

biosphere into noosphere gave him a perspective rooted in the past and stretching out into the future. Once grasped, such a perspective adds a new dimension to our thinking

about man and his destiny, a dimension that cannot be neglected by the Church.

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SOCIETY WITHOUT THE FATHER: A CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by Alexander Mitscherlich, translated by Eric Mosbacher. *Tavistock Publications*, London, 1969. 329 pp. 60s.

Originally published in Germany in 1963, this book is an extended commentary on our social situation as seen by a psychoanalyst. No society likes to have its collective assumptions questioned nor its dark side exposed to public gaze. Dr Mitscherlich has already documented the brutality of man to man in his books on atrocities committed in obedience to the Führer. Even medical men of the highest academic standing were found capable of using their skills in barbaric ways. Beneath the fragile crust of social norms every form of inhumanity is waiting its opportunity. Dr Mitscherlich attempts to explain this social phenomenon in social psychological terms which he believes provide a scientific framework for understanding the 'evilness' in man. He argues that every paternalist regime frustrates a great deal of instinctive satisfaction and that from time to time these frustrations break through the paternalist framework with disastrous results. Today that framework itself is passing away and there is imminent danger of an instinctive back-lash tipped with nuclear warheads. The traditional safety-valve of attacking other countries is no longer viable and the political paranoia that exists between East and West is highly dangerous.

The decline of the paternalist framework is evidenced by the decline of the Divine Father in religious belief and the former paternalism of political leaders has been replaced by anonymous bureaucracy. Even the family father has lost his authority as the teacher of skills necessary for earning a living. As the repressive power of paternalist figures withers away, the individual is assailed by a chaos of contradictory impulses. Dr Mitscherlich hopes that a new form of control by way of self-awareness and critical rationality will evolve rapidly enough to prevent the disintegration of civilization. 'Only the extension of alert critical thought can prevent the extinction of the European tradition' (p. 27). The chief obstacle to this extension is the present system of education which emphasizes specialist knowledge at the expense of emotional and social maturity. The reason for this is that 'the

division of labour requires specialists who think critically only in a narrow field and are otherwise expected to conform' (p. 196). Social education consists in obedience or punishment, which produces conditioned reflexes but paralyses thought. 'Infinitely more often education takes the form of terrorism rather than guidance towards independence' (p. 13). 'The attempt to think independently is accompanied by acute anxiety and hence social relations are restricted to stereotyped formal roles devoid of insight or understanding. This is particularly so in relations between young and old. 'The lack of intuitive understanding of the infant and young person in the crises of puberty represents the most underdeveloped social relationship in our society' (p. 191). 'The artificial tone of voice, the demonstrative display of affection, the false identification with the child's interests and its play world are all intended to overcome the actual inability to communicate' (p. 48).

Dr Mitscherlich's response to the threat of imminent social and political chaos is to advocate a new method of education which will educate the whole person irrespective of social class or academic ability. This is the only way that people can become sufficiently civilized to survive the breakdown of paternalism without resorting to regressive or brutish behaviour. But he recognizes that the prevailing power structure makes such progress unlikely because 'the inhibition of aggression by empathy and insight, which is the civilized method, runs counter to the ideology of authoritarian superiority and its right to impose punishment' (p. 178).

These few points, selected from many, have much in common with other critiques of modern industrial society and they link up with the current educational debate. It is only fair to say that they have been abstracted from a text which suffers from over-conceptualization; for example, 'The reactions of many drivers in heavy traffic show how the libidinal instinctual component is taken back into the ego in a state of hostile excitation and strengthens the narcissistic cathexis' (p. 276),

This fault may result from attempting to make a political analysis 'scientific' by couching it in psychological terms. For in my opinion much of the argument in this book is of a political rather than 'social psychological' nature. Had Dr Mitscherlich grasped this nettle his conclusions might have been even more explicit. His final position expressed here is that he advocates tolerance and rationality over against prejudice and irrationality. He regards emancipation as the fruit of insight and self-knowledge. This ignores the question as to whether emancipation is possible for the individual in the existing power structures and whether

action as well as insight is necessary. Today it is precisely the value of liberal values which is under pressure. Does anyone really believe that the incumbent of a power position will renounce power as a result of 'rational discussion'? The adoption of some of Dr Mitscherlich's criticisms of the education system by radical teachers, students and others has gone hand in hand with the rejection of his liberal values. It would be interesting to know what political position he has adopted in response to recent events in places of education, not least in Germany.

WILLIAM HALTON

WORK AND COMMUNITY: The Scott Bader Commonwealth and the Quest for a New Social Order, by Fred H. Blum. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London, 1968. 392 pp. 45s.

This book has three principal themes; first, an account of the development of a small chemical enterprise, Scott Bader Ltd; second, the results of two research projects whose aim was to assess the effect of the growth of an industrial commonwealth upon those working within it; and third, an expression of the Christian faith and its relevance to the world of work. Before continuing this review, I must however explain that I am currently engaged in research work at Scott Bader and that I write both as a social scientist and as a person who is very much committed to the Commonwealth ideals and their development.

Mr Blum's account of the firm goes back to 1945 when the Quaker founder, Ernest Bader, established a 'Fellowship' at work whose aim was to emphasize the ideals of Christian brotherhood and offer each worker complete economic security. Management's decisions were no longer to be determined solely by financial criteria but by their total effect on all who were involved by any particular decision. These changes were met by suspicion and doubt and after two years the experiment failed. The response of Ernest Bader was that he had not gone far enough in his attempt to change traditional attitudes as ownership was still retained by the family. In 1951, the Scott Bader Commonwealth was established and 90 per cent of the shares were transferred to the new body. Each employee of the company was entitled to join the Commonwealth and thus become one of the collective owners of the firm. The principles upon which this action was taken were the abdication of power and privilege of shareholders and managers, and the acceptance of responsibility for the social and

economic welfare of the enterprise by all its members. In 1963 the remaining 10 per cent of the shares was passed over to the Commonwealth.

What is the significance of this experiment? It sets out to be a genuine alternative to welfare capitalism and state-controlled communism. Although much has been said about the incompatibility of our existing industrial and social structure and the Christian conception, this book goes some way towards bridging the gap. The Commonwealth is a practical working attempt at co-operation which, although not perfect, still stands out amongst the earlier ventures. By some traditional criteria the firm is successful. Ten years ago turnover was £875,000 and profit before tax £87,000. Now turnover is £4m, and profits £250,000. We must, however, assess the Commonwealth by other standards. In its seventeen years it has given £120,000 to charity and paid out £110,000 to its members. The company will engage itself only in the production of goods for peaceful purposes, in strong contrast with many other firms in the chemical industry. One difficulty is that Scott Bader cannot go to the market for funds. In order to pay for expansion, an average of 80 per cent of the profits has been ploughed back. These brief details have been included because without them discussion about the Scott Bader experiment will become unreal.

The most sympathetic reader of this book is confronted with a number of difficulties. Three themes are developed and at no point does the author clearly define the limits of a particular argument. He writes: 'This book is an attempt to understand problems of work in (such) a