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Community : A Humanistic Vision of Social Life

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COMMUNITY: A HUMANISTIC VISION OF SOCIAL LIFE

I. INTRODUCTION

Man has been a dreamer from time immemorial. Regardless of the socio-historical conditions in which he found himself, he always dreamed of a better world. The human dream of a better future took different shapes under different sociohistorical conditions. For example, in the modern scientific era, the idea of building a utopia on earth has been tied to the development of science. Saint-Simon's "New Christianity", Comte's "Religion of Humanity", B. F. Skinner's "Walden Two", etc. are scientific versions of man's age-old dream of an utopia. In this day and age of technocratic rationalism, the concepts such as community, utopia, vision, and dream do have the connotations of unrealism, romanticism, irrationality, and reactionism. Yet man's hunger for a community of peace, justice and prosperity is still alive.

It is the position of the author that man is a dreamer by nature. Man's authentic dreams are not mere wishful thinking on his part unlike the claims of some reductionistic psychologists. The dreams are rooted in human depth, especially in one's sense of justice, community and creativity. It is the humanistic position that man is not only capable of building a social order of justice, but also that man needs such a social order to be truly and fully human. Man needs to feel that he belongs to a decent society, a community where he is accepted, respected and can feel proud of being a member. Moreover, when the social structures are unrelated to basic human depth and hunger, the individuals involved will be alienated and their life meaningless. The author has dealt with the basic human depth and needs from a humanistic perspective in another article (forthcoming); in this one, the emphasis is on a conception (vision) of a social order which can be called a community.

Historically there are several reasons why there is a great deal of rethinking about social order (structure) during the second half of the 20th century. First of all, science and technology which were once regarded

as the savior of humanity, have brought us to the brink of total destruction. Secondly, the modern individualistic market mentality, based on unrestricted competition, has not only created gigantic governments, monopolistic industries and bureaucratic technocracies, but also made millions and millions poverty-stricken especially in the underdeveloped countries. Thirdly, in the name of universalism, the market mentality has been instrumental in destroying a great deal of cultural complexity of man, and created a sort of cultural imperialism. Fourthly, revolutions and counter-revolutions have become widespread phenomena throughout the world, as social consciousness in the world is raised to an all-time high level. Fifthly, the human cost of technological approach is highly evident. Alienation, drug-addiction, alcoholism, vandalism, meaninglessness, and anxiety are considerably higher in the industrialized nations compared to the non-industrialized ones. Finally, the West, the birth place of modern technocratic, individualistic market mentality is no longer the unchallenged leader of the world. It is always easier to criticize the thinking of a nation (culture) when that nation is no longer the unchallenged leader of the world.

In social science there is a growing realization that there is something fundamentally wrong with the modern social life. Sorokin's *Crisis of our Age*, Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, D. Reisman's *Lonely Crowd*, William Whyte's *The Organization Man*, Philip Slater's *Pursuit of Loneliness*, Jules Henry's *Culture Against Man*, Gouldner's *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counterculture and Where The Waste Land Ends*, Charles Reich's *The Greening of America*, for example reflect, the above-noted uneasiness with modern social life. These social thinkers follow the concern of the 19th century thinkers. Toennies' concern about "gessellschaft", Marx's "alienation," Durkheim's "loss of collective conscience," Weber's "disenchantment" and Simmel's "objectification" of modern life deal with the same problem. We need a new social order if we are to cope with the new sociohistorical conditions of modern life. The 18th century social order is no longer adequate to cope with the dynamics of the present. The question is whether we should make a simple adjustment to the environment or should we create a new social order consistent with our internal nature and our external environment. Before that problem can be tackled it is important to take a close look at the modern social systems.

II. THE NATURE OF MODERN MARKET SOCIAL SYSTEMS*

(a) *Individualistic*: In the history of Western social thought, there has been a steady increase on the emphasis on the individual ever since the Renaissance, at the expense of community. Hobbes, Machiavelli, Adam

* The concept such as market mentality, collectivism, technocratic rationalism are used as abstract concepts, not as substitutes for particular nations or cultures.

Smith, etc. were basically individualistic in their thinking. In fact Adam Smith's position that by doing what is good for oneself, he or she is building (unintentionally) a good social order became a major, if not the major, driving force of modern individualism. The modern individualism has been a liberating force to some extent, no doubt. However, it is one thing to liberate the individual from the oppressive social structures, but it is entirely another thing to be liberated from all social bonds. The former type of liberation is creative whereas the latter type is destructive, since man is a social animal who needs to be rooted in a community. Individualism is an ideology when it is separated from other values in life.

(b) *Rationalistic, Technocratic, Bureaucratic*: By technocracy, the author means what Roszak has in mind when the latter defines it as progress, updating, modernizing and rationalizing (1969, p. 5). In the name of modernizing we have produced newer and newer models of technology. The newness of technology became an indicator of progress according to technocratic rationality. It was this modernistic, technocratic mentality which was responsible for the sense of superiority on the part of the industrialized nations towards the less industrialized ones, the mentality which destroyed the sense of community with others. The technocratic mentality is community-destroying in another way. It replaces everything historical and traditional with what is modern and new, whereas any ongoing community is rooted in tradition and history. We are yet to learn that we do not build a future by simply destroying the past. Only a future which is rooted in the past has any meaning to the people involved. Man's faith in himself is rooted in his memory of human struggle for a better and nobler life on earth. He who struggles for a better social order stands with all who have done so.

There is more than a functional relationship between the emergence of market mentality (market structures and powers) and the destruction of communities. Those who controlled the markets had a vested interest in destroying man's loyalties to his family, culture, tradition, etc., to make him wedded to the forces of market. The individual was made more free to buy the products of market! Thus a cultural homogenization is also associated with the emergence of market mentality. A market system based on mass production and mass consumption is based on a built-in destruction of goods to pave the ways for continued demand for newer and newer goods as Packard noted (1960). However, it should be noted that there is nothing wrong with technology or rationality or market. Man moved a great step forward when he left the world of magic and superstition by using reason. The use of technology was a breakthrough in the history of man. Technology is responsible for giving man a control over nature; but the technocrats assumed that all our problems can be solved by technology (Berger, p. 20). Market is unavoidable especially in this day and age of international exchange. However, the natural forces of market (the law of demand and supply) are not to be confused with the forces of market

controlled by those who manipulate them for profit. Moreover, the market forces are not the moral forces and man does not have to be a victim to the forces of market. The question is not whether or not the forces of market should be controlled, but who should control for whose benefit. The market forces must be guided not by greed of the few, but by the moral forces of justice for all.

Profit is not evil in itself. In this day and age of international market, the questions of profit, efficiency, etc., are unavoidable for any social system. But when profit or efficiency is considered as the ultimate value in life or the only value in life, then we have an ideology of profit-making. We do not solve the problem of the ideology of profit by declaring profit as evil. As long as we fail to raise the pertinent moral questions with regard to profit-making, the ideology of profit-making will be a destructive force in human life. How much profit is to be made? Who should get it? What is a proper way of making a profit? Are we to sell destructive weapons to dictators who are to use them against the poor in the name of freedom or demand or profit? These are some of the questions we should raise in connection with the forces of market. A social system which treats profit above people is bound to treat people as things. However, the problem of treating people as things is not limited to profit-oriented market societies. A society which considers religion or an ideology or a race or a nation as ultimate would end up treating the human beings as things. The question is how to build a social system which is based on human dignity and protect it. This is the humanistic challenge at all times.

The above-noted attack on technocratic mentality is not a call for a return to the preindustrialized, rural, agrarian traditional life. Technology is here to stay. In fact, we need advanced technology to survive. The question is not how to eliminate or reduce technology, but how to humanize it. There are many ways to humanize technology. First of all we can avoid the technology which is dangerous to human health. Some are too noisy; some are too radio-active, for example. Secondly, we must avoid the kind of technology which makes more and more people unemployed or which employs people as robots. Thirdly, we must introduce technology to serve people. Technology is humanized when it is used for the service of all. We cannot avoid the ethical question of humanizing technology in the name of valuefree technology. Dehumanizing technology cannot be viewed as value-free. The need to humanize the modern world of work is noted by Kurtz and Doudeyme (1972, p. 12). It is the warning of humanism that unless our technology and institutions are humanized, they have a tendency to end up as dehumanizing forces in our midst.

Elitism: The professionals who occupy the upper echelons of modern societies, like any other group in power, is an elite group and as such they have their vested interests, a selfinterest which no amount of universalistic language or ideology could hide. The elites in power do have a vested

interest in making the social structures more complex so that the nonprofessionals' dependence would be total. Modern legal systems are classical examples. With ever-increasing complexity of modern legal systems only the professional lawyers could understand the laws. What a neat way to control the people! In this age of technocratic elitism, we do not need dictators to control us. One of the major forms of social control by the professionals is by controlling the flow of informations available for the public. For example, most Americans, in my judgement, did not realize that they had been supporting a dictator in Viet Name or in Iran during the 1970s. No doubt the control of people by controlling the sensitive information is not limited to the U.S.A.

It must be remembered that we cannot avoid elites, but we can and we must avoid elitism. The question is how to humanize the elites. The author would like to suggest a few principles to accomplish such a goal:

- (1) The principle of openness: The professionals' salary, income, dealings, connections, values, etc., must be open to the public. Let the people know that the leaders are not taking advantage of their privileged position. Only when the people know that their leaders would not take advantage of their leadership position, would the former develop a faith in the latter.
- (2) The principle of accountability: The leaders must be accountable to the public.
- (3) The principle of democracy: Elitism by definition is antidemocratic in nature. It takes a true faith in democracy on the part of the elites to be accountable to the general public. Democracy goes one step further than accountability. Democracy is a social system in which the so-called ordinary people participate meaningfully in the decision-making process of the society; and it is not simply a matter of having a political election every four or five years. It is possible to have a political democracy and yet no true democracy. Women, for example, are increasingly discovering that they are being manipulated by the so-called democratic systems; the poor know very little about the resources which are available to them and about the decision-making in politics.
- (4) The principle of service: The modern bureaucrats and politicians are yet to learn that they are the public *servants* rather than the public *managers*. The people in a social system must feel that the leaders would do everything to help the former. Only then would an authentic gratitude fill the hearts of the people, a human-social condition which is crucial for a meaningful life. The poor cannot be left to the mercy of the market forces which made them poor in the first place. When the workers know that the "managers" would do everything in their power to help the former, the workers would feel integrated to the social system and will develop a genuine respect for the latter. To

the extent the workers feel that the managers are for profit over people, then to that extent the workers will be alienated from the system, which no amount of wages or concessions could cure. The modern social problems are primarily human problems and only secondarily technical problems of technology or wages, according to the humanistic perspective. What is sociologically significant to remember is that our human-personal concern for the poor, the sick, the oppressed, etc., can be institutionalized into meaningful structures as the modern social security or social insurance system makes it clear, for example.

III. VISION OF A HUMANISTIC COMMUNITY

A vision of a humanistic community must involve at least the following dimensions:

Freedom: Freedom in the modern market societies has had mainly a commercial meaning. Man was thought of as a consumer who should be free to buy the latest models or brands of commodities while the employers were free to hire and fire anyone they wished. The real freedom is not the freedom to buy this or that brand of cigarettes or whisky, for example, but a matter of being able to come to the full realization of what one is capable of becoming. From a humanistic perspective, this means that the true human forces of love, intelligence, creativity and justice are free to find their expressions and grow as Vanier notes (1971, p. 3). In the market-oriented societies of competition, conflict, and propaganda, people increasingly lost their freedom in spite of an ideology of freedom (Marcuse). Women are increasingly finding out that in spite of an ideology of freedom and liberation, they are as manipulated as ever. The freedom to criticize the *basic* (sacred) assumptions of a society is an indication of authentic freedom in that society. But as long as those who criticize the sacred assumptions of a society are branded as "utopians," "communists," "reactionaries," "unscientific," "crazy," etc., such a society is only paying lip service to the principle of freedom. This is not to deny the major achievements of modern, industrial, market societies in liberating the individuals from the oppressive grip of socio-cultural forces. Neither does it mean that outside the market societies, there is true freedom. Market societies have their sacred cows such as private property, profit, competition, etc.; but non-market societies have their own type of sacred cows. Social freedom is not a question of what the people believe as much as it is a question of how the individuals who disagree with the social norms are treated. Here again what is sociologically significant is the fact that we can institutionalize freedom into social structures without denying the responsibility of the people involved to protect such institutionalized principles. Every social system can be open to criticism from within and without. Unhealthy wheelings and dealings are more likely to take place in social systems which are closed. Every

social system must have a built-in method of inviting and encouraging criticism of itself on an on-going basis.

Justice: The conception of a humanistic social order is based on the understanding of man as a moral-social animal. Morality is not a matter of adjusting to the social norms or clearing one's conscience. The longing for justice is a basic human hunger which cannot be reduced to tradition or feelings or utility. Man not only needs to belong to a just social order (system), but if *his* social system is unjust, an inner withering away of the spirit takes place. This is what happened during the Viet Name war in the U.S.A. or during the recent Beirut massacre in Israel. The bombs which were dropped in the heart of Beirut were morally exploding in the spirit of Israel. It is part of the humanistic position that one cannot hurt others without morally hurting himself/herself, even if such an act may be economically very profitable or politically wise (popular); moreover, it is in helping the others that he/she helps himself/herself morally. Human hunger for justice demands that. This moral principle applies to social units too. Rich and powerful nations cannot ignore the cry of the poor and the oppressed ones for justice without the former destroying themselves morally. It is the author's conviction that most of the powerful nations (if not all) in history collapsed morally before they collapsed sociopolitically and militarily. Both the individuals and societies need self-respect, without which they will wither away. So is the case with authentic respect from others. And no attempt to impress others would solve the moral problem of inner withering away.

The postulation of a basic human hunger for justice does not mean that man has lived up to his hunger. It has been particularly hard for the powerful ones – individuals and societies – to pay attention to the issues of justice; for the powerful ones such a thinking has painful socio-political implications. The market societies looked at justice exclusively in individualistic terms; the issue here is *social* justice, a matter of establishing structures of justice. Justice is a question of who gets what and why. A just society means an equitable distribution of its resources and services among its members. The emphasis of a humanistic approach is on *all* members of a society, a conception according to which every human being is entitled to the basic necessities of life and to participate in the basic social functions of his/her society. It takes a vision, not a model or theory, to see that every human being regardless of his/her race, color, IQ, performance or beliefs deserves the basic necessities of life – physical and non-physical – as a basic natural right simply as a human being.

The above-noted position is considered too “socialistic” or “communistic” in the West by most people. But they forget that in most Western nations the idea of a natural right in politics is accepted, but they are slow to introduce the conception of economic and other rights for all their members. The practical question as to how we could provide for the physical necessities

of all the members in a society is, no doubt, not an easy one to tackle. According to the humanists we have the resources to solve the problem; the question is whether or not we will have the will to solve this problem. For example, if our science and technology are humanized we would not have the grinding poverty we now have in the world. However, if some degree of poverty is to be present among us, we can still share it among *all* of us. What a revolutionizing idea (vision) would it be, if we are to share the 10% unemployment a society has, among all its members, for example? This may or may not be practical in *all* cases or situations, but the vision of sharing is applicable. If we could share overemployment by working overtime during the time of war, for example, there is no reason to believe that we cannot share unemployment during the time of economic recession. The powerful have always developed theories of justification to hold on to their resources especially during the time of economic crisis. What a great vision would it be if the elites can say to those who are less fortunate, "yes, we deserve the higher salary we have, but we deserve it only in a technical sense. So we are willing to sacrifice our higher salaries for the less fortunate ones among us"? One can do that only when one is moved by a vision of life which transcends the glory of being powerful and wealthy. It is the humanistic position that man is not only capable of such visions, but also that it is in living up to his visions that he becomes truly and fully human.

At this point it is important to clarify the meaning of a vision. A vision is not an imaginary flight from reality, but an imaginative reconstruction of the real because the real is unjust. Vision by very nature not only inspires one to face the challenges but also transforms him or her to be truly human. An "ideal" which is unrelated to the hunger for justice is to be an intoxication with success or power. That was what happened to Hitler, for example.

In this day and age of high technology and advanced science, it is a paradox that we have more poverty than ever before. Moreover, the gulf between the rich and the poor nations in the world is widening; even more, the poverty of the poor nations is directly related to the political, legal, economic and social systems in the rich nations as Susan George makes it abundantly clear in her *How the Other Half Dies*. The problem of poverty is not a matter of personal choice or laziness on the part of the poor, but a matter of social injustice. Social justice is not a matter of just feeding the hungry, for example, but a question of establishing social structures of justices so that no one has to go hungry if at all possible. We tend to think of crime as an act by the criminals. But we seldom, if ever, think of crime as normal responses of normal people to the problems of social injustices. When a poor man sees injustices all around him, let us say, where the powerful ones use their power to keep themselves

in power unjustly, he is not likely to develop a sense of community with others; on the contrary, he is likely to be destructive towards the social system. The social injustice of one segment, like cancer, if unchecked, is likely to destroy all of us with it as Cuzzort and King note (p. 358).

In the humanistic tradition, a just social order is that which does justice to the basic human hunger and depth. In the past we have built social system. The social injustice of one segment, like cancer, if unchecked, is as I have already noted, are bound to destroy what is truly human. If we can build social systems on the aggressiveness or fear of man, there is no reason to believe that we cannot build one on the positive qualities of man such as his ability to care, to cooperate, or to be just. It is meaningless to talk about the principles of democracy or freedom or equality unless we are willing to translate them into socio-economic and political realities. Good many nations in the world have laws regarding minimum wages. Why not have one on maximum wages? The emphasis on abstract principles without materializing them into structures is a negation of one's social responsibility.

The question of building a truly democratic social order is not a simple matter of taking a political action of overthrowing the existing elites. There is no sense in replacing a right-wing dictatorship by a left-wing one or vice versa. The question of building a truly democratic society ultimately boils down to having humanizing social structures of power. We do not always need an armed intervention for a revolution. We can put a society on a revolutionary, democratizing path without violence and bloodshed. This is part of the humanistic faith. This is what Gandhi, Martin Luther King and others have taught the world. There is a power which is greater than the power of military or wealth. This is the moral power. Unfortunately the world is locked in a confrontational power politics. It takes a vision to see the moral power available to man. However, it should be understood that a humanistic vision is neither a blue-print nor a theory of social change; neither do we come to a humanistic vision by analyzing the social orders though analysis is important. A humanistic vision comes from a well-developed sense of social justice, not from well-developed statistical techniques. A humanistic vision is an open phenomenon; thus various expressions of it are possible; it is an inspiring, transforming conviction that we can build a social order based on human dignity. The verification of this model comes partly from one's own life of justice; partly it is unverified. So it requires not only courage to live by a vision, but also an inner flexibility and verification. Without courage, the inner flexibility could end up as lack or direction, and without the inner flexibility, the courage could end up as rigidity; and without the inner verification from one's own life, there is no basis for courage.

The humanistic vision of society gives the impression that man is basically

good. In fact, the question whether man is *basically* good or evil is too academic. The real men and women we meet in everyday life are involved in good and evil. Therefore the question is whether we promote what is good in man or promote what is evil (destructive) in man. Humanism is not a glorification of man without recognizing his limitation. It is definitely not a glorification of one race or nation at the expense of others. Humanism must insist that Americans are no different from the Russians, for example. Its emphasis is on humanity in general while recognizing the immense complexity of human-social life. Thus humanism involves an attitude of tolerance, openness, and dialogue in relation to the complex manifestations of social life. However, this does not mean that humanism has no way of critically evaluating various social structures. Humanism is value-oriented and its central value is human dignity. Moreover humanism assumes that the basic human hunger for freedom, justice, community, truth, beauty, etc. is good. The human inclination to be aggressive is not a basic human need. Man does not need to dominate others, any more than he needs to manipulate others. There is no question of social structure being value-neutral either. Either it promotes what is good in man or it does not do so.

Injustice is a time-bomb which is bound to explode sooner or later, particularly these days when the social consciousness of the people are awakened throughout the world. This is an age of revolutions and counterrevolutions. The role of a humanistic vision is to create an atmosphere of reconciliation so that destructive social revolutions are made unnecessary; if that goal is not possible, the role is to make the revolutions less violent and destructive. Moreover we need a humanistic vision to work for reconciliation once the open conflict is over.

The technocratic rationalism is most obvious in the modern militarism. Any society armed to its teeth is insensitive to the non-military needs, resources and solutions. The modern militarism, like all militarisms, thinks of national security exclusively in terms of military hardware. The security of nations living in peace and friendship is unknown to militarists. Militarism has become a major drain on world economy. How revolutionary would it be if every nation is to start departments of peace and justice comparable to their department of military? It is ironic that man has never spent so much money for defense, yet he is far more frightened than ever before. Militarism cannot grow without destroying the human ability to trust, to share, and to care for the people involved.

The real question of modern political life is not whether or not to have a military but how much emphasis is to be placed on it for what purposes. There is justification for a military for defense. But when the military takes an offensive and oppressive position, it is basically destructive. It takes a humanistic vision to see that even the military can be humanized. A large military can be used for humanitarian purposes such as helping the victims in a natural disaster for example.

COMMUNITY

In the modern industrialized societies, the word "community" has the connotation of being an isolated, small, closed, eccentric group. Community is the product and expression of the human hunger for love and to love. Ideologies of racism or nationalism or sexism cannot fulfill the authentic human hunger for community. Man knows in his heart of heart that he belongs to the whole humanity and not to a particular racial or national group for example. However, social groupings at these smaller levels have their place provided they do not stand in one's way to find his/her identity with the humanity. The term community is used here as a vision of social life based on caring and sharing; it is open, dynamic and just. The vision that people of different races, nations or beliefs can live together as one family is the basis of community. Community is not the collectivism which destroys the individuality of the members nor the individualism which does not recognize one's moral responsibility towards others as a social animal. Neither is it an isolated, closed social system which tries to run away from the realities of modern life.

There has been a systematic destruction of community in the modern industrial societies as I have already noted. Paradoxically enough, the individualism which increasingly negated the individuals' social responsibility ended up in creating a gigantic state to fill the vacuum. The state ended up doing what the social systems such as the family, neighborhood, etc., have done traditionally for the individuals. The market societies have negated the individuals' social responsibilities towards others. The modern "play boy mentality" which opposes any ongoing enduring social responsibility towards others is only the climax of the above-noted negation. But the collectivism which destroys the individuality of the individuals is no answer. Market societies must pay attention to the issues of social justice and community whereas the collectivistic societies must do the same with regard to the issues of individual freedom, initiative, etc.

Before I go any further, I need to correct some of the misunderstandings about community. Humanistic community is not a social arrangement where everything is owned collectively and nothing is done for or by the individual initiative. Private ownership and individual initiative can have their proper place in the humanistic conception of society. However, the principle of private ownership is not elevated to the level of an ideology or law of Nature. We think of the air, water, roads, etc. as belonging to the whole community. So to think of something as belonging to the whole community is not unnatural. What humanism claims in the name of justice is that the basic resources of a land upon which the people depend for survival should not be allowed to be exploited by the rich and the powerful in the name of freedom or profit or individual initiative or creativity. Colonialism assumed that the world belonged to the mighty and the powerful.

What humanism claims in the name of human dignity is that the weak and the poor have as much right to live as the rich and the powerful.

Unless the dignity of man is translated into socioeconomic and political realities, which respect the dignity of the poor and the oppressed too, there is no sense in talking about the principle. Great moral principles are to inspire us to change the real world. This is why a vision is more than a mere cognition. At present the major powers are exploring the outer space, deeper oceans, distant planets, etc. To whom do these "cosmic" resources belong to? To the technologically rich and powerful? Do the poor nations exist only to share the ill-effects of the explorations of the rich nations such as pollution and inflation? We need to give up the ideology of the survival of the fittest which the market mentality glorified as the law of Nature and of progress. Man is capable of a higher principle – of cooperation, caring and sharing. In fact, the individual initiatives can be channelled to build a new and just social order. Isn't it strange that the nations want to be number one in science and technology, but no nation wants to be number one in helping the helpless? This is indicative of the moral poverty of modern social life.

Community is not a melting pot which destroys the human cultural diversity. It is by the encouragement of such differences that the richness of social life is preserved. The vision of community is based on the conviction that the differences in society do not have to be divisive, but they can in fact, be the basis of mutual respect, dependence, and cooperation. In fact, one of the signs of a community is that people of different race, color, nationality and beliefs can live together in peace and harmony. It is one thing to disagree with a person, but it is entirely another thing to deny his/her basic right as a human being.

Community does not mean that there is no leadership in the society. Leadership is unavoidable in any society. In a humanistic community, there are leaders of all kinds; and no one type is allowed to dominate the others; nor an elitism is allowed to develop among leaders. It is the humanistic conviction that we can have leaders without developing an ideology of elitism. A true leader is the one who discovers and explores the abilities in others especially in the so-called ordinary people; moreover, a true leader thinks of himself/herself as the servant of others. In a community the leaders accept their responsibility not only to be accountable to others, but also to serve others. Moreover, a true leader knows how much he/she is depending upon others for performing the role as a leader. Both the leaders and others are grateful towards each other. The leaders are grateful to the people in general for the latter's cooperation, and the general public is grateful for the dedicated service they enjoy from their leaders. Only a leader with a humanistic vision can be the servant of others. People are held together not by legalism or force or ideology, but by a sense of community rooted in a sense of justice. Humanistic vision defines life

as a cooperative enterprise. As long as life is defined as a game or a struggle for survival and the fellow-human beings as enemies, the question of morality or justice is not a central issue in life; then cheating, killing, and manipulation are not only permissible but also glorified. When we encourage cheating the "enemy" as a good practice, chances are that the moral decay will spread to the friends too. The ideology of the survival of the fittest has become the greatest stumbling block against the very survival of humanity. Community is not a static social entity where there is no struggle for excellence. However, the struggle for excellence in one area is not elevated to the place of an ideology nor the excellence is used against those who cannot succeed in an area; in fact, the excellence of a person or group is to be used for the service of others. Community is neither a place where there is no competition. The purpose of competition in a humanistic community is not to destroy or dominate the other competitors, but to challenge them. So competition is never alienated from one's sense of justice and community.

A community is not an informal social system without formal rules and regulations nor a social system without a central political system. Formal rules are necessary, but the question is whether they reflect the power of the elites or the needs of the public. Similarly the question is not whether or not we need central government, but whether our governments represent the interests of the general public. Without central organization, larger social systems cannot function. Without order and organization, there is no justice, but law and order are not synonymous with justice. The government which is meant to be a *social* institution could easily end up as an institution of the rich and the powerful. That is why it is important to establish institutional safeguards against such tendencies.

Community is not a utopia. The emphasis on caring and sharing is not without its limitations. Some people might take advantage of such an ideal and become social parasites. Thus we cannot take the ideal of a community for granted. What we can do in a humanistic community is to make every effort to reward honesty, justice, hard work, caring and sharing rather than competition and conflict. Moreover, every effort should be made to rehabilitate the "offenders." The emphasis is not on punishing, but on rehabilitating them, treating even them with dignity. Community is a healing touch for the offenders while it is an inspiration for the non-offenders. People have had visions of all sorts of utopia. A humanistic vision, unlike other visions, promotes what is truly human such as our sense of justice, community, love, gratitude, sharing, and creativity.

Community is not against profit or material goods. Just because profit is good, that does not mean that any amount of profit or any source of profit is good. The profit made by destroying the crops is no doubt evil, just as sharing the profit exclusively among the powerful is evil.

The market societies failed to relate the question of profit to the ethical issues it raises. Moreover, the market mentality gave the impression that people will be happy and their life meaningful if they buy such and such commodities. There is some truth in it since man is an animal with certain creature needs. But man as a creative animal has certain other needs too. He needs to love and to be loved. He needs to belong to a community. What community opposes is not the individual's rights but the ideology of individualism which denies one's moral responsibility for the welfare of others. There is no inherent irreconcilable difference between the principles of social responsibility and of individual rights. No social system which does not respect the right of the individuals can be a community and no individual who does not accept his social responsibility to others can be a member of a community. The individuals must take the responsibility for their own lives, but that does not mean that they will always succeed in doing so. We need the true individuals who can stand up against the unhealthy and unjust social forces, not the individuals who use the doctrine of individualism to improve their own socio-economic conditions. It is the humanistic conviction that no amount of profit (or power) for example can cure the modern meaninglessness of man as Schewmacher notes (p. 161). Man is meant to live a higher life.

A community by definition is a personal relationship. The modern societies — both market and non-market alike — subscribe to an ideology of bigness (success). It is a product of competition and confrontation. This is the age of big institutions — big government, big business, big universities. To some extent, the big institutions are here to stay. For example some of the problems we face are global in nature, and they have to be tackled from a global grand perspective. Pollution, for example, knows no national or regional boundaries. What humanism warns is that what is big is likely to destroy what is personal, unless we make the extra effort to overcome the above-noted tendency in large institutions. The solution is not simply a matter of dividing the big institutions into small ones, but finding creative solutions to the problem of overinstitutionalization. The question is how to keep the "personal" touch in our large institutions such as hospitals, universities, corporations, etc. There is no gimmick which would work in the long run. We need to go back to an authentic human perspective (vision) to regain what is human in modern social life.

Paradoxically, in spite of all the advances we have made in psychology, communication techniques, etc. we are more and more lonely. This is called the age of anxiety. The loneliness of modern man is well-explained by David Reisman (1953). The modern loneliness, alienation, and meaninglessness are related to the way we live as human beings. For example we employ machines to say "please," "thanks," "sorry", etc. It is the conviction of the humanists that we need a truly human environment to live a meaningful life. People

everywhere experience sorrow (death, disease, etc.) and happiness (birth of a child, wedding, good harvest, etc.), and they need to share their sorrow and happiness with others in a personal environment of mutual respect, concern, and care for such sharing to be meaningful. The proper role of a community is to keep what is personal alive without destroying the fabric of social institutions.

This is the age of internationalism. Technology has made us neighbors, but we are yet to learn to be neighborly. The interdependence of nations and cultures are becoming increasingly clear day by day; yet we try to live by the ideology of competition and domination. We have to learn that our survival and safety, not to mention our happiness, are dependent upon the survival and safety of others in this nuclear age. How can a nation avoid moral disintegration if it destroys the rest of the world in a nuclear confrontation? How can it avoid nuclear destruction of itself from fallout? We must realize that the enemies of people everywhere are the same. They are poverty, violence, militarism, pollution, anxiety, etc., and that no nation has a monopoly of these problems or of their solutions. We need to discover that the people of other nations or races, or beliefs do not have to be our enemies, but they can be our friends in a cooperative attempt to live as a family. This is the highest level of a humanistic vision. In fact a humanistic vision is no longer a luxury of the dreamers, but a necessity for the very survival of humankind.

SUMMARY

In the past man had built social structures to fight and to dominate. He built societies on his fear, anxiety, hatred, greed, etc. The modern societies are no exception. Yet the age-old human hunger for a community of peace and justice is still alive. We can not be true to ourselves if we do not take the above-noted hunger seriously. A humanistic vision of community, is an expression of man's sense of creativity, peace, justice, beauty, truth and love. No amount of alcohol or profit or therapy or propaganda can cure the modern meaninglessness of life. Man needs to be part of a community where he is treated with dignity. Creating such a community is not a matter of going back to a pre-industrial, agrarian, rural way of life or a matter of ever-expanding science and technology, but a question of working patiently and cooperatively with others in humanizing the existing social structures one by one. What humanistic vision does is to put us on a revolutionary path of transformation, not on a path of mutual destruction. There is a new urgency to the question of building a new social order. In this day and age of nuclear confrontation, a humanistic vision of a community of peace, justice and love is no longer the luxury of the utopian dreamers, but a matter of survival for all.

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