

SOCIAL DEMONSTRATION AND THE MAJURO CONSULT

Three pictures of the world have emerged in our lifetime. The first stressed the conflict between the "Free World" and the world behind the Iron Curtain. The second pictured the West over against the East. A third view emerged in the Fifties. This view defined what the Movement has called the continents of Sphere South as the "Third World" and as the area of hopeless contradiction.

This situation has changed. For the first time since the Industrial Revolution, the "developing nations" that produce raw materials are making more money than the "developed" or industrialized nations which use these materials for technological purposes. A team just came back from China to report that China has already planted the new rice strains and will not have a food shortage. Today it is clear that the developing nations have made it.

A fourth world picture is emerging today, and involves a Fourth World in tension with the developed and developing nations. This world is difficult to comprehend because it is not neatly defined by national boundaries. It is divided into four parts: the primitives, the poor, the outcasts, and the trapped. The primitives are the forgotten people of the world. They exist in every nation: Russia, Taiwan, the aboriginals of Australia. The poor are found in communities like 5th City. The Palestinians and people of Majuro typify the trapped people of the Fourth World, imprisoned in that they are denied participation in life.

For a long time it seemed that three or four nations ran the world. That power structure is gone. In our present times, we have attributed this shift to a collapse in our culture: we were clear that the family and our social structures were collapsed. We might say that economic collapse is beneath this shift. The economic system is so befuddled that every method we have ever had of curing inflation does not work anymore.

Something entirely new and different, a spirit happening, is going on in our world. An alien image which says, "All the earth belongs to all the people" is burning through our political, economic and cultural structures. We have known the truth of that statement imaginally for years. Anyone schooled in the great religions has grounded that image deeply in life. Now that image is becoming practical. This image is burning through the very life of everyman, whether he lives in the United States, Russia, or Majuro, or anywhere.

Everyman experiences the burning through of this image as utter humiliation. The other night I was talking to some businessmen who were rehearsing how they had spent so much time in college, got degrees, and had become successes, who saw now that their lives were running out. "We have come to this." they said. They were humiliated. This humiliation is a facet of the Dark Night which the whole world is experiencing. This Dark Night has been brought on by the burning, alien image. This night is a cloud, a darkness before everyone on the face of the earth.

In the midst of this darkness, people are clear that they are called to go on a Long March. To make practical in society the fact that all the earth belongs to all will take the rest of one's life. It is a long, steep march. I am reminded of the story of the Ronin who was trying to chop a tunnel through a mountain. When he finally chopped through the mountain, the Ronin looked out and saw a deeper cliff than the one he had tried to avoid in the first place with his tunnel.

We held a consult with a bank in Montreal. Some community bank managers had begun a program of poor people's banking. They had intended to be bankers, but once they touched their communities, the bottom fell out of their work. They found they had the whole community, in fact, the whole world on their hands. The burden is always crushing. When one sees the whole world on his back, it takes a lifetime to move. It is a long march.

The world is waking up to this march, whether everyman can articulate his experience or not. A new spirituality is emerging, and is required, before one will have a sense of what the new economics, the new polity and the new culture will be.

The 5th City and Oombulgurri projects deal with the poor and the primitives, respectively, of the Fourth World. We are beginning a project in Calcutta and need one in the Middle East. We need social demonstrations which deal with the social contradictions of the Fourth World.

In each social demonstration, something like this process is required. First, one has to create an economic miracle which will release people to participate in the twentieth century world. But it is not enough to be giving people money. Four decades of aid in this country has shown this alone does not work. A hard, practical plan must be developed. The recovery of human community out of the deeps, out of people's wisdom or heritage, is crucial. An "archaic" miracle must be created here. Finally, practical training, or retooling of people will allow people to participate in the twentieth century. Social demonstration is at the junction of these three thrusts. This is where people can see possibility. Hope emerges.

We went to the Majuro Atoll of the Marshall Islands to hold a global consult. This consult in one sense had nothing to do with Majuro--one has to say this to avoid being lost in the particulars of the consult. We intended to create a model to obtain the methods which could be taken to any part of the globe and break open a social demonstration in a week's time. The key to the consult is indicative battleplanning. The consult itself deals with the issues of creating a spirit happening, a practical, economic happening, a recovery of heritage, and a retooling of people to break them loose to participate on the Long March. All this is done in a week's time.

Indicative battleplanning must first be distinguished from liberal, bourgeois planning. The concept of expertise is central to the latter. When I was in Mowanjum in Australia, the expert planners said, "You can't raise anything around here because it's desert. You can't even find water here and we have the geological surveys here to prove it." So we asked the aboriginals where to drill a well. They said, "Drill over there on that little hill." On our first drilling, we had a gusher at 105 feet. The well had more water with less salt than the town water which cost fifty thousand dollars to discover. Apparently, the report of the discovery of water landed on the desk of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs the same day as the geological survey which said no water could be found.

The liberal bourgeois planner starts with a vision or expectation given by his culture. Then he looks at his situation to see how it measures up. Out of that evaluation, he builds his objectives, strategies and tactics. Some of the most beautiful books are published at the end of this process. A thick housing study on Majuro was published four years ago, and nothing has happened since. The planners started with their vision of what housing looks like. Majuro did not have that kind of housing so they built a model of suburban housing. Then, they gave the Marshallese the tactics to implement suburban housing on Majuro. When nothing happens in such a situation, the tendency is to blame the "ignorance" of the native people.

The indicative battleplanner begins with his situation. He develops his vision by talking through his situation. If you ever listen closely to someone talk about his family, for example, you can capture his vision of his family within his description of what is going on in it. As the battleplanner takes hold of his situation as it is, his situation is exposed to him as a vision of possibility. He then orders the possibilities for the future of his situation into practical steps, such as a twenty-one point plan.

In attempting to deal with the myriad of blocks to the realization of that vision, some means of rationalizing them is required. Our intuitions usually tell us rational human beings that our rationality always leaves something out in this process. After making gorgeous plans, one has the feeling that they are wrong. No one will be able to execute them. One needs a planning method which employs such intuitions.

One such method is the "swirl" method. One spreads before him in intuitive fashion all his data and blocks to his vision. He then discerns, again intuitively, the clusters of data which seem related. Out of these clusters, he names the contradictions which are preventing the implementation of his vision. The contradictions are discerned intuitively from the real situation. After this, it is a matter of creating proposals to deal with the contradictions, and tactics and implementary procedures which will actualize your proposals.

In this implementary phase, a new expertise is emerging. The liberal, bourgeois planning process does not deal with the contradiction of getting

technical wisdom to the people where it may be implemented. The Guardians on the Majuro Consult were experts beyond experts in that they discerned this contradiction and then wrote the implementary procedures which allowed their technical expertise to flood into Majuro, into the world, where it might take effect. Implementary expertise is the new expertise.

The presence of the Guardians and their particular expertise has other effects in a social demonstration. The Guardians are a back up system. When someone in Majuro needs parts for a boat, for example he knows there are Guardians who can quickly secure for him that which has previously taken months to obtain. The Guardians provide practical wisdom which breeds miracles. An oceanographer in the Consult prevented the destruction of an enclosed lagoon on the atoll and laid out plans for a sea farm there, to raise lobsters. The very presence of the Guardians created an impact on the community on Majuro. As the Marshallese participated in the Consult, they experienced a global fellowship. The Guardians globalized the community, pushing the Marshallese beyond concern simply for Majuro to concern for Majuro as a social demonstration one could do in Calcutta. This process relates them to the globe and to the future, so they see they are not alone.

After our experience in Majuro, it appears that such consults require two days of context, four for the consult itself, and two days of wrap up: Given one day of travel at either end of the consult, and one is asking a man to give up ten days of his life to set loose a social demonstration project.

We will probably need to do a second consult on Majuro. In the first, we built a comprehensive human redevelopment plan divided into the social, training and economic arenas. We also designed the tactics to begin implementation of this plan. In the second consult, we need to go in to spot the single contradiction blocking the situation. These consults are not long advisory sessions in which one is so muddled by detail that nothing happens. We must spot the depth contradiction in the spirit of the people to find our release point. Such a contradiction is never a practical problem. It is always a block in the spirit of the people. Once it is removed, the practical problems have a funny way of being resolved.

There are many kinds of personnel needs in a project like this. One needs the consultants who are present for a week to blow open the project. Then people with various kinds of expertise are required for a year. In Majuro, we need an oceanographer, a master mechanic, and a teacher of book-keeping and secretarial skills. Then there will be those who will decide to be global demonstrators who will move from project to project throughout their lives.

An interesting fact of the Majuro project is that it was started by Guardians. When KITCO ( the Kwajelein Import and Trading Company), based in Majuro was facing bankruptcy, we sent two Guardians from the business community in to turn KITCO into a profit making venture. Their sucess provided the authorization for us to do this consult.

Majuro is only a beginning. We intend to span the globe with signs of the New Social Vehicle. We need several social demonstration projects: the aboriginals project, urban projects, exurban projects, one in a hospital, another in a school. We need a global chain of projects which pull people into the future, a chain which releases people to take the next step into the future. Those who went to Majuro have a new style about them. They are a sign of the new human being.

--George Holcombe

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