ANTONIO GRAMSCI first gave the notion of hegemony its correct place in marxist theories of the exercise of political control. According to Gramsci, societal power did not rest solely on coercion but on manipulation and consensual agreement between the rulers and the ruled. The exact proportion in which coercion and consensus co-existed depended on which society was examined at which stage of history. He thought that in advanced capitalist societies and transitional societies, like the Italy he examined in the early thirties, the emphasis was more and more on obtaining consensus through manipulation, rather than ruling through coercion. So at least one of his central concerns in his research was to establish and describe just how the rulers of a society manipulated the populace to obtain their agreement in the way society was run. Obviously the indoctrination of the young was very important. Through the type of schooling which existed the rulers could inculcate the values and beliefs necessary for the maintenance of their type of social system. Thus Gramsci was always very interested in the “Questione scolastica” and wrote a number of significant notes on schools and their organisation and their role in the instilation of hegemonic values in his prison notes. Only since 1958 has really significant work on Gramsci’s pedagogical theory been done in Italy and practically nothing has been done outside his name. What follows is a translation of one of his two most important essays on the schooling system.

Alastair Davidson
IN GENERAL WE CAN SEE that all practical activities have become so complex, and sciences so intertwined with life in modern society, that every practical activity tends to set up its own school for its own specialists and directing groups and thus to create a group of specialist intellectuals of a higher grade who can teach in these schools. Thus, beside the sort of school which we can call “humanistic”, which is the oldest and most traditional school, and which was designed to give every human individual a general and even unspecialised education—the fundamental ability to think and get along in life—there has been created an entire system of specialist schools of various grades, for whole branches of the professions or for already specialised occupations which are precisely marked out. We could even say that the crisis in education which now besets us is tied to the fact that this process of differentiation and specialisation has come about chaotically, without clear or precise principles, and without well studied and consciously fixed planning: the crisis of educational programming and organisation, that is, the crisis of the general orientation of policy for the formation of modern intellectual groups, is in great part an aspect and a complication of the more all-enveloping and general crisis.

The basic division of schooling into classical and vocational was a rational scheme: the vocational school for the instrumental classes and the classical school for the ruling classes and the intellectuals. The development of an industrial base in both the city and the country made increasingly necessary a new type of urban intellectual: beside the classical school developed the technical school (vocational but not manual). This called into discussion the very principle of the concrete orientation of general education, of the humanistic orientation of general education based on the greco-roman tradition. This orientation, once under discussion, was finished, since its formative effectiveness was in great part based on the general prestige, which was traditionally not questioned, of a particular type of civilisation.

The tendency is today to abolish every type of “disinterested” (or not directly tendentious) and “formative” schooling or to leave only a reduced sample for a small elite of gentlemen and women who do not have to worry about preparing for a professional future and to spread the specialised vocational school in which the fate

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of the pupil and his future activity are predetermined more and more. The crisis will find a solution which, according to reason, should follow these lines: a single primary school for general humanistic, formative education, which correctly adjusts the development of the capacity to work manually (technically/industrially) and the development of capacity to work intellectually. From this type of school for all, via repetitious experience of vocational orientation, pupils will proceed to one of the specialist schools or into productive work.

We must bear in mind the growing tendency by which every practical activity tends to create a specialised school, just as every intellectual activity tends to create its own educational club or circle, which assumes the function of a post-school institution which specialises in organising the conditions which allow men to keep up to date with the progress taking place in their own branch of knowledge.

We can see that the decision-making organs are tending more and more to divide their activity into "organic" aspects: the deliberative which is essentially theirs and the technical-educative whose problems they have to resolve which are first examined by experts and analysed scientifically. This has already created a bureaucratic body structured in a new way, since beside the specialised offices of those competent to prepare the technical material for the decision-making bodies is created a second type of functionary, more or less "volunteers" and disinterested, chosen from time to time from industry, the banks and financial world. This is one of the mechanisms through which the career bureaucracy has ended up controlling democratic and parliamentary regimes; now the mechanism is extending itself systematically and is absorbing within its ambit the great specialists in private practice, who thus control both bureaucracy and regime. Since it is a necessary systematic development which tends to integrate persons skilled in political techniques with persons skilled in the concrete questions of administration of practical activity essential to great and complex modern national societies, all efforts to exorcise this tendency from the outside have no result but moralistic preaching and rhetorical lament.

The question arises of modifying the preparation of technico-political personnel, integrating their education with the new necessities and elaborating new types of specialist functionaries who collectively can relate the decision-making activity with it. The traditional type of political "leader", who is prepared solely for formal law-making functions becomes anachronistic and represents a danger to the life of the state: the leader must have a minimum of general technical education which permits him, if not to "make"
the correct solution by himself, to be able to judge the solutions offered him by the experts and thus to choose the correct one from the "synthetic" point of view of political technique.

A type of decision-making body which seeks to incorporate the necessary technical competence to operate realistically has been described in another place [in another essay he wrote] where I spoke of what happens in editorial boards on certain journals, boards which function both as boards and cultural clubs. The club criticises collegially and so contributes to the elaboration of the work of single editors, whose work is organised according to a plan and a division of labor which is rationally apportioned. Through the discussion and the collegial criticism (made up of suggestions, advice, methodological direction, and criticism which is constructive and directed towards mutual education) in which each man acts as a specialist in his field to integrate with the collective competency, we succeed in reality in raising the average level of individual editors, and reaching the height and capacity of the most prepared, ensuring not only an ever more close and unified collaboration on the review, but creating the conditions for the emergence of a homogeneous group of intellectuals who are ready to produce regular and methodical bookish publications (not only of occasional publications and unconnected essays, but of whole works together).

Undoubtedly, in this type of collective activity, all work produces new capability and possibilities for work, since it creates more and more fundamental conditions for work: indexes, bibliographical notes, collections of fundamental specialist works, etc. This calls for a strict struggle against habits of amateurism, improvisation, and declamatory and oratorical solutions. The work must be done in writing especially, just as the criticisms in succinct and concise notes must be in writing. This can be achieved through distributing the material in time, etc.; the writing of notes and criticism is a didactic principle rendered necessary by the need to combat the habits of prolixity, declamation and fallacies created by oratory. This type of intellectual work is necessary to make the self-taught acquire the discipline for study which a regular school career creates, to taylorise intellectual work. The principle of the "old men of Santa Zita" of which de Sanctis talks in his memoirs of the Neapolitan school of Basilio Puoti is useful: that is, it is useful to have a certain "stratification" according to capability and attitude, and the formation of work groups under the guide of the more expert and advanced, so that the more backward and rough can have their preparation speeded up.

An important point in studying the practical organisation of the single primary [q.v. supra] school is that regarding schooling in the
various grades which correspond with the age and the intellectual and moral development of the students and the ends which the school itself desires to attain. The single or humanistic (understanding this term humanistic in the wide and not traditional sense) or general education school must intend to usher young people into social activity after having taken them up to a certain level of maturity and capacity, up to intellectual and practical creativity and autonomy in attitudes and initiative. Fixing the compulsory school age depends on general economic conditions since these can force demands that youth and young men contribute immediately to production. The single school demands that the State is able to assume the expenses which are today a charge upon each family for the maintenance of the pupils, that is, that it transforms the education department from top to bottom, extending it and complicating it in an unheard of way: the entire process of education and formation of the younger generation becomes public after having been private since only in that way can education involve all generations without distinction of groups or castes. But this transformation of schooling demands an unheard of enlargement of the practical organisation of schools, that is, of buildings, scientific material, the teaching body, etc. The teaching body in particular must be increased because the fewer the number of pupils to teach the greater and more intense efficiency of the school, which raises other problems which will not be solved rapidly and easily. Even the question of buildings is not simple because this type of school must be a college with dormitories, refectories, special libraries, rooms suitable for seminar work, etc. Thus, at first the new school should not be and will not be for other than limited groups, students chosen by competition and placed according to the responsibility of appropriate institutions.

The single primary school should cover the same years as that covered today by the elementary and middle schools which have been reorganised not only for content and method of teaching, but for the distribution of the various grades during schooling. The first grade of elementary school should not last for more than three or four years, and beside inculcating the first "instrumental" notions of learning—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and history—should propound that part of "rights and duties" which is neglected today, that is, first notions of the State and Society, as primordial elements in a new conception of the world which opposes the conceptions given by various traditional social ambients, that is, concepts that we can call folkloric. The problem of teaching we have to resolve is that of making fruitful and moderating the dogmatic tendency which must exist in these early years. The rest of the course should not last more than six years, so that at fifteen
to sixteen years all the years of the single primary school should be complete.

It could be objected that a course like that is too tiring because of its rapidity, if we wish to attain effectively the results which the present organisation of the classical school proposes to attain but does not. We can say, however, that the complex of the new organisation will have to include the general elements through which, for some pupils at least, the course is too slow today. What are these elements? In certain families, especially in the intellectual classes, children find in family life a preparation for, a prolongation of, and an integration with school life. They absorb, as the saying goes, from the "atmosphere", a great quantity of attitudes and beliefs which facilitate schooling properly speaking: they already know and develop knowledge of literary language, that is, the means of expression and knowledge which are technically superior to the means possessed by the average pupil in the school population between six and twelve years. Likewise, the pupils of the city, because they live in the city, have already absorbed before the age of six a number of concepts and attitudes which make schooling more easy, profitable and rapid. In the internal organisation of the single primary school at least the principal of these conditions must be created besides the fact which is presupposed, that alongside the single primary school there is developed a network of kindergarten and other institutions in which, even before school age, children become accustomed to a certain collective discipline and acquire preschool notions and attitudes. In fact, the single school should be organised as a college, with a collective life day and night which is free from the present hypocritical and mechanical present-day forms of discipline. Study must be done together, with the help of the masters and better pupils, even during the hours of so-called individual study, etc.

The fundamental problem of this phase is raised by the present schooling represented by the high school (liceo) which is no way different from preceding years of schooling as a type of teaching except for the abstract supposition that there is a higher intellectual and moral maturity in the pupil which is in conformity to the greater age and the experience which has already been accumulated.

In fact there is a jump between high-school and university, that is, between what is a school truly speaking and what is life. . . From teaching what is purely dogmatic, in which the memory plays a large part, one passes to a phase of creative or autonomous and independent work; from school where study is imposed and controlled in an authoritative fashion, one passes to a phase of study or professional work in which intellectual self-discipline and moral autonomy
is theoretically unlimited. And it comes straight after puberty, when the surge of instinctive and elementary passions has not yet finished grappling with the brakes of character and moral consciousness which are being formed. In Italy, where in the university the principle of tutorial work is still not widespread, the transition is even more brusque and mechanical.

This is why the final period in the single school must be conceived of, and organised as, a final phase in which we tend to create the fundamental values of "humanism", intellectual self-discipline and moral autonomy necessary for further specialisation either of a scientific character (university studies) or of a more immediate practical and productive nature (industry, bureaucracy, organisation of exchange, etc.). The study and learning of creative methods in science and life must begin in this last phase of school and no longer be a monopoly of the university or be left to chance in real life: this phase of school must contribute to develop the element of autonomous responsibility in the individual, to be a creative school. It is necessary to make a distinction between the active and creative schooling, as in the Dalton method. The single school is active schooling throughout, even though it may be necessary to place limits on libertarian theories in this field and emphasise with some energy the duty of adult generations, that is, the duty of the State, to make younger generations "conform". We are still in the romantic phase with active schooling in which the elements of the struggle against mechanical and jesuitical learning have become unhealthily inflated by contrast and in polemic: we must go into the "classical" rational phase and find in the ends to be reached the natural springs for the elaboration of methods and forms.

Creative schooling crowns active schooling: in the first phase we tend to discipline and thus to level in order to obtain a certain sort of "conformity" which we can dub "dynamic"; in the creative phase, on the basis of "collectivisation" of a social sort, we tend to expand the personality, which has become autonomous and responsible, but with a solid and homogeneous moral and social conscience. Thus creative schooling does not mean an "inventing and discovering" school; it indicates a phase and method of research and knowledge, and not a "programme" in which is predetermined an obligation to be original and to innovate at all costs. It indicates that learning comes especially through a spontaneous and independent effort of the learner, in which the master has only the function of a friendly guide like that which exists or should exist in Universities. To discover a truth by oneself, without suggestions or outside help, is to create even if the truth is an old one. It also shows methodological ability; it shows that in every way the pupil
has entered the phase of intellectual maturity in which new truths can be discovered. Therefore fundamental school activity in this phase takes place in seminars, libraries and experimental laboratories; in it the fundamental preparation for professional occupations take place.

The advent of the single school signifies the beginning of new relations between intellectual work and industrial work not only in the school but in all social life. The principle of unity will be reflected for that reason in all cultural organs, transforming them and giving them new content.

**The problem of the new function which universities and Academies can have.**

Today these two institutions are independent of one another and the Academies are the symbol, frequently derisory, of the lack of connection between high culture and life, between the intellectuals and the populace (thus the fortune which the futurists had in their first period of anti-academic and anti-traditional Sturm und Drang, etc.).

In a new situation of relations between life and learning, between intellectual and industrial work, the Academies should become the cultural (systematising, expanding and creating intellectually) organisations of those people who, after their single schooling, pass into work in the professions and a field of contact between them and university teachers. Social elements employed in the professions must not fall into intellectual passivity, but must have at their disposition (through collective initiative and not through individuals, as a fundamental social function recognised as of public necessity and usefulness) specialised institutes in all branches of research and scientific work, in which they can collaborate and in which they can find all the subsidies necessary for every form of cultural activity which they intend to undertake.

Academic organisations will have to be reorganised and revivified from top to bottom. Territorially they will have a centralisation of specialisations and competencies: national centres will be composed of the existing great institutions, regional and provincial sections of local, urban and rural clubs. They will be divided up according to cultural and scientific competency, and will all be represented in the higher centres but only partially in the local clubs. Unify the various types of existing cultural organisations Academies, Cultural Institutes, philological circles, etc., integrating them with traditional academic work which consists mainly of systemising past knowledge and seeking to fix the norm in national thought as a
guide for intellectual activity, with activity tied to collective life, to the world of production and work. Industrial conferences, scientific organisation of work, and experimental factory cabinets will be controlled, etc. A mechanism will be constructed to select and advance the individual capacity of the popular masses, which are sacrificed today and lost through mistakes and dead-end efforts. Every local club should be obliged to have a moral and scientific section, and gradually should organise other special sections to discuss the technical aspects of labor, in the factory, office and field, etc. Periodic congresses at various levels will make the most able people known.

It would be useful to have a complete list of all the Academies and other cultural organisations which exist today and arguments which they deal with most in their work and which are published in their "Reports": in a great part it is a question of cemeteries of learning, but even these have a role in the psychology of the ruling class.

The collaboration between these organs and the universities should be close, like that of all higher specialist schools of every sort (military, naval, etc.). The aim is to obtain a centralisation and an impulse to the national learning superior to that of the Catholic Church.*

* This scheme of organisation of cultural work according to the general principles of the single primary school should be developed accurately in all its parts and serve as a guide in the constitution of even the most elementary and primitive centre of learning, which should be conceived of as an embryo and molecule of the whole massive structure. Even initiatives which are transitory and experimental should be conceived of as being capable of absorption into the general scheme and at the same time as vital elements which tend to create the whole scheme. The organisation and development of the Rotary clubs is to be studied.

THE VIETNAM MORATORIUM invites the famous American author, Mr. Norman Mailer, to attend the September demonstration. Would he mind sharing the platform with Jane Fonda and dear old Dr. Spock, hero of the Woman's Day set, toilet-trainer extraordinaire? How about a dash of Dr. Cairns to top it off? And will Norm write a book about it — about the demonstrators, and his role in the whole deal, and how the Daily Telegraph misrepresented him, and the relationship between shit and Dr. Spock, and some insights into the psychology of Jane Fonda, Time pin up girl? And what will he say about poor old Jim . . .

We could find out, one day, perhaps. In the meantime however we have The Armies of the Night, Mailer's account of the Washington anti-Vietnam demonstration of October 1967. It's more than an account of a political demonstration, it's a deep and tortured look at a sick society: "America, once a beauty of magnificence unparalleled, now a beauty with a leprous skin."

Mailer is a complex man. He's been to the further shores of Hell, and back, stabbing one of his wives, consuming drugs and alcohol, burning holes in his brain until, in his words, his head had taken on "the texture of a fine Swiss cheese". Yet he has retained a hold on life and not slipped off the razor's edge. This he achieved via writing — novels, journalism, essays, poetry — putting into words his own concept of life and the truths that have been revealed to him.

An egotist to be sure. Mailer is the hero of this work. But he deals with himself in the same tough-minded sharp way that he deals with others. He catalogues his hang-ups. He likes his sex to be guilt-ridden; he is a neo-Victorian. And if he's cruel to others then he's cruel to himself as well. It's a kind of existential therapy. Just write it like it is.

He blasts his way through the American Peace Movement, past the liberal academic opponents of the war whose only quarrel with the Great Society is that they think it temporarily deranged, jabs a couple of Oscar Wilde rights to left personalities like Paul Goodman, Dwight Macdonald, frames the American Communist Party in a brief few lines, the spiritual deadness of its dull old manipulating calculations, and dashes on commenting left and right, the New Left, sex, Black Power, morality, tactics, revolution, violence, television, history, American life, values, cops, Vietnam . . .

"The death of America rides in on the smog". This is also what Mailer writes about; the death of America, the death of the society that set out to be the new Jerusalem, "the land where a new kind of man was born from the idea that God was present in every man not only as compassion but as power . . ." And it's dying in a schizophrenic frenzy where hate and power come together, where war and sex meet, becoming interchangeable; and the Vietnam war becomes the huge production of Christianity gone wrong and its aberrations (the twisted napalmed kids, the frightened young men shooting at the shadows of dark trees in the darker jungles) are the manifestations of sex gone sour in a society that's shot holes in the minds of its children, stifling them, crippling them, showing them reality in the TV commercial. This is what Mailer's about.

And the real hero of it all is not Mailer but the dissenting people of America of which Mailer is part.

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