

RESIDUES OF HOPE

To be assigned to lecture to this group is an awful task. Anybody who would take on this group has got to be kooky, but we have been working together too long to let that get in our way. We have to take seriously what we do, and the way we handle that is to sacrifice a few of us to get up and say what we have done, so that the rest of us can take a look at it and then shoot holes in it. This is corporateness and has brought us to where we are. I am convinced of that. And so, I put up one representation of that pentagon diagram in which the base, Primal Community, stands as the foundation and the abbreviations up there stand for functional aptitude and netherly prowess. I abbreviated them because I don't know what they mean.

This summer the emphasis is on the mechanism for bringing about depth awareness and historical engagement in society. We have found ourselves in the time of engagement. We are coming close to laying out the dynamics that bring about the profound transformation of society. The depth transformation of our social fabric is what we are dealing with, not only in the West but across the whole globe. We are using ourselves, our communities, the provinces of Canada, and the United States as the initial experiment in Community Forum. The people in this room represent the most radical experiment that is going on today. There are other groups, there are other organizations, and certainly there will be other projects to come up that require radical engagement. But, they will have to look to what this group has already done to enable people to be involved on a long-range continuous basis. But, the lecture tonight is on the residue of hope.

At this point, the crucial part has to do with understanding what we mean by hope. I am going to talk about the residue that is appearing in society under the categories of depth awareness and historical engagement. Hope, as we have talked about it, is a dynamic of consciousness that has to do with what it means to be a human being. It has nothing to do with an object, it has nothing to do with encouragement, it has nothing to do in the first instance with psychological enablement. Hope is a happening in history and it leaves sociological external historical manifestations, biteable remains in history. The happening we call hope occurs when in society a group of people, and individuals realize this: that every belief is tied to a vision and every vision that you know anything about is temporal. Every vision that you have ever encountered has passed away. Every visionary projection that you have encountered has already disintegrated for you. You have the possibility of profound believing only on the other side of that vision passing away.

We call this the Dark Night. When there is no light ahead, when there

is no vision, when there is no object for belief, we use the poetry the Dark Night. This is a dynamic of consciousness. It does not mean that you have become ill all of a sudden. This is ordinary in the sense that it is the way consciousness operates. Consciousness calls itself into question. And you say, "I wish I had never become conscious." The fact of the matter is that once you have gone this far, there is no turning back. Consciousness blacks out every so often. Consciousness does away with itself every so often only so that it can be reborn anew. Old language like that may not mean much to you. The same thing happens with every intentional effort. It finally comes to naught, to no value. It finally is worthless. The poetry that we have used there is the Long March. There is finally no satisfying significance, no fulfillment in what you do. The bluebird does not exist over the rainbow. That is a dynamic of consciousness. That is not your failure in society, although society would look at it as a failure. That is the way consciousness operates. And the Long March therefore becomes a reality that abides with you. The Long March becomes like your most personal and intimate friend. That is not a little voice down inside. The most radical, wrenching experience that you will ever have is to realize that all efforts come to naught.

When that love which is never fulfilled, and that belief which never reaches an object occurs, hope appears. It appears not as a substitute for the objects of belief, and not as a reconciliation for the unfulfillment, but hope appears. However, hope appears not in any visible form, but only in residual efforts. You never see hope, you only see where hope has occurred or passed by. You see in society only the result of hope. But hope is not a functional category. You do not do something in order to achieve it, you do not hope in order to achieve results. Hope blows where it will. Only through the eyes of the Dark Night and the eyes of the Long March can you see where hope actually has passed. It leaves signs, it leaves tracks, it leaves deposits in its way. Those deposits have always been the building blocks of societal transformation, and only those blocks bring about lasting societal transformation. . . political revolutions do not bring about lasting transformations, economic revolutions bring about chaos. Is that not clear in this century? We have withstood barely two centuries of economic revolution and we are almost lying in the wake. The only thing that brings about the reconstruction of society is not economic revolution, not political revolution, not cultural revolution. The only thing that brings about lasting societal transformation has to do with this dynamic of hope. Hope beyond hope. Not hope in anything, not hope in any object, not hope in any vision, not hope in any body. The depth transformation of society is preceded by a break loose of consciousness that we call hope. But it is not the kind of hope that most people are talking about.

I am going to talk about four things in the context of the residual hope. I want to talk about Social Demonstration, the Global Community Forum, paravocation, and finally something called human power, which you probably know far more about than any group of human beings in the history of civilization. It happens like this: when people engage themselves in Social Demonstration there is brought about an intensity of effort which forms, if you will, a kind of communication. This articulation and interchange builds a network, a new nexus of society. That new nexus of society is the most mature form of corporate human power that mankind has ever seen. Shall I say that again? It is something like this -- the transformation of society is a happening. It is not a strategy. It is not a social theory.

It is not a new societal program by the government. The transformation of society is a raw, volcanic eruption. It bursts loose enough psyches at the seams that somebody has to say something about it, somebody has to respond to it, somebody has to give it some kind of articulation. That is what a forum is all about. That forum in its very nature builds a nexus of sociality. It brings people of the most diverse backgrounds you can imagine together and starts them talking. You get them together long enough talking about it and a realization, another happening occurs. It is called para-vocation. This is what happens to people on the other side of Town Meeting. They grasp, or have the possibility of grasping themselves as caring for society. That is para-vocation. And that demands of us almost in and of itself, a kind of mature corporate effort. It demands mature banding together, not for self-defense, but in this case to build the earth itself. This has happened to us.

A few years ago we had a program called Imaginal Education. Some of you may have participated in this kind of program. We knew that we did not have to go around demonstrating new ideas or telling people new information. We knew that raw data was not the key, but rather the education of a person's imaginal faculty. Imagination is the key. Imaginal Education was an occasion to knock people up the side of the head. You had to wake them up long enough so that some kind of communication could go on. We called those seminars. When one was done right, you were not teaching the paper; you were teaching people how to dialogue, how to work as a group, and how to possibly come to a decision together. On the other side of this, groups of people began to come together. Remember, we used to have teacher's guilds. Before we had LENS we had the mobile cadre, the family cadre, the doctor's cadre. They were struggling back then with para-vocation, but did not have the tools or the context to do it. And so it was dropped. Earlier, this is where the Ecumenical Institute began. The earliest seminars in Evanston were on para-vocation. That is interesting, isn't it? That is the way Dr. Leibrecht began the Ecumenical Institute (only he didn't use the word para-vocation, obviously). He thereby began to sense that there were possibilities for renewal within the institutions of society. Imaginal Education addressed latent revolutionaries. The function of every educational effort that we have had up to this point was to call out latent revolutionaries from within the structures that were there.

If you look now at where we are, these dynamics of depth awareness and historical engagement have changed because we have more sophisticated ways. But the process of transformation of society is what we are working with now, and Social Demonstration is like the ground base upon which we have lived. We are beyond "protesting" as a method of demonstration. We are into Social Demonstration that is a different kind of demonstration from protest. We used to have courses. Now we have Town Meetings, Community Forums; probably the most fantastic communicative tool that the world has ever seen because it is applicable within any national boundaries and within any national construct. And, we have this realization of para-vocation. The gift of that is not that some of us are in one vocation and some of us are in another vocation. The great thing about para-vocation is that it makes us all equal. That is the point of para-vocation. In this outfit, it does not matter if you are a doctor, if you are a lawyer, or if you are a bishop. In this understanding every man and woman is equal. But society has a criteria for success, and they go with those vocational titles. They go along with what it means to be a successful physician or a successful businessman. Paravocation cuts that away.

And in this understanding you and I stand shoulder to shoulder. It does not necessarily mean that you give up your occupation. Quite the contrary. It simply means that you stand shoulder to shoulder with other people who have grasped as well that they have particular skills and herein lies the power of the movement. Herein, I believe, lies the power of resurgence in the future. It cuts across those kinds of class distinctions. It cuts across those kinds of vocational distinctions.

Very quickly, Social Demonstration is a residue. Majuro is not important. Majuro in and of itself is the most ridiculous, out-of-the-way, god-forsaken island you would ever want to go to. The most important thing about Majuro is that people are going to it. Do you hear the difference in that? People are engaging in Majuro. That is the Social Demonstration, not the island itself. (We have people lined up -- trying to keep them off the island, because it might sink if we add any more. You that have been out there know that you can only get so many people with blue shirts on that island and it becomes very difficult. That is not a Social Demonstration, that is over-population!). Majuro is a symbol, not of people going to do some wild exotic thing, but a symbol of socio-economic development. Who in the world would want to go out to an island and start a Marine Farm? Nobody is interested in that. They are interested in the possibility that social development (that is, human development) and economic development could go on together. An affluent society without a bunch of zombies in it, would not that be something? What if Majuro brought off the first balance between human development and affluence in this world? We are talking about Social Demonstration.

The residue of Majuro is long-range commitment, as is 5th City. Fifth City is not "going to be over some day". I thought it was. That is why I signed up. They said we were going to start an 8-week summer program, in 1965. Well, we are still "serving" that neighborhood, as far as I can tell. For Social Demonstration is long-range commitment. How long has it been since you stuck with something for a while? That is a residue of hope. The only thing that allows you to stick to it is hope, but not hope in Majuro, not hope in 5th City, but even something more important.

Probably everybody in this room has been touched by hope. Now, what does that mean? What does it mean to be touched by hope? Well, you have experience like this. Somewhere along the way somebody told you about Majuro or maybe they told you about 5th City, or maybe they told you about an inner-city project somewhere. What we are talking about is not the first blush of confrontation with society. We have all been brought up in Western Civilization. No, we are not talking about Western or Eastern Civilization. Some of us were brought up in the Eastern World. We are not even talking about the Third World, and there are representatives here from the Third World. That is not what it means to be confronted by hope today. What it means to be confronted by hope is to be confronted by the Fourth World. The fact of the matter is that every ordering process is necessary today in any society -- east, west, or south. I am not a pacifist, but I am in favor of peace. But I mean that I am in favor of an ordered society. I don't mean law and order. I mean any society that has made it into the 20th Century deserves to get its gifts into the civilization process. That is

what I mean by order. That every isolated out-of-the-way community that has lasted this long has done so because it has some order to it. Now, by order I don't mean democracy or communism. I mean it has something to give, something to hold it together, and we are not going to make it into the 21st Century without every ounce of gift of order. Is that not clear? I am talking about the rich gifts of human relationships that allow human beings to exist side by side. That is in Majuro and that is in 5th City, and I have not been to some of the other places. But the residue of Social Demonstration is that those south sea island cultures have made it this far. Hawaii didn't make it this far and that is a blot on our record. The residue that I am talking about of Social Demonstration is the residue of order that is left in this world and it is left in very few places. It is left in isolated places. One place it is left, I know of is Majuro.

Now let me talk about the residue of Community Forum. Community forums have been going on for a long time. Some of us just finally caught on. These things have been happening all over the world and they are a product of -- they go with -- social demonstration. Whenever you have socio-economic activity going on together, automatically you have community forums come about. That is empirically proven. It is not the other way around! You do not get together and have people plan out socio-economic development. That goes on as a human happening on the other side of which community forum begins. We can whomp up these Town Meetings and bally-hoo in the Lion's Club and all that, but there ain't going to be no Town Meeting until Social Demonstration takes place. I believe that they have at least to go hand in hand. You do not have one without the other. Now, the Global Community Forum stands on its own as a residue, but out of that communication, that interchange which is Community Forum, there you have a new nexus of society, a new network of social relationships. There are still conservatives and liberals after the meeting but you have a different kind of person.

This socio-economic activity which is communicated through Global Community Forum, then, has a political impact. Not the other way around. Global Community Forum is not a political activity in the sense that I am using it. It is not going to make any difference in the Republicans or the Democrats. Only on the other side of social-economic demonstration comes the possibility of political alteration. This country is famous for political revolution. I know enough about it to know that it would have fallen on its face before Thomas Jefferson's death, if the public school system did not follow within 15 years. Without mass awakening there is no lasting social change. There is no political change, there is no structural change, there is no legal change, there is no legislative change, there is no administrative change without mass awakening. That is why this Community Forum thing is so important. That is a residue that happens, though. It is not starting a bunch of discussion groups. It is not starting the precinct idea up all over again. It is not trying to jack up democracy with some new form of representation. No, it is a radical breakthrough in consciousness and we hope that the form that we have used will hold intact long enough for us to get our minds around the direction of the political change that is going to inevitably follow.

The next residue is para-vocation. When hope appears, something happens called para-vocation and it is simply this: once and for all you grasp a

sense of your own destiny and not some 8 to 5 job. Now, that is not divorced from one another, because everybody's got to work, but destiny is not automatically seen in that 8 to 5 job. Para-vocation implies that there is a possibility that you were sent, you were captured, you were fated.... You were fated to care, and you were fated to believe and you were fated to hope. And when you come to terms with that, you come to terms with vocation. You have no alternative but to believe in the next best thing that goes by. And guess what is going to happen. It is going to get smashed. You have no alternative but to care for the whole world, which is impossible. You have no opportunity but to hope that things are going to get better. And yet, when you die, there is going to be more suffering than when you started. When you realize that you can work, you can do something. Until then you cannot. Because what we are talking about is not professional skills. We are talking about Those Who Care. We are talking about those who are assigned to 8 to 5 jobs, who are assigned to business, who are assigned to do jobs to keep this social fabric going one day more. But finally, you have only one vocation and that is the para-vocation. It is a realization that comes when you are trying to do something by yourself. Well, you know some of us had the opportunity to work through the AMA. Can you imagine trying to change society through the American Medical Association? Nothing against the American Medical Association, but how long does it take before you come up against the fact that the P.T.A. is not going to change the world. How long does it take to realize that your fine family is not going to change the world? How long does it take to realize that your community is not going to change the world? That the only thing that is going to change the world are Those Who Care and that that is a corporate effort. It may not manifest itself in some tight-knit network, but it is people who have decided together to deal with the major contradictions of society. In this room we have a body of people who are a sign and a symbol to that meaningful possibility for existence. You are those people. You are the ones who have decided to care.

It is like leading a double life, isn't it? It is like being two-faced. That is putting it politely. Well, you feel like you have double-crossed everybody. That is what it means to be Those Who Care. And the double life comes something like this. You always are engaged in particularities. You are always doing something very mundane, very particular, wherever you are assigned, and then all of a sudden in the midst of doing that particular, (they let me count the money around here) all of a sudden like a neon sign, the light goes off on the particularity. Can you believe that? Not even wanting to see money anymore? Well, that is what happens. After a while you just get tired, but it is like the light goes off on that particularity and the unparticular in your life becomes present to you. That is the way it happens; it is not instead of the particular or around the particular. It is while you are doing the particular, counting the quarters in the coke machine, the light goes out and then it comes back on and written across the neon sign is, guess what ...in great big huge letters "H-U-M-I-L-I-A-T-I-O-N" and it just keeps blinking. Do you know this experience? It is called humiliation. The next minute the light comes back on and you are counting money again. You don't want to go in that shop and then the light goes off again. And then the neon sign flashes "R-E-S-E-N-T-M-E-N-T". I can't

even let myself say it, I spell it. You see the sign go on and you realize that if it was up to you you would chuck it all and everybody associated with it. And then the light goes off again and....\$1.35, \$1.45, \$1.55 -- and the neon light comes on again and it reads "E-N-D-L-E-S-S-N-E-S-S" (that is a big neon sign). Now that is the capstone. You are going to be sitting there counting something. It is not coke machine quarters -- something for the rest of your life. Doing the most mundane, particular, stupid job in the world.

What I am talking about is an experience of eternity, not some wishdream of eternity. I am talking about the awareness of human power in which you see yourself doing that for the rest of your life and then the possibility that somebody is going to keep that neon sign plugged from now on and you are going to be out there doing a job and the same signs are going to keep coming on: DARK NIGHT -- LONG MARCH -- DARK NIGHT -- LONG MARCH --DARK NIGHT -- LONG MARCH -- from now until as far as you can see.

That is exactly what built every civilization to this point, and that is exactly what is going to build every civilization to the next point as far as you are conscious of. That dynamic of consciousness and only that. You realize that whatever it is that keeps people going is that neon sign. This is an experience of power. It is the experience of knowing everything that has ever gone on. You know how everything has come to be. And if you can stand the nausea just long enough, you see how everything is going to come to be. In Sunday School we used to call it missions. Boy, they never told me it was like this. They had some other words like omnipotent. I thought that would be better. This is the experience of being all-powerful, but not powerful in the sense that we normally mean that. It is the sense of realizing that you could work forever if you had to. You don't have to get motivated. You are motivity. You don't have to be in the future, you are the future. We used to have a word like omnipresent...what in the world does that mean? It doesn't mean that you are everywhere, although you could be everywhere if you were assigned to it. You could work there. You are open to any assignment and you will take any assignment and wherever Social Demonstration is needed, wherever Community Forums are needed, wherever paravocation has not been experienced, you are ready to go. You are ready to take the most alive, conscious experience you have ever had and chat a little while with people about it.

---Rick Loudermilk

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