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# Which Way to the Revolution?



SHOSHANA RIHN & MARTY JEZER

# WHICH WAY TO THE REVOLU- TION?

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We are aware of a great deal of discussion and questioning and, indeed, some hot debate by people who identify themselves as radical beings, about what strategy will most likely lead to revolution. The discussion is over whether or not alternative institutions and life-style modes, and the gropings toward personal growth that often accompany such life-styles, contribute to the revolutionary change that we all claim to want.

A recent article in WIN [1/13/77]—actually a debate between Rev. Philip Zwerling and Rev. Douglas Wilson—seems to us to typify the discussion. It is Wilson's contention that the Human Potential Movement and the creation of alternative life-styles *in themselves* represent a revolutionary force in American society. As two people who live the kind of lives that Wilson says will lead to meaningful change, we feel the need to state and explain our support for the political perspective articulated by Zwerling, and criticize what we believe to be the dead-end prescription for revolution that Wilson advocates.

Although we are using the Zwerling-Wilson debate as our point of reference, we feel that we are speaking to many of our friends and comrades in our own area, and hopefully to other unknown comrades elsewhere in the country who, like ourselves, are personally grappling with the issues under discussion.

The two of us live in a relatively self-sufficient commune, pretty much outside of the consumer culture. We raise and grow our own food, cut our own wood for heat and cooking, are part of grower (farmer) and consumer (food) cooperatives, and generally try to understand ourselves within the dynamics of group process. Living with ten other people makes this kind of self-awareness almost a prerequisite for survival.

It is very tempting for us to define our situation as inherently revolutionary, and on occasion one of us (MJ) has. [See, for instance, "Notes From A Vermont Farmer" in WIN 11/15/68]. The attempt to define our lives in terms of a revolutionary calling is something many of us are prone to.

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Wanting to change the world, we tend to judge ourselves in moral and political terms. It is not sufficient to live a good, honest productive life. Our lives must also be politically relevant and contribute to revolutionary change. Thus, we often define ourselves not by the life that we actually lead, but as against the life that we think we ought to be leading. This encourages two attitudes: Either we judge ourselves too harshly for failing to live up to our ideals, or we define whatever we do in terms of our ideals, applying revolutionary attributes to even the most mundane aspects of daily existence. (Growing organic food is one example of this).

Our situation, in this, is unique. Most people have not had (or aren't aware that they've had) our options. We've made choices about careers, family, levels of affluence, etc. that are voluntary. And having made these choices we feel compelled to justify them, to ourselves, especially, if nobody else. Certainly, for us living self-sufficiently on a communal farm as opposed to, say, building Trident submarines, working in advertising, or dealing smack, is a moral way of living. But does that make it political? Here is where we part company with Wilson and other proponents of alternative life-styles as a way to revolution. He describes a number of good ways that people are living and arbitrarily (we think) assigns them a

revolutionary content. Revolutionary activity is or should be at all times moral. But moral conduct is not necessarily revolutionary, or even political. Sometimes it's only moral . . . and personally fulfilling.

Wilson says that he respects "people who are trying new ways of eating, becoming vegetarians, making contact with their own bodies, learning what health really is, learning to do without doctors. This is part of the revolution that is already happening." Well, wealthy gourmards have always experimented with new ways of eating and the fact that radicals are now into good food does not make their appetites any more revolutionary than those who have the money to (if they live in the East) fly in fresh organic carrots direct from California. Vegetarianism, as well, is a personal preference for right wingers or left. Hitler didn't eat meat and neither, for what it's worth, does one of the authors of this article. Certainly, for ecological reasons we ought to eat less meat. But if we are going to have an organic agriculture, we are going to need (and properly utilize) massive amounts of animal manure. Besides, there are grassland areas that ought to be pastured and cannot sustain crops. So any sound agriculture is going to have to include beef, hogs, sheep, etc.

Vegetarianism is neither an indicator of moral purity nor a revolutionary way of organizing food production. Getting in touch with our bodies is only novel for people who spend their lives sitting at a desk or standing hours on end on an assembly line. Workers get in touch with their bodies playing ball or dancing. Corporate executives take saunas and have daily steam baths and massages. The way that counter-culturalists get in touch with their bodies may sometimes differ. But the intent is the same and the political effect is neutral.

As for health care and doctors, we probably all believe that the American health care system needs overhauling. But learning to do without doctors does not confront the injustices of the system. Besides, doing without health care is something many people in this country have had to do simply because they cannot afford to do otherwise. Whether all of the above activities are worthwhile is beside the point. The question is whether they, in themselves, contribute to revolutionary change. We think not.

### The Personal and The Political

We are not saying that politics are separate from our personal lives. The two should be integrated at all levels. Our politics should be carried into our daily lives and shape our conduct; the way that we are ought to be taken as a reflection of our politics. But if we are going to commit ourselves to revolutionary change, we are going to have to evaluate our activities in terms of a wider political perspective. It is not enough to say that we are living morally or decently or even that we are living in a way that we hope all people will live *after* the revolution. The revolution hasn't happened. And it won't happen unless we make it.

So while we favor most of the things that Wilson

is enthusiastic about—from painless childbirth to organic apple pie—and pursue some of these ourselves, we do not believe that in themselves they contribute to revolutionary goals. Living communally, for instance, makes us less fragmented and alienated. It allows us to depend less on the consumer culture and more on each other. It teaches self-reliance in a collective context, and it sometimes provides us with necessary psychological support. Inasmuch as it teaches us collective responsibility and forces us to confront the destructive and selfish individualism that is part of our culture (and which we have all absorbed in varying degrees), it may even make us more effective in our political work.

### Revolution by Example

What we mean by political work is evidently different from what Wilson means by the term. The strategy of alternatives that Wilson espouses (the idea of building a new society in the shell of the old) is the strategy of *revolution by example*. The idea is that if a few people perform an exemplary act (which might be civil disobedience, living collectively, organizing a food co-op, growing organic vegetables, etc.) other people will be inspired to do the same. The alternative movement will grow, reaching out to more and more people. As it grows, it will draw strength away from the old order (which in the process will become demystified) which, because it is irrelevant to freshly perceived human needs, will wither away. The A&P will give way to co-ops. GM will collapse because we will all become auto mechanics, repair our old cars and keep them running forever, and the utility companies will go broke because we'll all have homemade solar collectors or wood stoves. And, as the old order goes, a new simpler way of life, scaled to human dimension will take its place. From the first seed of exemplary conduct a revolution will eventually grow.

This strategy has been attempted many times before and failed. This, in itself, is not sufficient reason to discard it. History is not "doomed" to repeat itself and revolutionary movements that come to grief in one situation triumph in another. The *example* theory fails not so much because of the time or situation, but because it does not address itself to the basic contradictions of society and is inadequate in itself. (The Chinese built up alternative institutions in their liberated areas. But whereas Wilson describes alternatives as substitutes for politics, the Chinese integrated their alternative and co-operative experiments into the political struggle. To offer the idea of alternatives, as Wilson does, without a political context, is to offer a placebo for social discontent and to encourage people to abandon useful, political work.)

### The Rural Alternative

Take our own experiences (one that Doug Wilson shares) of living in the country: it may seem "radical" to some who feel stuck in cities and even to some who have made the move from city to country. And it is "radical" in the sense that it

represents a departure from the basic socio-economic trends of the past several decades in the US. But how can rural life in itself be considered any more inherently revolutionary than city life?

Almost certainly, a revolution in this country would include a substantial back-to-the-land movement, a resurgence of agriculture and/or small town life as a desirable option for many people. (Keeping in mind that it is the harsh economic necessities induced by capitalism that has driven so many people off the land and into the cities in the first place). But that doesn't necessarily mean that the few people who have gone back to the land constitute a part (or a vanguard) of that movement.

We are fortunate to have bought our farm in 1968, before the price of land skyrocketed out of proportion. At the time, some of us flattered ourselves into believing that we were part of a back-to-the-land movement that had profound revolutionary implications. In fact, as more people joined us on the land we thought that we had been proven politically correct. But as these people moved back-to-the-land, the price of land began to rise. In the sense (as Wilson would have it) that our communal farm was a model that inspired others, it contributed to the difficulty that these new groups of homesteaders and communards had in buying land.

In Vermont, the failure of the rural alternative is especially striking. The flood of people who came to create a new society in the shell of the old forced land prices up even beyond the means of those who came with inherited wealth. The best agricultural land, in fact, was priced out of the range that allowed farming to be economically viable. Developers bought this land and turned it into shopping plazas and tract houses. Those of us who wanted to farm, had to settle for hill farms of marginal agricultural value. (That is, we could support a self-sufficient operation, but growing food "for the people" is quite another matter).

What we now have is a situation in which only a few of the people who came to Vermont to homestead or farm communally actually have land. Most people have had to postpone their dream, work in



town, and hope to save money to buy land in the future. But inflation, and the high unemployment and low wages that are endemic to rural areas eat at their savings and most accept the fact that they will probably never own land. Gradually, the New Age organic homesteading fantasy fades. Many of the young people who moved to Vermont have become proletarianized like their working neighbors (who possibly came to Vermont years ago with similar dreams.)

The point here is that communes as viable alternatives to the existing system are open only to a privileged few. And any talk about rural communes, organic gardening, eco-agriculture, feeding the people on healthy diets, etc. means talking about money, power, and control of land. Fewer and fewer people who now own land actually live on the land, much less farm it. The trend of corporate agribusiness is driving independent family farmers out of business, and this trend is inherent in capitalism; it cannot be reversed by patchwork reform. Moreover, the people who do speculate in land for profit, or mine it for short-term agricultural gain (like the agribusiness corporations) are not going to allow would-be homesteaders to squat on it out of social philanthropy.

The only way to redistribute land (as well as to redistribute the income to provide the people who live on the land with enough capital to take care of it) is by building a political movement and making an agrarian revolution. The old injunction to "raise more hell and less corn" is as meaningful today as it was during the heyday of the populist rebellion before the turn of the century.

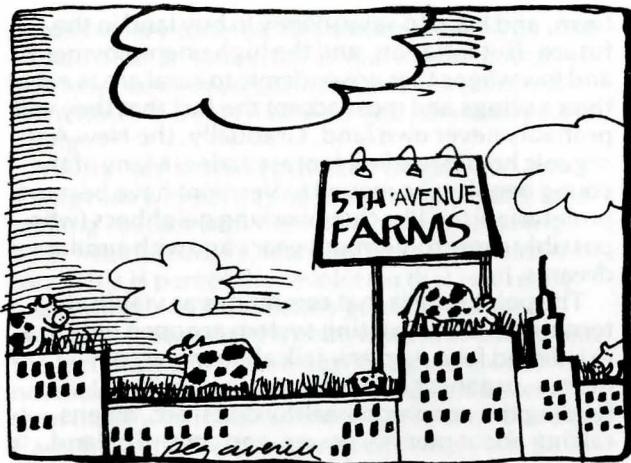
This is a hard fact of rural life that would-be homesteaders who have turned their backs on politics continuously choose to ignore. Julius Lester, writing in a recent issue of *Liberation*, falls prey to romanticizing about the political of organic gardening. He writes:

*I am more concerned these days about blossom end rot on my tomatoes than the rotten capitalist system. That's revolutionary in a way because every pound of food I raise (successfully) frees me that much from the tyranny of agribusiness. Everything I learn to do and make for myself makes me that much less available to exploitation by capitalism.*

This is true, of course, but only as far as it goes, which isn't very far at all. Tending a garden is a long way from feeding the masses. Using compost and manure does not break the hold that the agricultural industry (or even the purveyors of organic fertilizers) has on American agriculture.

Being a political person, Lester realizes this. So he fantasizes teaching welfare recipients how to grow food in the city and of organizing a farm with poor people and old folks living on social security. Although this fantasy presupposes a political solution to the problem of food and land, Lester does not make the connection that political solutions necessitate a political process.

The fantasy of a New York skyline with cows grazing on rooftop pastures is a delightful one. But



just as old tenements won't support the weight of roof-top gardens, the economic system under which we live won't tolerate a degree of self-sufficiency that seriously cuts into its market. The question we would ask Lester is an obvious one, but it strikes at the limitation of the rural alternative: How are you going to buy the land? Where are you going to get the money? How are you going to acquire the tractors (or work horses) chisel plows, manure spreaders, seeds, lime and fertilizers to detoxicate and improve the soil?

Moist soil rich with humus is the best way of preventing blossom end rot on tomatoes, a condition that often occurs in hot dry weather. A mulch helps and so does frequent watering or irrigation. But agrarian revolution leading to redistribution of land and income is the only way to change our system of agriculture and improve our dietary habits. Although growing a small organic garden may raise one's consciousness about agricultural economics and rural politics, the most productive organic garden in the world is not going to further the cause of agrarian revolution.

### Feminist Carpenters

Another example that Wilson uses to describe the alternative and Human Potential Movements as a revolutionary force is the idea of women learning skills that were once the province of man. We agree with Wilson (and Zwerling) that the liberation of women is inherent to revolution. Indeed, given that this country already has a strong economic base, the battle against sexism (and racism) are primary parts of the process. Therefore, anything that furthers the independence of women and destroys the patterns of stereotyped sex roles ought actively to be encouraged. But let us not confuse this, which is good in itself, with necessarily contributing to a revolutionary movement.

When a woman learns carpentry and wants to make it her life's work, what can she do. First, if she has the money for land and material she can build herself a house. Possibly, she will find work building things for her friends, helping out at barn raisings, building alternative school structures, doing interiors for a local restaurant or a women's center. She may even get paid for some of this work, although the satisfaction of doing skilled

work that is socially useful will—for a while—be its own reward. Conceivably, if the number of women entering the carpentry field remains limited, she will be able to support herself doing this kind of work. But what happens when her personal solution inspires thousands to follow in her steps?

There is not enough capital in the alternative network to support many independent, politically conscious carpenters (or anyone else, for that matter). If she wants to continue her trade, she is going to have to do what most other carpenters do in order to survive. And here is where capitalism intrudes on her world, and where feminism that does not have a political perspective becomes an insufficient solution for women who want work.

If our newly trained and highly skilled carpenter joins the union (and the craft unions are notoriously a bastion of white male supremacy), or even if she hires out as an independent contractor, she may be reasonably paid, but she will find her work far less rewarding. For instance, she will have no say in the kind of structure she is building and what it is to be used for. Moreover, she will have no control over the way she and her sisters do their job. Her boss—and let's assume that it is a woman—will want to get maximum production from her carpentry crew. By this we mean that the workers will have to work as fast as possible, so that she (the boss) will spend as little as possible. (If the boss is a feminist who feels sisterly towards her workers and does not demand that they work with maximum efficiency, etc. she'll very fast run out of money to pay them and capital to invest in new construction. Capitalism and feminism just do not mix.) Her work will become fragmented, repetitive, boring; she will probably not be involved in the whole of the construction. Instead, she will specialize in a particular task, and will have no say in the way she performs it. She will be told what size wood to cut and where to pound every nail. The satisfaction that she felt cutting her first two by four to specification will give way to the drudgery of assembly line work.

All of this assumes that she will find work. This is no longer likely. In an expanding economy, the job market increases and there is room at the bottom for women workers. But the era of capitalist expansion is happily coming to a close. Every country that goes socialist cuts into American economic expansion. As this process accelerates, the domestic economy suffers. Unemployment is a permanent condition. So we would have a situation of more women learning skilled trades but fewer opportunities for them to break into the job field; unless, of course, women get jobs at the expense of white males. Although there may be short-term justice in the preferential hiring of women and other minorities over white males, it is not really a solution. It merely raises the economic opportunities of one group at the expense of another.

Of course, this is how things are today; it doesn't always have to remain so. But the personal success of a few feminist carpenters in no way assures that those who follow will retrace their steps. The alternative movement (or the feminist movement) can support a few women workers, just as it now

supports a few skilled "hippy" carpenters who do exquisite work but like to take up during their breaks. But creating the opportunity for all people to do interesting, and useful work necessitates collective struggle in the political sphere. It means confronting capitalism and taking control of the means of production. Building alternatives may be a step in that direction. And a woman who becomes a skilled carpenter but doesn't have the opportunity to work in her trade is readily going to realize the political dimension of her oppression. But when Wilson cites women (or anyone) learning new skills and fulfilling a part of her previously unrecognized potential and then saying that this in itself leads to revolutionary change, he is neglecting an essential part of the revolutionary process.



### Food Co-ops

Food co-operatives are another alternative institution that people with Wilson's perspective consider part of the revolutionary struggle. Food co-ops, however useful they are in making good food available to some people at decent prices, are not inherently political. We especially see this with the rise of food co-ops in middle class and suburban neighborhoods. A bargain is, after all, a bargain, and housewives in suburbia (more than working class families where women are more likely to hold outside jobs) have the time to do the volunteer work that keeps the co-op going.

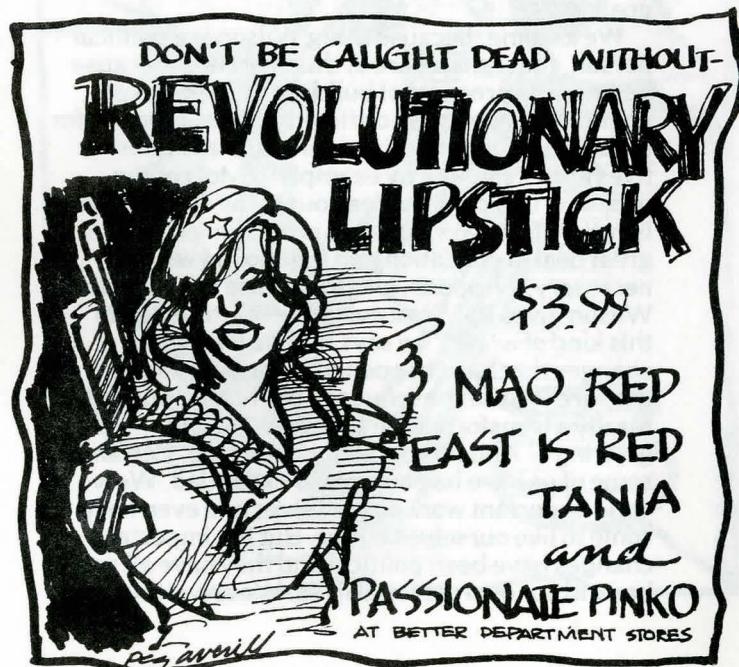
Some food co-ops do see themselves as a tool for political organizing. They work to support local organic growers, undercut capitalist competitors (Erewhon and Celestial Seasonings no less than Kraft and General Foods), introduce new people to collective work experience, and alert people to the evils of food for profit. The goal of these cooperatives, in addition to providing an alternative to the supermarket, is to strengthen the radical movement by showing (through the experience of food shopping) the unwholesome qualities of corporate food processing and capitalist economics. This often means selling canned goods and non-organic foods, because that is what people still think they need. It also means a program of nutritional education that requires dropping the cultural elitism and class snobbery that is so rife in the health and natural food movement. Further, we

believe, it means an end to a dependence on volunteerism, which is the privilege, again, of a small leisured elite or the commitment of a dedicated few who rapidly burn themselves out. A co-op, if it is to be a viable economic alternative, should pay its workers and give them control over their workplace.

Under the existing system, only small, economically irrelevant co-ops are likely to survive. As soon as the co-op movement expands to the point that it offers competition to the supermarkets, the food processors, and the hip health food entrepreneurs, it is going to be wiped out. Capitalism does not invite competition from those who refuse to play by its rules.

### The Problem of Co-optation

Very few alternative institutions ever get to that point. Most are co-opted long before. Those agricultural cooperatives formed in the early part of this century—that were not killed by the banks and the railroads (i.e. Monopoly Capitalism)—are now among the largest agribusiness corporations in America. Although they were founded on cooperative principles their operations are now very much a part of the capitalist system. Health foods and organic gardening at this point also fit comfortably into the capitalist milieu. Reactionaries and radicals are all better off eating good food. When feminists start a Women's Bank and get their capital from some of the corporations that are most intimately involved in ripping off women (Revlon and Clairol, not to mention Ma Bell and IT&T) we see how alternative movements are co-opted. Capitalism is sufficiently flexible and opportunist enough to buy off opposition. A few women in high and visible positions are not beyond the capabilities of the corporate system. And the men who manage this system know that they can appease the educated white elite (who, at this point, make up the core of the alternative movement's opinion makers and activists) and steer it gently down a safe, non-revolutionary path.



## Our Political Isolation

How does a counter-culture or the alternative movement become politically effective? What is our political struggle all about? For historical reasons beyond our control (McCarthyism, the Cold War, etc.) and for shortcomings in our own practice (arrogance, elitism, counter-cultural excesses, male chauvinism, racism, etc.) a cultural gulf exists between the movement and a large proportion of the American people, including those working class people with whom we most need to work.

Certainly, we've learned by now that counter-cultural styles don't necessarily denote political attitudes. The so-called "greening of America" represents the triumph of hip capitalism and little else. Corporate executives use Transcendental Meditation and encounter group techniques to increase their efficiency as managers. The Human Potential Movement has more than its share of racists, sexists, and P. T. Barnum-like entrepreneurs. The swamis who have flocked to the United States (bringing with them the most archaic and oppressive patriarchal attitudes) have come knowing that the path to enlightenment is paved with gold.

To change the country we are going to have to build a movement based on political goals, not on cultural lifestyles. To break out of our ghetto, the left is going to have to learn from the millions of people whose lives it does not now touch and work with them for the furtherance of common goals. This is no easy task, but many on the left now recognize that this is the direction we have to go. The Human Potential Movement suffers from this same kind of cultural isolation. But if it is aware of it, it does not consider it a failing. It is smugly self-congratulatory as it measures personal growth. And this smugness, which again is a privilege of a small elite, works to further the gulf. Collective action and the involvement of millions of people in the workings of society are not this movement's stated goals.

We assume, because Doug Wilson is a political person, that he is aware of this. Perhaps, because he finds the prospect of building a broad-based political movement so difficult, he has opted out for the strategy of promoting individualized alternatives and revolution by example. "Most of the people in this country freak out at the word socialism," Wilson says, and this is certainly true. "A great deal of education and organizing work is necessary," he adds, and this is also true. But then Wilson gives up. "Not everyone is interested in this kind of work," he says. "If we look at the changes that have happened in the past 15 years, they are of little consequence politically, but culturally a transformation is deepening and growing." And this certainly is *not* true. Certainly, some of us have had our minds expanded. We've done important work on ourselves and even have come to like ourselves better. But the important changes have been political and they have all gone beyond our own personal lives. We are witnessing

a world turning upside down in the past 15 years. And it surprises us that Wilson doesn't realize the religious (not to mention the political) significance of this transformation: the weak are growing strong and the mighty are faltering.

We agree, however, that in the US there is reason to look at political organizing with despair. But revolutionaries in Cuba, China, Vietnam, etc. must also have felt the same hopelessness. Yet, in the face of incredible odds, they continued to do their political work. We give up so easily!



## The Danger of Individualism

An essential part of this work, as we have said, is learning to work together. Even though the Human Potential Movement is often organized into cooperative groupings (e. g. encounter groups, communal households, etc.), its emphasis on personal problems and individual solutions encourages people to become self-centered to the exclusion of the material conditions of society that shape them.

This leads to a kind of individualism that Wilson claims can be a starting point for social change. The philosophy of individualism was an important advance in revolutionary theory a few centuries ago when it helped to break the hold that monarchy and feudalism had on the human community. But in the context of contemporary American society, it serves only to reinforce the selfishness, competitiveness, conformity, and fear of one's neighbor, etc. that are the underpinnings of modern capitalism. In this crowded interdependent world, individualism reinforces the inability of people with common problems to work together.

Individualism is a disease of American politics. Americans are alienated from politics precisely because they have been fed a myth that they have individual rights and equal access to political power. Americans do not trust collective action because we think that strength comes from our individualism and self-reliance. It is our most popular myth: the honest sheriff (Gary Cooper), standing alone, drives the outlaws out of town. Or

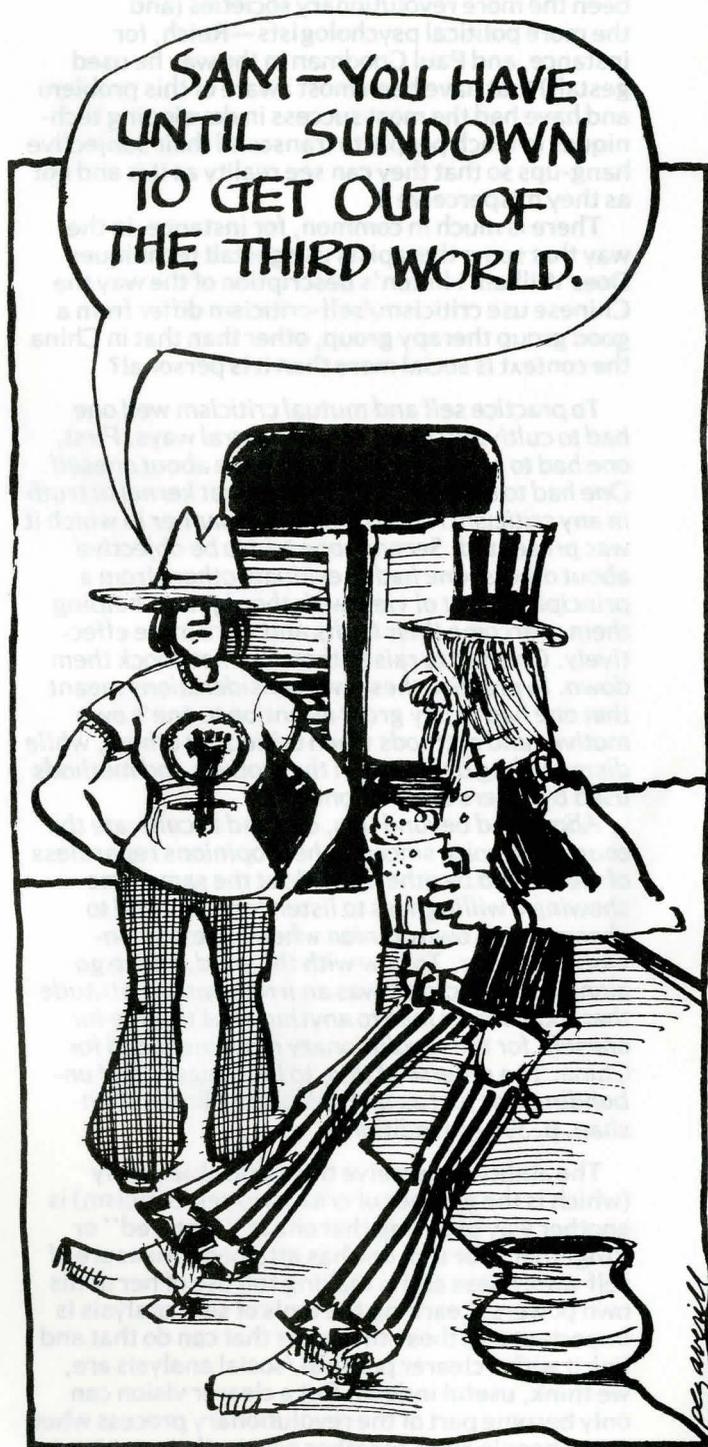
the clean reformer (Jimmy Stewart) cleans out the corruption in City Hall. We see it so often, ambitious liberals, each one a would-be hero on the white horse, undercutting each other for personal power, never working together to achieve common goals. This is, of course, the American way, going into battle single-handedly, heroically to change the system. But it doesn't work; it can't work. So we get clobbered and give up. And then we tell each other that although the system may be rotten, you can't fight City Hall. But instead of abandoning this thickheaded individualism that made defeat inevitable, we turn it on ourselves and change our focus from personalized politics to personal growth. And because the Human Potential Movement encourages this process, it contributes to the individualism that is so destructive a force in political life.

Granted that Wilson in supporting alternative institutions is not defending individualism per se. But the apolitical collectivism that he defines as revolutionary often reflects individualism just the same. He cites, for instance, his conference center "where 25 people are living together in a house, for many their first experience in communal living." This, he continues, "can lead to the realization that it is possible to live together with others. This creates hope, where cynicism is pervasive. . . ." All of which is true, but a collective experience is not the same as a collective solution, and a commune that isolates itself from the larger society (as many communes do), even though it is collective in form, is not collective in substance, and is seeking a solution to the problems of society for its own exclusive membership.

#### A Psychological Dead-end

Personal problems are not individualized problems; they are very much rooted in the complexities of material existence. But the Human Potential Movement does not encourage its participants to look at the society that has shaped them; it does not provide people with the tools or techniques to look back upon where they came from in order to analyze the source of their discontent. Focused as it is on personal concerns, it excludes from its focus objective conditions. And inasmuch as it sees only personal solutions it leads ultimately to psychological dead-ends. In fact, it has to some extent become a part of the consumer society, with people moving from one religious or psychological discipline to another in a fruitless quest for personal happiness and fulfillment; fruitless, because most individuals cannot be fulfilled in an alienating, individualized society, and humanity as a whole cannot realize its potential in a basically inhumane or anti-humane system, such as capitalism is.

We won't burden Wilson with defending such aspects of the Human Potential Movement as EST or Arica. These are attempts by shrewd entrepreneurs to exploit the loneliness and lack of community that so many Americans face in their everyday existence. For a price, some of these disciplines may work for a while and give people a taste of community. In the same way that Hostess



Twinkies may appease hunger, or coffee may perk you up when you are down. EST and Arica may give you an initial psychological lift. But they cannot cure the basic malaise because they do not deal with the root problems.

This is not to say that individual therapies do not have their merits. As Zwierling points out, therapy is a useful tool. Unhappy, self-hating, alienating, neurotically depressed cadre, who cannot perceive an objective situation because they have no awareness of their own subjective distortions, are not going to be effective political people. Indeed, it has been the more revolutionary societies (and the more political psychologists — Reich, for instance, and Paul Goodman in the way he used gestalt) that have been most aware of this problem and have had the most success in developing techniques to teach people to transcend their subjective hang-ups so that they can see reality as it is and not as they misperceive it.

There is much in common, for instance, in the way that some therapists use gestalt techniques. Does William Hinton's description of the way the Chinese use criticism/self-criticism differ from a good group therapy group, other than that in China the context is social more than it is personal?

*To practice self and mutual criticism well one had to cultivate objectivity in several ways. First, one had to be willing to be objective about oneself. One had to be willing to seek out that kernel of truth in any criticism regardless of the manner in which it was presented. Second, one had to be objective about others; one had to evaluate others from a principled point of view with the object of helping them overcome their faults and work more effectively. One had to raise others up, not knock them down. In practice these two considerations meant that one had to pay great attention to one's own motives and methods when criticizing others, while disregarding on the main the motives and methods used by others towards oneself.*

*Above and beyond this, one had to cultivate the courage to voice sincerely held opinions regardless of views held by others, while at the same time showing a willingness to listen to others and to change one's own opinion when honestly convinced of error. To bow with the wind, and to go along with the crowd was an irresponsible attitude that could never lead to anything but trouble for oneself, for the revolutionary movement and for China. The reverse of this, to be arrogant and unbending was just as bad. (William Hinton, *Fanshan*, p. 395 (pb. edition))*

The ability to perceive the world objectively (which is the essence of criticism/self criticism) is another way of saying that one is "centered" or "together," or that one has attained a measure of self-awareness and is making full use of her or his own powers. Learning the tools of self-analysis is important and those therapies that can do that and link it with a clearer political/social analysis are, we think, useful indeed. But a clearer vision can only become part of the revolutionary process when many people come together politically to put it into

practice on the grand social scale.

To describe the Human Potential Movement as a revolutionary force is ultimately to engage in a metaphysical flight. Wilson says, "I believe we already have what we need inside ourselves, it is simply a matter of contacting that security, that awareness that we carry what we need inside ourselves and in the relationship we have with each other." And then he concludes that if only we will open ourselves up to what we have inside of ourselves, *voila* revolution!

Well, what we have inside ourselves is a lot of old baggage, the accumulated products of our own culture and socialization process and probably of previous generations as well. There is no evidence that people are either good, bad or indifferent. We are shaped by our society and reflect our culture. We can drop-out of the society but this doesn't necessarily enable us to drop-out of our culture. To change ourselves, we must change our society, and that change is never arbitrary in that "the revolution" will instantaneously make us new women and new men. It is a process that perhaps never ends, but without changing the material conditions of society the process can hardly begin.

And no matter how righteous and how decent our lives are, we cannot make a revolution, we cannot begin this process on our own. The vast majority of working Americans have neither the time or the financial means for the Human Potential Movement or revolution by example. Furthermore, most do not see what it has to offer them. Clearly, it does not speak to their basic concerns and problems. But these are precisely the people who must be part of the struggle if we are to achieve revolutionary change. Metaphysical fantasies will not work. Wilson quotes from the song, "two and two and fifty make a million." But two and two and fifty makes fifty four. No amount of wishful singing is going to involve the other 999,946. And without their active participation, the game is lost. Ω

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