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INTRODUCTION

The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. It is the place where the diffused rays of many separate beams of life fall into focus, with gains in both social effectiveness and significance. The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning. Here in the city the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused: here, too, ritual passes on occasion into the active drama of a fully differentiated and self-conscious society.

Cities are a product of the earth. They reflect the peasant's cunning in dominating the earth; technically they but carry further his skill in turning the soil to productive uses, in enfolding his cattle for safety, in regulating the waters that moisten his fields, in providing storage bins and barns for his crops. Cities are emblems of that settled life which began with permanent agriculture: a life conducted with the aid of permanent shelters, permanent utilities like orchards, vineyards, and irrigation works, and permanent buildings for protection and storage.

Every phase of life in the countryside contributes to the existence of cities. What the shepherd, the woodman, and the miner know, becomes transformed and "etherealized" through the city into durable elements in the human heritage: the textiles and butter of one, the moats and dams and wooden pipes and lathes of another, the metals and jewels of the third, are finally converted into instruments of urban living: underpinning the city's economic existence, contribut-

ing art and wisdom to its daily routine. Within the city the essence of each type of soil and labor and economic goal is concentrated: thus arise greater possibilities for interchange and for new combinations not given in the isolation of their original habitats.

Cities are a product of time. They are the molds in which men's lifetimes have cooled and congealed, giving lasting shape, by way of art, to moments that would otherwise vanish with the living and leave no means of renewal or wider participation behind them. In the city, time becomes visible: buildings and monuments and public ways, more open than the written record, more subject to the gaze of many men than the scattered artifacts of the countryside, leave an imprint upon the minds even of the ignorant or the indifferent. Through the material fact of preservation, time challenges time, time clashes with time: habits and values carry over beyond the living group, streaking with different strata of time the character of any single generation. Layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves in the city until life itself is finally threatened with suffocation: then, in sheer defense, modern man invents the museum.

By the diversity of its time-structures, the city in part escapes the tyranny of a single present, and the monotony of a future that consists in repeating only a single beat heard in the past. Through its complex orchestration of time and space, no less than through the social division of labor, life in the city takes on the character of a symphony: specialized human aptitudes, specialized instruments, give rise to sonorous results which, neither in volume nor in quality, could be achieved by any single piece.

Cities arise out of man's social needs and multiply both their modes and their methods of expression. In the city remote forces and influences intermingle with the local: their conflicts are no less significant than their harmonies. And here, through the concentration of the means of intercourse in the market and the meeting place, alternative modes of living present themselves: the deeply rutted ways of the village cease to be coercive and the ancestral goals cease to be all-sufficient: strange men and women, strange interests, and stranger gods loosen the traditional ties of blood and neighborhood. A sailing ship, a caravan, stopping at the city, may bring a new dye for wool, a new glaze for the potter's dish, a new system of signs for

long distance communication, or a new thought about human destiny.

In the urban milieu, mechanical shocks produce social results; and social needs may take shape in contrivances and inventions which will lead industries and governments into new channels of experiment. Now the need for a common fortified spot for shelter against predatory attack draws the inhabitants of the indigenous village into a hillside fortification: through the compulsive mingling for defense, the possibilities for more regular intercourse and wider co-operation arise. That fact helps transform the nest of villages into a unified city, with its higher ceiling of achievement and its wider horizons. Now the collective sharing of experience, and the stimulus of rational criticism, turn the rites of the village festival into the more powerful imaginative forms of the tragic drama: experience is deepened, as well as more widely circulated, through this process. Or again, on another plane, the goldsmith's passive repository for valuables becomes, through the pressure of urban needs and the opportunities of the market, the dynamic agent of capitalism, the bank, lending money as well as keeping it, putting capital into circulation, finally dominating the processes of trade and production.

The city is a fact in nature, like a cave, a run of mackerel or an ant-heap. But it is also a conscious work of art, and it holds within its communal framework many simpler and more personal forms of art. Mind *takes form* in the city; and in turn, urban forms condition mind. For space, no less than time, is artfully reorganized in cities: in boundary lines and silhouettes, in the fixing of horizontal planes and vertical peaks, in utilizing or denying the natural site, the city records the attitude of a culture and an epoch to the fundamental facts of its existence. The dome and the spire, the open avenue and the closed court, tell the story, not merely of different physical accommodations, but of essentially different conceptions of man's destiny. The city is both a physical utility for collective living and a symbol of those collective purposes and unanimities that arise under such favoring circumstance. With language itself, it remains man's greatest work of art.

Through its concrete, visible command over space the city lends itself, not only to the practical offices of production, but to the daily communion of its citizens: this constant effect of the city, as a col-

lective work of art, was expressed in a classic manner by Thomas Mann in his address to his fellow-townsmen of Lübeck on the celebration of the anniversary of Lübeck's foundation. When the city ceases to be a symbol of art and order, it acts in a negative fashion: it expresses and helps to make more universal the fact of disintegration. In the close quarters of the city, perversities and evils spread more quickly; and in the stones of the city, these anti-social facts become embedded: it is not the triumphs of urban living that awaken the prophetic wrath of a Jeremiah, a Savonarola, a Rousseau, or a Ruskin.

What transforms the passive agricultural regime of the village into the active institutions of the city? The difference is not merely one of magnitude, density of population, or economic resources. For the active agent is any factor that extends the area of local intercourse, that engenders the need for combination and co-operation, communication and communion; and that so creates a common underlying pattern of conduct, and a common set of physical structures, for the different family and occupational groups that constitute a city. These opportunities and activities superimpose upon primary groups, based upon traditional acceptances and daily face-to-face contact, the more active associations, the more specialized functions, and the more purposive interests of secondary groups: in the latter the purpose is not given, but chosen: the membership and the activities are selective: the group itself becomes specialized and differentiated.

Historically, the increase of population, through the change from hunting to agriculture, may have abetted this change; the widening of trade routes and the diversification of occupations likewise helped. But the nature of the city is not to be found simply in its economic base: the city is primarily a social emergent. The mark of the city is its purposive social complexity. It represents the maximum possibility of humanizing the natural environment and of naturalizing the human heritage: it gives a cultural shape to the first, and it externalizes, in permanent collective forms, the second.

"The central and significant fact about the city," as Geddes and Branford pointed out, "is that the city . . . functions as the specialized organ of social transmission. It accumulates and embodies

the heritage of a region, and combines in some measure and kind with the cultural heritage of larger units, national, racial, religious, human. On one side is the individuality of the city—the sign manual of its regional life and record. On the other are the marks of the civilization, in which each particular city is a constituent element."

Today a great many things stand in the way of grasping the rôle of the city and of transforming this basic means of communal existence. During the last few centuries the strenuous mechanical organization of industry, and the setting up of tyrannous political states, have blinded most men to the importance of facts that do not easily fit into the general pattern of mechanical conquest, capitalistic forms of exploitation, and power politics. Habitually, people treat the realities of personality and association and city as abstractions, while they treat confused pragmatic abstractions such as money, credit, political sovereignty, as if they were concrete realities that had an existence independent of human conventions.

Looking back over the course of Western Civilization since the fifteenth century, it is fairly plain that mechanical integration and social disruption have gone on side by side. Our capacity for effective physical organization has enormously increased; but our ability to create a harmonious counterpoise to these external linkages by means of co-operative and civic associations on both a regional and a world-wide basis, like the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, has not kept pace with these mechanical triumphs. By one of those mischievous turns, from which history is rarely free, it was precisely during this period of flowing physical energies, social disintegration, and bewildered political experiment that the populations of the world as a whole began mightily to increase, and the cities of the Western World began to grow at an inordinate rate. Forms of social life that the wisest no longer understood, the more ignorant were prepared to build. Or rather: the ignorant were completely unprepared, but that did not prevent the building.

The result was not a temporary confusion and an occasional lapse in efficiency. What followed was a crystallization of chaos: disorder hardened uncouthly in metropolitan slum and industrial factory districts; and the exodus into the dormitory suburbs and factory spores that surrounded the growing cities merely widened the area of social

derangement. The mechanized physical shell took precedence in every growing town over the civic nucleus: men became dissociated as citizens in the very process of coming together in imposing economic organizations. Even industry, which was supposedly served by this planless building and random physical organization, lost seriously in efficiency: it failed to produce a new urban form that served directly its complicated processes. As for the growing urban populations, they lacked the most elementary facilities for urban living, even sunlight and fresh air, to say nothing of the means to a more vivid social life. The new cities grew up without the benefit of coherent social knowledge or orderly social effort: they lacked the useful urban folkways of the Middle Ages or the confident esthetic command of the Baroque period: indeed, a seventeenth century Dutch peasant, in his little village, knew more about the art of living in communities than a nineteenth century municipal councilor in London or Berlin. Statesmen who did not hesitate to weld together a diversity of regional interests into national states, or who wove together an empire that girdled the planet, failed to produce even a rough draft of a decent neighborhood.

In every department, form disintegrated: except in its heritage from the past, the city vanished as an embodiment of collective art and technics. And where, as in North America, the loss was not alleviated by the continued presence of great monuments from the past and persistent habits of social living, the result was a raw, dissolute environment, and a narrow, constricted, and baffled social life. Even in Germany and the Low Countries, where the traditions of urban life had lingered on from the Middle Ages, the most colossal blunders were committed in the most ordinary tasks of urban planning and building. As the pace of urbanization increased, the circle of devastation widened.

Today we face not only the original social disruption. We likewise face the accumulated physical and social results of that disruption: ravaged landscapes, disorderly urban districts, pockets of disease, patches of blight, mile upon mile of standardized slums, worming into the outlying areas of big cities, and fusing with their ineffectual suburbs. In short: a general miscarriage and defeat of civilized effort. So far have our achievements fallen short of our needs

that even a hundred years of persistent reform in England, the first country to suffer heavily from disurbanization, have only in the last decade begun to leave an imprint. True: here and there patches of good building and coherent social form exist: new nodes of integration can be detected, and since 1920 these patches have been spreading. But the main results of more than a century of misbuilding and malformation, dissociation and disorganization still hold. Whether the observer focuses his gaze on the physical structure of communal living or upon the social processes that must be embodied and expressed, the report remains the same.

Today we begin to see that the improvement of cities is no matter for small one-sided reforms: the task of city design involves the vaster task of rebuilding our civilization. We must alter the parasitic and predatory modes of life that now play so large a part, and we must create region by region, continent by continent, an effective symbiosis, or co-operative living together. The problem is to co-ordinate, on the basis of more essential human values than the will-to-power and the will-to-profits, a host of social functions and processes that we have hitherto misused in the building of cities and polities, or of which we have never rationally taken advantage.

Unfortunately, the fashionable political philosophies of the past century are of but small help in defining this new task: they dealt with legal abstractions, like Individual and State, with cultural abstractions, like Humanity, the Nation, the Folk, or with bare economic abstractions like the Capitalist Class or the Proletariat—while life as it was lived in the concrete, in regions and cities and villages, in wheatland and cornland and vineland, in the mine, the quarry, the fishery, was conceived as but a shadow of the prevailing myths and arrogant fantasies of the ruling classes—or the often no less shadowy fantasies of those who challenged them.

Here and there one notes, of course, valiant exceptions both in theory and in action. Le Play and Reclus in France, W. H. Riehl in Germany, Kropotkin in Russia, Howard in England, Grundtvig in Denmark, Geddes in Scotland, began half a century ago to lay the ideological basis for a new order. The insights of these men may prove as important for the new biotechnic regime, based on the deliberate culture of life, as the formulations of Leonardo, Galileo,

Newton, and Descartes were for the more limited mechanical order upon which the past triumphs of our machine civilization were founded. In the piecemeal improvement of cities, the work of sanitarians like Chadwick and Richardson, community designers like Olmsted, far-seeing architects, like Parker and Wright, laid the concrete basis for a collective environment in which the needs of reproduction and nurture and psychological development and the social processes themselves would be adequately served.

Now the dominant urban environment of the past century has been mainly a narrow by-product of the machine ideology. And the greater part of it has already been made obsolete by the rapid advance of the biological arts and sciences, and by the steady penetration of sociological thought into every department. We have now reached a point where these fresh accumulations of historical insight and scientific knowledge are ready to flow over into social life, to mold anew the forms of cities, to assist in the transformation of both the instruments and the goals of our civilization. Profound changes, which will affect the distribution and increase of population, the efficiency of industry, and the quality of Western Culture, have already become visible. To form an accurate estimate of these new potentialities and to suggest their direction into channels of human welfare, is one of the major offices of the contemporary student of cities. Ultimately, such studies, forecasts, and imaginative projects must bear directly upon the life of every human being in our civilization.

What is the city? How has it functioned in the Western World since the tenth century, when the renewal of cities began, and in particular, what changes have come about in its physical and social composition during the last century? What factors have conditioned the size of cities, the extent of their growth, the type of order manifested in street plan and in building, their manner of nucleation, the composition of their economic and social classes, their physical manner of existence and their cultural style? By what political processes of federation or amalgamation, co-operative union or centralization, have cities existed; and what new units of administration does the present age suggest? Have we yet found an adequate urban form to harness all the complex technical and social forces in our civilization; and if a new order is discernible, what are its main outlines?

What are the relations between city and region? And what steps are necessary in order to redefine and reconstruct the region itself, as a collective human habitation? What, in short, are the possibilities for creating form and order and design in our present civilization?

These are some of the questions I shall pose in the following study. Wherever possible, I shall utilize for answer concrete contemporary examples: a procedure that is all the easier because the germs and embryonic forms of the new order are by now, for the greater part, in existence. But where this is impossible, I shall seek to uncover the essential principle upon whose basis a viable answer or solution may be predicted.

Today our world faces a crisis: a crisis which, if its consequences are as grave as now seems, may not fully be resolved for another century. If the destructive forces in civilization gain ascendancy, our new urban culture will be stricken in every part. Our cities, blasted and deserted, will be cemeteries for the dead: cold lairs given over to less destructive beasts than man. But we may avert that fate: perhaps only in facing such a desperate challenge can the necessary creative forces be effectually welded together. Instead of clinging to the sardonic funeral towers of metropolitan finance, ours to march out to newly plowed fields, to create fresh patterns of political action, to alter for human purposes the perverse mechanisms of our economic regime, to conceive and to germinate fresh forms of human culture.

Instead of accepting the stale cult of death that the fascists have erected, as the proper crown for the servility and the brutality that are the pillars of their states, we must erect a cult of life: life in action, as the farmer or the mechanic knows it: life in expression, as the artist knows it: life as the lover feels it and the parent practices it: life as it is known to men of good will who meditate in the cloister, experiment in the laboratory, or plan intelligently in the factory or the government office.

Nothing is permanent: certainly not the frozen images of barbarous power with which fascism now confronts us. Those images may easily be smashed by an external shock, cracked as ignominiously as fallen Dagon, the massive idol of the heathen: or they may be melted,

eventually, by the internal warmth of normal men and women. Nothing endures except life: the capacity for birth, growth, and daily renewal. As life becomes insurgent once more in our civilization, conquering the reckless thrust of barbarism, the culture of cities will be both instrument and goal.