposed to the regime. And it is indeed barbaric. But how many lives in the West have been ruined as thoroughly by young people in particular injecting drugs of their own free will? Have we faced what it is in Western society, in us, which produces that kind of result? And have we repented? If we had, our censure of others would have a new ring of authority. The protests would become dangerous to those they are directed at.

One of Norway's best-known theologians, Dr Thorleif Boman, wrote recently about Communism and the non-Communist West: "With sadness I must confess that I do

not any longer see any basic moral difference between the two sides. Neither has any reason to sermonise to the other side about morality."[1]

Having read some of Dr Boman's books, I know that he does not think there is no moral difference between a society which respects human rights and a society that does not; or a society which has free elections and one that does not. I believe he wants to get at a deeper level: the betrayal of truth.

Christ reserved his harshest judgement for the Pharisees, who were the trustees of the truth which God had given the Jews through the ages. They were the representatives of decency and obedience to the law, but they had betrayed the truth.

In his play *Mr Brown Comes Down the Hill*, British playwright and leader of Moral Re-Armament, Peter Howard, writes: "Here are the Communists teeming over half the earth. From their mother's milk they've been fed Karl Marx. They've been taught to hate God. They have no knowledge of Him except by stealth and instinct. They've murdered Him, or done their best to do it. But they've marched through blood, torture, misery to feed the hungry, house the homeless, put hope of something new into the hearts of humanity.

"Then there are the non-Communists with their strong sense of their own righteousness. They talk about God. Some of them even print 'In God We Trust' on their money. Out of this half of the earth, with all their opportunities and protestations, have come two world wars in

1. *Aftenposten*, Oslo, 30 April 1974.

fifty years, the castor oil of Fascism, the gas chambers and Gestapo of Hitler, and the toleration of social and economic injustices that gave Marx his philosophy and Stalin his fuel and flame. They've been taught to fear God, but all they do is to flee from Him. Now you have the Christian West glorifying sex and satirising faith – rationalising the materialism that they despise and hate in their enemies. They've had the wealth. They've had the power. They've had the chance of faith. They've been entrusted, so they say, with the hope and truth of all ages. What have they done with it?"[1]

The way out of the paralysis of mutual accusations and no change is the old maxim: Sweep your own doorstep first. Starting with our own camp, it is within our power to see that something gets done; while our judgement of others often produces nothing but self-defence and a hardened resistance to changing anything.

Norway's former Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen tells a story about Khrushchev's visit to Norway in 1964. During the Soviet leader's preceding visits to Denmark and Sweden, Gerhardsen had made an observation. Whenever Khrushchev was shown some aspect of life which his hosts were particularly proud of, he would respond by saying that everything was just as good or better in the Soviet Union.

During the Oslo visit, Gerhardsen took Khrushchev on a drive through some of the most rundown and dirty parts of the city, explaining that it was just too bad that areas like these existed, but that we had not had the time

1. Blandford Press, London, 1964, p. 81.

or resources to improve them. Khrushchev was quiet for a while, then he responded: "Actually, it's just as bad in the Soviet Union!"

Starting with our own failures does not solve everything. But it would make a tremendous difference in the prestige- and mistrust-ridden international climate of today. It would also help us to come to grips with the real problems, instead of living in the make-believe world where our enemy's problems get more attention than our own.

Of course this must not be confused with "ideological coexistence". If you have a vision of the kind of society you want to create, you will fight for it, and this will necessarily bring you into conflict with those who hold other ideas. "It is possible to fight false ideology only with genuine ideology and not with 'non-ideology'," says Mihailo Mihailov, the Yugoslav writer.[1]

No amount of wishful thinking can do away with the struggle of ideologies. But we must try to lift it to a more creative level. Fear, hate, chauvinism, demagoguery, manipulation bring in a destructive element. We must get to the point where our opponents are not our enemies. Then the clash of ideologies will contribute towards finding the new forms of social organisation and the new attitudes which are necessary.

It should be possible to achieve a high degree of unanimity about certain structural changes which the facts of our human situation are forcing upon us. According to conservative estimates, the world population will

1. *New York Times*, 23 December 1975.

at least double before growth can be expected to stop. Thus food production becomes a priority. All countries should fully utilise their soil resources for this purpose. At the same time food sources like the oceans and arable land must be protected from pollution and over-exploitation.

The droughts in different parts of the world have focused the fact that fresh water is a limited resource. At the moment Oslo citizens use 200 litres of water per head per day. Measures to cut down waste could surely be introduced.

The pace of extraction of non-renewable sources of energy, like oil and coal, should be considered in the light of the needs of the future generations. Priority should be given to energy sources which man's use will not exhaust, such as the sun, the wind, the waves, earth heat and, within the limits posed by ecology, the rivers. Atomic energy can only be exploited fully if a safe way is found to dispose of radioactive waste.

Man himself is a considerable source of energy, especially if there will be over eight billion of us. At the moment there are, according to the estimates of the International Labour Organisation, about 300 million unemployed or seriously underemployed in the developing countries. In the developed countries, 18 millions are without work.[1] In a future with foreseeable shortages, can we afford not to make full use of the energy resources of man himself? As recommended by Dr Schumacher[2]

1. ILO Information, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1976.
2. *op. cit.*

the wide-spread introduction of more manpower-intensive technology can be a remedy.

Another inescapable task is to narrow the gap between developed and developing nations. Apart from the gross immorality of the present situation, there can never be security and stability as long as poverty and plenty exist side by side. There should be an increase in straightforward economic aid. The West has not lived up to its promises. A stabilisation of the prices of raw materials must be brought about. The large-scale transfer of technology from developed to developing nations is necessary, even in fields where the rich countries find themselves building up competition to their own industries. Developed countries may then have to spend large sums to retrain people and create jobs in fields favoured by their local conditions.

Whether these tasks can be fulfilled without a reduction of consumption in the developed countries is a question. What seems clear is that the necessary changes cannot be effected on the basis of old laissez-faire liberalism. A greater degree of government intervention and steering will be necessary. That poses the danger of increased bureaucratisation and a paralysis of initiative. To counteract it, a maximum degree of decentralisation must be effected and a battle fought to strengthen the responsibility, participation and vigilance of all citizens. A genuine dialogue must precede the shaping of policy, especially on long-range issues. Individuals and groups with initiative and a sense of responsibility, not only for the immediate but also for distant peoples and future generations, can keep government steering to a minimum.

Only those who are motivated by a passionate concern for all men will be able to stake out the right course. This concern must include everyone from the impoverished Indian villager to the Commissar at his desk in the Kremlin or the President of General Motors. It does not shut its eyes to the guilt that weighs heavily on many, but it is open to the possibility that even the guilty can change.

There is a price to be paid by all – Communist and non-Communist, developed and developing nations alike. We will have to accept a growth in character, a renunciation of personal and national selfishness, an expansion of responsibility which none of us will find on the cheap.

Is the birth of a better age just a pipe-dream, or is it the goal of history? Christ stated that God's Kingdom on earth will be established one day, marking a final victory over evil. Marx predicted the birth of a classless society. Through all of man's blood-stained past, the dream of a better day has remained alive, sometimes in the most naive or perverted forms.

I myself believe it will come. And that we all have a part in deciding at what price and how soon.