

our experiences. In a word, many of us refuse to concede that the longest way round may be the shortest way home.

An abbreviated self-portrayal, a sort of montage of us few: We have no trouble at all in seeing through the sham of the attractive nicknames and the loftily worded preambles of political power schemes. There is no distraction to us by reason of these wordy adornments. A very good eye here! Nor are we blind as to their essence. We clearly see that all of them, without exception — TVA, Post Office, Farm Allotment Program, Urban Renewal, or whatever — are no more than something-for-nothing concoctions.⁴ We see that these grandiose political plans are founded on something being given in return for nothing, and given by a government which *has nothing of its own to give*. An excellent eye up to this point!

But beyond this comes the blindness: Too many of us wish to correct the thinking of these millions who approve false meas-

⁴ Some of the millions will counter that people pay for TVA power and light, for postal service, for money borrowed from government, and so on. They do, in part. But the feature of these socializations is below-cost and below-market pricing. It is the uncollected part which has to be met by taxpayer subsidy that is the something the "beneficiaries" will receive in return for nothing.

ures by "telling 'em off"; to spread the true word by pounding into their heads that there's no such thing as a free lunch, and that these schemes are a fraud and delusion; to elect the "right" people to public office. And more: to give them economics in capsules; to put the gist of our wisdom in parables; to get our message across to the masses; to convince the man in the street. As the sales manager puts it, "Get out there and sell! sell! sell!"

Education is a *drawing forth* process, induced by an attraction to light. These attempted short cuts, on the other hand, are *pushing* thrusts, and if they have any effect at all, it is to repel. They do not serve to educate. The record is clear on this. Better nothing than these.

The Pursuit of Excellence

Not only is the longest way round the shortest way home, it is the only way home! The formula, as old as thinking man, is simple in pronouncement but as rare and difficult of achievement as any of life's disciplines. It is the road that has no earthly inn, the ideal unattainable, the renewal of desires that knows no satiety; it is, as Hanford Henderson phrased it, "the passionate pursuit of excellence in everything." This he termed "a religion."

Relating this longest way round to the problem at issue, it is plain that millions of citizens, at least in their present state, cannot perceive free market processes. For these they have no eye. What brings forth the eye? Why the light itself brings forth the eye!

We see that animal species committed to the depths of the sea or to subterranean existence lose or never develop sight, and from this conclude that where there is no light there is no eye for seeing.

Nor need we confine these observations to the kind of light that can be precisely measured in candle power. The same principle is applicable to that inner light — enlightenment — which we know not how to measure. In societies where there are no enlightened individuals we also note that there is neither light nor eyes developed to perceive it.

Where the eye is blind or underdeveloped, disaster to a once great economy cannot be avoided. Thus, any person concerned about the environment in which it is his lot to live, is warranted — yes, selfishly justified — in doing what he can to bring forth the eye. But analysis reveals that one's influence in this respect is limited to self-perfection, that is, to increasing one's own candle power; approximating, as nearly as possible, one's creative potentialities;

acquiring the ability not merely to perceive but to *conceive* ideas; in a word, it is the art of becoming human.⁵

It is this long way round, the continual emphasis on personal emergence in consciousness and awareness, along with ever-improving expository qualities — self-generated enlightenment — that should be what we mean by *individualism*.

It is, of course, as unindividualistic as it is futile to urge this form of individualism on anyone. Individualism, in this highest sense, is a product of the Creative Light and of self-urging. But of one thing I am certain: Regardless of any pretensions to the contrary, no one but an individual dedicated to and having success with his own upgrading has any influence whatsoever on bettering the perception of others, on improving society or the free market or whatever. Can one develop light enough to open eyes? That's the question. For light, and light only, brings forth the eye!

If this longest way round has the "fault" of being difficult, it at least has the virtue of being realistic — and possible — in *my* opinion. ♦

⁵ For a further exploration of this idea, read Lecomte du Nouy's commentaries on the evolution of man, especially Chapter XI in his *Human Destiny*. Now available in paperback. A Mentor Book.