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Chapter XXV

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS NATIONAL REINTEGRATION

We return now to our earliest assumption, in Chapter I, that the real theme of American regionalism is essentially that of a great nation in whose continuity and unity of development, through a fine balance of historical, cultural, and geographic factors, must be found the hope of American democracy and, according to many observers, of Western civilization. We have pointed up something of the range and meaning of this regionalism in both its theoretical and historical aspects and in its practical implementation in the American scene. We have illustrated some of these applications through the sixfold division of the United States into major regions which without doubt qualify as composite societal regions in which may be found for our purposes, the largest possible degree of homogeneity, measured by the largest number of indices available for the largest number of practicable purposes. Or to state the case differently, these composite six major American regions comprise a larger degree of homogeneity measured by a larger number of indices for a larger number of purposes than can be found in any other classification available. They further are susceptible of combining within their frame of reference a large number of the multiple regional classifications and arrangements now being used or proposed.

Now regionalism in itself needs no apology. By and within itself it merits continuing study, more adequate definition, more comprehensive presentation, and more critical analysis than it has had. Its historical and scientific heritage as well as its increasing importance justify whatever of co-operative study and analysis may be devoted to it. Yet it still remains to explore its place in the total perspective of a changing nation to see to what extent, as motivation, concept, and tool, it may contribute, on the one hand, to better analysis and understanding of the scene and, on the other, to a more realistic reintegration of national diversities. On this assumption, we still have to envisage the nation in terms of its present dilemmas, set in the framework of its past heritage and performance and of its present struggles and confusion. We need to question the extent to which we may need to "retrace our steps, and, region by region, learn to do intelligently and co-operatively. The grasp of the region as a dynamic social reality is a first step."

There appear to be two major areas of inquiry, and each reflects the cumulative product of past heritage. Each holds something of the puzzle of how the nation has come to its present dilemmas. The one is the American background with its extraordinarily undesigned mastery of the continent and its pluralisms in time, geography, and culture. The other is the impact of modern civilization itself upon the changing nation. Nor should the desire to present the picture as objectively as possible obscure the dramatic proportions of the American struggle or the range and depth of national crisis. For undoubtedly there is being enacted the most momentous drama of survival-struggle that has yet tested the enduring qualities of American civilization.

It is scarcely necessary to remind ourselves that there is need for a dynamic and realistic defining of the concept of Americanism to take it out of any possible shallow connotation of reaction or conservative implication. Classifying people and policies as "American" or "un-American" is a poor substitute for reality in a day when the nation needs to go on as a nation, set in the American scene. The facts are that the reality of the nation is found, first of all, in its geographic situation, and secondly in the peculiar culture, people, and institutions which make America what it is.

There are authentic historical Americanisms and there are realistic current changing Americanisms. Earlier Americanisms which have molded the nation include high motivation and purpose, idealism and optimism, religious motivation and character, the passion for liberty and freedom, a capitalistic social order, "the American Dream" of op-
portunity for all, in which the emphasis was on the common man, a
nation of realized "opportunity," a rural and agrarian culture, a pioneer
and frontier economy, ruthless exploitation of resources, homogeneity
of northern European stocks, homogeneity of Protestant religions,
autonomy of local government, a nation of states' rights and of sec-
tions, a nation in which politics was the key to public policy. Over
against these are the ways of a changing nation in a world of urban
and industrial emphasis and of technological dominance in which co-
operative endeavor and regional arrangements must needs supplant
the extreme individualism and sectionalism of the small frontier, rural
nation.

In much the same way it is important to dissipate the shallow
notion that regionalism connotes primarily localism and provincialism.
For whatever America is, in addition to its major continental position,
it is a fabric woven of regional patterns and forces. By the same
token, the future must be American, in fact, and the sooner realities
may be substituted for superficialities the more effective and co-
ordinated will efforts become.

Lewis Mumford's interpretation of the organic nature of regionalism
illustrates the point of view. Behind the great regionalist movements
are certain common ideas. "At a period when the uniformities of the
machine civilization were being overstressed, regionalism served to
emphasize compensatory organic elements: above all, those differences
that arise out of geographic, historic, and cultural peculiarities. In its
recognition of the region as a basic configuration in human life; in its
acceptance of natural diversities as well as natural associations and uni-
formities; in its recognition of the region as a permanent sphere of cul-
tural influences and as a center of economic activities, as well as an
implicit geographic fact—here lies the vital common element in the
regionalist movement. So far from being archaic and reactionary, re-

1 Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities. Quoted, by permission, from proof
sheets.

regionalism belongs to the future." 1

In the American background, as it has been responsible for the
present American scene, there appear to be a number of basic char-
acterizations which justify the conclusion that the nation has reached
its present crises at the crest of unprecedented achievements wrought
more through undesignated development and exploitation of resources
and regions, of land and men, than through well-planned arrange-
ments, through which equilibrium of all parts of the nation would
be maintained with equity to all. This, of course, was but natural
in a frontier civilization, but it does not change the fact.

Because the people of the nation had succeeded far beyond their ex-
pectations in developing their great resources—physical resources, tech-
nological power, artificial wealth, human resources, institutional modes
of life; and because the nation had grown and sprawled this way and
that throughout the uneven development of states and regions, often
featuring sectional advantage and conflict, America had come in the
late 1930's to the top of a new hill from which the people faced a
frontier of social action and difficulties predicated upon super-achieve-
ments in nearly all aspects of life and culture. From this hilltop, to
look back only, there could be little doubt of the extraordinary pro-
gress which had been made. To ask whether the nation had developed
the great natural resources of the continent and mastered its physical
forces was itself to answer the question in the affirmative. To review
the sweep and power of recent scientific discoveries and mechanical
inventions was to present a picture in which technical progress in a
phenomenal and unbelievable number of fields and extraordinary ways
had been everywhere apparent. And the assumption and claim in this
country and abroad that America was the wealthiest nation in the
world undoubtedly had ample support. Likewise, the picture showed
great progress in the development of human wealth, in the strength-
ening of the people, in child welfare and public health, in the better
ordering of human relationships in their physical aspects; and unbe-
lievable progress in the development of education and educational insti-
tutions, in the expansion and efficiency of industry, in the expansion
and sweep of government, in the vast domain of community organiza-
tion, in communication and transportation, in the changing quality of
religion, in the more earnest examination and qualitative development
of the home and family relationships and in many attitudes and activi-
ties relating to children, to women, to races. And, specifically, the
picture showed a nation that had won its wars; led the nations in many
achievements; attained the much-sought leisure, luxury, and power;
and made an American standard of living.

Yet something was radically wrong; the nation had made its mis-
takes as well as its successes. What was the nature and measure of its
errors? What to do with these designless and unco-ordinated gains,
now reflected in multiplied lack of equilibrium and balance—these were
questions to be answered only through an understanding of the actuali-
ties in terms of something to be done about it. For no less than the
greatness of American achievement, American tragedies are of the essence of the American fabric; exploitation of human and physical resources, tragedy of the Indian, tragedy of the Negro, the immigrant, the tenant; the crushing power of master builders in ruthless competition; sectional conflict and war of brothers stranger than fiction.  

It was nowhere difficult to portray the state of the nation in the early 1930's. The picture was everywhere eloquent, not of a wealthy nation so much as of the plight of a wealthy nation bordering dangerously near disintegration and chaos. One half of its more than thirty times the people of Jefferson's America was living on such meager subsistence as to make joking stock of the boasted American standard of living. Rich America was not providing for the basic necessities of its citizens. Yet in the picture somewhere were still billions of wealth, millions of units of subsistence and comfort and abundance. More than a fourth of the nation's total number of normally gainfully occupied workers were without work. Yet somewhere in the picture were nearly a million establishments equipped to employ millions while still other millions of unemployed awaited the call of great fields of occupations now woefully depleted. One-fourth of the nation's citizens were to all practical intents and purposes on "charity." Yet somewhere in the picture were billions of dollars of uncirculated money, billions of dollars of surplus wealth in the control of an extraordinarily small number of individuals and corporations in turn, in the current picture, impotent to use it or to let others use it. Nearly one-half of the farms of the nation, fruits of life-time work, were ready for the auction hammer, yet somewhere in the nation were millions of people needing the buyable products of the farm and millions of capital available, under a different picture, for needed credit.

The engineers, the economists, and the technicians all assured the public that the nation's industries and machines, power and energy were capable of producing three times the maximum output at the crest of the 1920's, ample for not only necessities but for comfort and convenience and leisure for a new American standard. Yet, not somewhere but everywhere, there was breakdown in distribution and consumption processes and standards. This was a motif that kept recurring again and again. Wasn't it possible, somehow, some way, sometime; anyhow, anyway, anytime, to break this tragic deadlock between the giant forces of abundance and the insatiable demon of want? Millions of the nation's best citizens, broken from the unequal struggle, had laid down the burden of living in one way or another, many in "the only way out," in mournful numbers uncounted by any man. Millions of children, born and unborn, like the countless victims of war, awaited the crippling aftermath of this devastating peace-time crisis. Yet somewhere, everywhere, in the nation there had seemed to be new gains and new hopes for the vitality of the American people, promise of new highs in human wealth. And everywhere, anywhere, the nation seemed impotent, was impotent at least for the time being, to do aught save stand by and look helplessly on.

If it may be said the nation came to its dilemmas through logical sequence of cause and effect and especially through imbalance and unevenness in its regional developments and integration, it seems equally apparent also that a large part of the situation is part and parcel, creator and creature of the modern technological and urban civilization. Here, then, is challenge to show cause why there should not be, on the one hand, abandonment of those procedures which appear to lead in the wrong direction, and, on the other, the setting up of new designs for new order. If the causes of catastrophe are apparent in major trends, then the remedy will be sought in some counteracting force. Is it possible, therefore, to focus upon a number of explanations of the tragic crises in which the nation found itself and in which the civilized world now finds itself, and at the same time to find some constant factors in them all, susceptible of isolation and utilization?

A part of the glamour and adventure of this fascinating and tragic picture of the 1930's was found in the sheer chasm of contrast between the swift-moving drama of current Western civilization and the slow journeying of mankind toward his earlier cultures. There was the spectacle of civilization moving faster and going further in multiples of technological achievement in one short third of a century than in all the long centuries before. Incredible, breath-taking; yet stark reality it was with everywhere all the time the clamor for

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faster, faster, further, further, more, more, new, new, new, now, now. It was as if the acres of yesterday, with all their harvests of achievements and failures, were suddenly receding before the limitless reach of todays and tomorrows, with their rapidly changing and adventurous social frontiers. The drama of such change was found not so much in the contrasts between the pictures of the present and those of the earliest cultures, or of slow-forming boundaries from the Near East to Western Europe and thence to all the Western World, as it was in the flashing movement of this particular nation at this particular time in contrast with an already forgotten era so recent even as that of Thomas Jefferson, apostle and progenitor of the earlier American democracy. This statesman, farmer, scientist, dreamer, planner, with all his skill and mastery, had he been walking at Washington in the 1930's, or speeding the long roads across the continent, or sojourning in the great cities and industrial places, must needs have the help of many interpreters, turning slowly the pages of pictures, to comprehend so stupendous a transformation in so extraordinarily brief a span of national life. Such was the unprecedented growth and change that every part of the American picture indicated that Jefferson's democracy would have been hopelessly inadequate and that he himself would have failed miserably had he been called upon to direct the nation in its latest emergency. This bridging of the chasm, therefore, between the earlier Jeffersonian democracy of the simple government and agrarian culture and the new greater democracy of the designed and controlled complex social order, must appear as an exciting and recurring motif in this continuing American drama.

There was the Jeffersonian picture of the nation in which the farmer was the main bulwark of democracy, and there was the 1930 picture of agriculture providing less than 13 percent of the nation's income. There was Thomas Jefferson proclaiming that “the mob of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body,” and there was the 1930 picture of America with more than 60 percent of its people living in cities or in the metropolitan-village fringe, and 93 metropolitan districts each with over one hundred thousand population ranging up to ten million people, with a single city area housing twice as many people as all of Jefferson’s beloved America. There was Thomas Jefferson admonishing to “let our workshops remain in Europe” and there was the American picture of the early 1930's with more than 37,000,000 or 76.2 percent of all the nation’s working folks occupied in manufacturing, mechanical, distributive, and social services, leaving only 23.8 percent for all of agriculture, mining, lumbering, fishing, and allied branches of the early primary extractive occupations. There was Jefferson idealizing that government as best which governed least and there was the picture of the NRA of America, approximating social control of individuals and groups in the heroic effort to start the nation on its new era of salvaging what it could of the Jeffersonian democracy of the simple rural nation and of building a still greater democracy for the bigger and bigger complex urban and industrial America. Jefferson's constitution and government constituted a great experiment; but the America of the 1930's was continuing in a still greater experiment. It was to be both a stupendous picture and a gigantic struggle.

Still more of adventure was found in the sheer mass spectacle of this American picture set in the modern world of nations. A spectacle of civilization grown immeasurably big and powerful, yet paradoxically being transformed through science and technology into an ever smaller and smaller universe, and still again being threatened with impotency or self-destruction, constituted a dramatic picture of exciting proportions. For such was one picture that was being constantly thrown across the screen to portray the extreme movements possible for an American civilization, reaping where all history had sown, gathering where had been strewn the factors of Western life which have given new design to all our culture, and flowering into a gigantic struggle between the powerful onrush of science and the decay of tradition.

Bigness, complexity, science, technology, speed and change were the new masters, dominating the American picture as they had never done before. Masters they were of the whole incredible, and as yet uninventoried, sweep and drive of the modern age—science, invention, management, machines, cities, industry and business, education and government, communication and world community relations, social organization on a scale never yet attempted in the history of man. Early modest millions in wealth multiplied to nearly four hundred billions of dollars with nearly one hundred billions of in-

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come. Picture extraordinary of a federal loan increase of 2,000 percent in the short span of a few years. Jefferson's Louisiana purchase price, multiplied five hundred and sixty and more times in the single item of mortgage debts on farm lands and buildings in the United States. The same purchase price multiplied many times over in appropriation for flood control and drainage work on the bounds of Old Man River alone. A million inventions in electricity, chemistry, physics, biology, metals, construction, transportation, transforming the whole national life—comforts, recreation, education, leisure, social legislation.

In this pageant of super-achievement strange and mighty doings were on parade. A nation now working mightily; now appearing as children playing in the dark with toys of production; now venturing new reaches in distribution, magnifying the people as consumers of goods, experimenting with science and technology and all the while terribly in earnest. Kaleidoscopic pageant of the past; some whom the gods made; some whom they destroyed. Following the World War's reshaping the destinies of America, involving the whole fabric of civilization and changing the tempo of living, unprecedented changes were wrought through the vast sweep and power of this new science and technology. Great cities were built and over-built, fabricated through a new metropolitan architecture and planning. Industries, old and new, grew up and waxed powerful. Incredible highways and airways and lines of communication were built tending to make the ways of the nation the ways of the city and connecting the nation with the world. An energetic people created bursting bubbles and booms, went up hills and down again, conquered frontiers and came back for more. They multiplied and concentrated wealth, increased philanthropy, developed resources, and destroyed them. They printed millions of books, reached new highs in the circulation of newspapers and magazines, developed new social welfare programs, created new standards of living and of comfort, made comfort and culture perilously near the same thing. They multiplied the power and costs of government tenfold. There were panics and depressions, political battles and struggles, the rise and recession of organized labor, the emancipation of woman, the prohibition amendment, the rise and fall of Ku Kluxism, and the battles of fundamentalism, humanism, technocracy, and beer. And there were still other mighty pageants and parades, a nation colorful and rich in organizations and slogans, reformers and patriots, forbidders and saviors of other people's destinies.

Another basic element of dramatic interest in the American picture was the newness of the world which this extraordinary transformation of technology had wrought with such breath-taking swiftness. A new world, a new epoch, a new deal—new ways, new morals, new manners, new tempo and new prospects and new dangers—so ran the catalogue of characterization of a nation dominated by speed and change, breath-taking and devastating. President Roosevelt, in a few hours, could traverse more miles than Thomas Jefferson moved in a lifetime; contact in a few brief moments more European situations than were encompassed in all of Jefferson's gracious diplomatic experience. There was the new world of communication, operating to modify the whole environment, creating new problems of adjustment, transforming the world of nations into accessible community. Elimination of time and space and distance—telephone and telegraph, radio and television; transportation systems and the new mobility, highway and airway, trucks and trains, interacting units transforming individuals and communities, remodeling areas of land and units of government. New pictures of two-miles-a-minute trains, network of roadways and waterways, pipe lines of energy, transmission streams of power. New machines of production outmoded before installation was completed; new fashions of architecture proclaiming archaic great structures yet in process of construction; new models today, old models tomorrow, fashions today out of fashion tomorrow. Pictures, therefore, of alarming unevenness and lack of equilibrium in the rates of change in many parts of society; pictures of herculean tasks of readjustment and adaptation; new types of education, new modes of leadership, new tempo of action.

Chieferest among the elemental dilemmas was the ever resurgence of the common man. For, in this transition to a new stage of civilization, the mass-man, the whole, real people approximated an accession to social power such as has hitherto not been recorded. Now the American ideal had always insisted that it was through the vigor and freshness of a strong and virile people and through the orderly development of a natural folk society that we must attain stable and permanent social development. As between the too artificial and too technical specialist and the native wisdom and strength of the well-bred and -nurtured common man, the American picture had always
featured the latter as superior in his capacity to carry on. There was Woodrow Wilson's picture: "The great voice of America does not come from seats of learning. It comes in a murmur from the hills and woods and the farms and factories and the mills rolling on and gaining volume until it comes to us from the homes of common men—" Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the dominance and revolt of the masses, in a quick-changing mass emotional process beyond reasonable capacity for quick adjustment must surely appear as a new frontier of civilization. It was surely in contrast to the Jeffersonian ideal of democracy ruled by the few chosen representatives, chosen for skill, training, experience, and devotion to the public weal. The great forces of technology, speed, change had contributed largely to this phenomenon as to others. This was true whether it applied to the people and politicians of the United States or to the new Russian, German, Italian, or Spanish reconstruction, or to revolution in the orient or elsewhere, or whether it was reflected through the general effects of mass communication, increasing the range and possibilities of education, information, and propaganda.

This phenomenon of the folk mass power was reflected in the picture in many divergent ways. If it was a sort of constant in a world of great variables, constituting the basic assets of new cultures, it also afforded a great variable in the contrary threats of reaction or revolution. And since the sweep and speed of technology had exceeded the capacity and development of even the most highly educated and widely experienced leaders, it was not surprising that the processes of education and cultural experience had conditioned the common folks still less for intelligent social understanding and action. There was another dramatic aspect of the picture in the modern folkways and mass emotional reaction of the urban intellectuals. Not all of mass reaction was of and by the "masses." The episodes of the technocrats, of the humanists, of the Epic of the Townsatives, of the young Hitlerites, and of many of the liberal-radicals in a sort of blind allegiance to artificial formulae as the indices of progress, the trends toward dictatorship on the part of minorities—these and other manifestations were evidences of mass-mindedness which was to add to the later confusion of the scene.

For these and other reasons the chasm of distance between modern artificial society and supertechology, on the one hand, and the facility and capacity of the people and of their institutions, on the other, appeared much greater than ever before in the history of human culture. Pictures of many cultures reflected the axiom of social theory that when the demands and sweep of artificial society and of supertechological processes exceed the natural capacity of the people or of a living culture to absorb and adjust, and when there are inadequate media of integration and leadership, there must inevitably be crisis, maladjustment; and if the process goes on long enough, disintegration. This implied no value or moral judgment of what might be desirable or what might be the standard of the future, but reflected purely and simply impressions of the picture. How much could the people stand? How much would their institutions bear? How much ahead of the people were the thought, ideologies, and technologies of the leaders? If there was not a natural capacity for adjustment, on the one hand, or a directed guidance, on the other, survival was not likely. Here were new dilemmas of artificial society and supertechology which the nation had not yet faced.

Still other important elements which added zest and fascination to the picture were the widespread confusion approximating despair, the resistless onrush of action, the dangers and hazards in prospect, the catastrophe of every man's own personal fortunes, the crises of emotions and tensions, and the quick sweeping away of standards and belongings dear to the race. With confusion abounded conflict; mighty struggle of capital, mighty struggle of race, conflict of individual, conflict of group, old ways and new ways—which would survive? "Will our civilization survive?" "Which road shall we take?" "Who shall lead the way?" The scene of the New Deal, therefore, reflected a dramatic crisis which demanded heroic men and measures without which must come greater chaos. The drama was swift-moving, threatening mass tragedy. The new epoch was fascinating alike in its dangers and its opportunities.

Confusion was, of course, a perfectly logical and natural product of these bewildering developments. The citizen was confused. The leader was confused. The scientist and the specialists were confused. No one, for once, boasted of knowing the way out. Some of the evidences of this product of our onrushing civilization were: a sort of mass panic among the intellectuals as well as the common man; a sort of blind
movement to turn back the clock and undo quickly what had taken so long to accomplish; a too easily accepted verdict that "the end was in sight"; an all-sweeping emotional factor with reference to finances and money, characterizing the nations of Europe as well as America; an apparent unanimous appraisal that finances and budgets were the supreme value of the day; the seeming low repute of things intellectual and artistic; an apparent Samsonian effort of many of the best people to threaten the structure of our culture in a leveling process; and a flood of contradictory advices from many reputable sources.

But whatever else might be true, one thing was everywhere clear in the picture, and that was the fact of the dilemma of bigness and technology and the consequent stark reality of crisis. The magnitude of this problem of adaptation was such as to lead many observers to conclude that the chief dilemma of the time was that of society’s ability to accommodate its natural capacities and institutions to the artificial demands of bigness, speed, technology, change. This was not only a supreme test of survival in the crisis of the 1930’s, a very practical and imminent test, but it was of great theoretical significance in the future planning of American civilization.

Stated in simple terms, the problem was one of marginal capacity. In proportion as the demands of artificial society or bigness or rapidity of social change or technology exceeded the capacity of the people, or their institutions, to that extent not only prosperity and happiness but also survival was being endangered. This demand of artificial society or bigness might be for super-achievement in some gigantic emergency or for sudden adaptation to new conditions. It might be the ever-broadening power of centralization over local groups. Such demands might constitute sheer quantitative tests of magnitude and speed, or they might be qualitative tests of artificiality over against what was "natural" or possible or attainable without wrecking the social or human organism. Or, again, the demands might be the fabrications of idealists or theorizers, based upon subjective rationalizations unsupported by fact or experience, suddenly thrust upon the people for absorption.

The significance of regional structure and arrangement may be envisaged further in the reflection of a certain artificial society which grows up and divides the people wherever concentration of politics or wealth or professions or science or expertness had separated the politician or the specialist or the individualist from the mass of people. There is not only the fact of their flight from reality but of the imposition of the will and patterns of the few, often untested and unsound, upon the many. There is the danger of the rule of the self-appointed intellectuals whose arbitrary, isolated, and specialized training is often mistaken for comprehensive education. There is also the danger of the pure scientist or the experimentalist confusing his learning or his ability to discover facts with similar ability to enact practical programs of policy. Thus, it is that there is the same general danger of the learned individual, isolated from the people, developing the same provincial autocratism as the politician, the dictator, the wealthy individual, the labor agitator, the propagandist, the aristocrat.

So, too, the primary weakness of the more than one hundred new political groupings and creeds, of the more than a thousand "plans" proposed for superimposition upon the American people, of the dogmatizing of enthusiastic liberals and propagandists lies in the essential artificiality of most of the proposals. Many of their tenets are so artificially designed as to be impracticable; so specialized as to be incomplete; or so technical as to preclude enactment. They do not come to grips with the complicated social problem involved; they stress action and audacity where also are needed science, intellectual design, and social equilibrium. In so far as they constitute a literature of escape or the essence of romance, they cannot meet the new demands for social achievement.

There were two fundamental aspects of the question. First, how much could the people and their institutions do? How much would the people stand? How much could they stand? What was the limit of their present capacities? How fast could they go without wrecking the men and institutions? How far could the "new" always be substituted for the old in quick succession without having the people prepared? To what extent and how rapidly could the capacities of the people and their institutions be increased, and what were the ways of increasing them? How, therefore, should the demands of new technology and change be so graduated as to insure reasonable attainment for given periods of time, for given regions, for specified institutions, for varied objectives, and for social organization in general? On the other hand, there was a second fundamental dilemma. How many and
of what sort were the supertechnical demands which ran counter to "nature" and the normal capacities of mankind? Which ones would retard human development and welfare, and therefore were of themselves detrimental to civilization or to the things of the spirit or intellect as opposed to that which was primarily material or mechanical or physical? How many and of what sort, therefore, were the demands of artificial society and of supertechnology to which society could never adapt itself and in the midst of which would not survive?

These were questions which were rarely ever asked and more rarely answered. And because they were neither asked nor answered, the prevailing tendency was to set up unrealistic schemes and plans and "isms" magnifying monistic forces out of perspective in the composite scheme of things. We have recounted at length all of these contributing factors which assume the proportions of major structural and organic features, in order to point up the fallacy of attempting to rebuild society through quick-moving schemes of reconstruction or through technological transformation of materials. Concepts, even if valid and in adequate perspective, cannot take the place of realistic implementation through the equilibrium of time and place and people. Even so, the concepts of redistribution of wealth, of class against class, of the capitalistic or non-capitalistic system, of planned money, of collectivism, and/or of the other scores of remedies urged upon a troubled nation are no substitute for actual, realistic growth, through orderly processes of the people and their institutions within the living geography of their regions and in harmony with their natural heritage. Even so, again, if they were valid, the sudden imposition of multiple schemes under the enthusiasm and high pressure of individuals temporarily in the service of philanthropy or of the government, but soon to depart leaving their unfinished and unrelated work, cannot be a substitute for sound theoretical and administrative measures safeguarded by constitutional arrangements within the framework of democracy. Perhaps there is no better way to make this point clear than to illustrate with samplings of the extraordinarily varied and numerous volumes, discussions, and plans which have been so abundant during the 1930's.

It was a perfect setting for everybody's prophecy and promise. For the professional critic, for the eager reformer, for the breathless propagandist, for the lovers of confusion, turmoil and strife, here was a nation eloquent with impending crisis, with unprecedented disaster in sight, and with such glorious threatening doom as the tongue and pen of man had not yet had the opportunity to portray. For the historian here was surely the ending of a phase of civilization. For those who gloried in the cyclical order of civilizations, the rise and fall, the ebb and flow of cultures through some great universal and inevitable rhythmic sequence, here was analogy extraordinary with the most optimistic prospect that this nation, through its disintegration and decay, had made the greatest of all contributions to the next great civilization which would rise from its ashes. For those who saw a new middle or dark ages, there was abundant prophecy that it would be "impossible to maintain unimpaired the heritage of civilization." On the other hand, for those who foresaw more concretely and hopefully into the ways and centuries ahead, this nation was paving the way toward that world economy in which all paths would be paths of peace, in which intellect and emotion, iron might and tender loving, science and philosophy, men and technology, would attain the perfect balance in a new world of social equilibrium. And to all and sundry leaders and thinkers, liberals and intellectuals, students and planners, pioneers in experimentation, patriots and philanthropists, artists and literateurs, here was the perfect problem setting, the perfect social laboratory, the perfect theme, with abundance of material for achieving master work.

Inventory the long roll of those who saw in the American picture the ways of general economic theory or of single unit theories of cause and cure. There was no gainsaying that the materials and setting approximated the perfect laboratory and observatory. For those who saw power as the definitive index of the future, there were multiplied figures, and pictures upon pictures. For those who saw energy and price as the foci of all action and guidance there was logic enough not only for the technocrats but for many others. For those who saw land as the real wealth of the nation there was logic enough for the old Jeffersonians, for the dreamers of the new agrarian culture, for the single tax enthusiasts, and for various and sundry others. For all those to whom gold and money were the chief elements in the national fabric there were great bodies of material and evidence in problems of currency stabilization and inflation; fluctuation of the dollar, gold
toward the destruction of civilization; to others toward new heights of human adequacy. Contributing to these and many other pictures of dilemmas were the reputed breakdown of religious and moral sanction, the lack of authentic religious and moral codes, the lack of authentic formal bodies of knowledge, and the consequent inevitable confusion. The saving way out of this was, according to this school of thinkers, to be found only in the revitalization of religion and ethics, the remaking of humanism, the rediscovery of values. And among the evidences for the search after values were the concepts that machines were killing men, that the chief mode of progress was nothing less than tragedy, that there must be a new equilibrium and orientation. Spiritual and mental security and poise were, they said, as important as economic or social security. Finally, there was abundant evidence, according to its several interpretations, to see in the American picture a nation getting better, a nation getting worse; and more particularly to show the real picture of America as one not of good or bad, of better or worse, but one whose dilemmas were centered rather around complexities and difficulties.

A part of this confusion as well as of the panaceanic pattern of social reconstruction so much in vogue was due to the natural incidence of depression and after-war phenomena. Another large part, however, was due to the multiplicity of problems and the imbalance between the world of technology and the world of men. Nevertheless, the very number and complexity of these dilemmas are further testimony to the futility of quick single-track solutions as substitutes for adaptation and adjustment. Rather each problem and each situation, cumulative product of cause and effect, is a constituent and related part of the whole and can be appraised and adjusted only in such relationships. This principle of totality is equally true of the explanation of the past and in the direction of the future. It is in this area of conflict between specialisms and technics, irresponsible intellectuals and “systems,” that will be found the testing ground for societal determinism against the new possible technological determinism.

Because of this comprehensive nature and enormity of the American task, it follows that there is an unusually large number and variety of general and specific problems which must be faced before any adequate programs of planning could be drawn up and successfully applied. There is, of course, still the emergency situation,

Strangely enough the same background facts, the same framework of inquiry, the same elements of national culture supplied the base for extraordinarily diverse conclusions: that fascism was the way out, that fascism was not the way out; that fascism was approaching, that fascism was impossible. And similarly, revolution was the best way on, revolution was the worst way on; revolution was imminent; revolution was impossible in the American setting. To some the evidence pointed toward complete world chaos; to others world reconstruction; to some

dollar or commodity dollar; silver issue or gold standard; the international flow of gold and money, with its complicating problems of tariff, international trade, and intercultural relationships. The same evidences and backgrounds provided the basis for new pictures of nationalism, featuring the contrast between nationalism and internationalism as being the definitive elements of contemporary society. And once again these materials and backgrounds constituted the basis of conclusion and propaganda on the part of those who believed that there could be no major issue comparable to that of peace and war.

The American picture was rich also in features through which multiple applications of more specialized economic theories were being interpreted and set forth as peculiar instrumentalities in the fabrication of the new plans. Once again an extraordinary inventory, overlapping, interrelated, inseparably tied in with all other backgrounds and other theories: profits and competition; prices and purchasing power; production and distribution; consumers’ standards and exchange; “social credit” and national dividends. Again, an incomparable picture of possibilities and eventualities for those who featured the present drama as the supreme test of capitalism, for those who saw in it its doom or for those who saw new opportunities for state capitalism; for those who saw in the present emergency the supreme test of democracy; for those who saw in it democracy’s undoing; or for those who saw new and unprecedented opportunities; for those who saw the rise of new governments attaining such composite value and power as had hitherto been recorded. For those who saw the rise of dictatorship there was abundant evidence, according to every man’s several interpretations, to point to the dictatorship of the masses, or of dominant personality, such as Mussolini or Hitler, or of other types yet to be developed through new combinations and permutations of the social elements in the case.
which must be met before the approach to permanent planning can be successfully made. There are also the objectives of developing and training the requisite new leadership and citizenship. There are, then, certain general ideals and principles of American democracy which must be kept continuously in the foreground. There are moreover special scientific problems involved in the quality of the race and the evolution of culture, which unfortunately in the past have most frequently been neglected. Once again there are the special problems of social technology or of ways of attaining the ideals and objectives of the American culture. And as means of attacking these special technical problems there are many specific techniques, samplings of which would indicate both the range of the planning problem and ways of moving forward.

The first essential to the mastery of the emergency is _poise, balance, and sanity_. If it is natural that the bigness and complexity of recent problems here transcended the measure of our understanding and education, it should also be logical that we should strive to develop a leadership which would prevent panic, blind mass emotion and action. If the nation is perhaps ashamed of the things which it has overdone or done wrongly, surely it does not wish to be ashamed more of what it is about to do in the continuing crisis. Where there are doubt and fear there must be, to go alongside of the search after the facts, abundant hope and faith commensurate with the national heritage. Mass emotion and a blind striking out to abolish and to destroy will crowed out the fruits of reconstruction and recovery. There must be also a certain unity of support not always required in normal times. The second emergency problem of _public relief_ is one of helping individuals and families literally to survive and to retain their normal status of self-sustaining American citizens. Physical and mental morale undermined will give the nation such tragedy as America has not yet faced. There can be no waiting for final plans, because the blame belongs to the nation, not the people. Commonly estimated to be the most immediate and disturbing emergency problem of the nation is that of _unemployment_. What will happen to a nation which cannot give gainful employment to its people? How long can it last? Likewise, in _farm relief_, the problem of preventing bankruptcy of the nation's chief primary enterprise is of such emergency nature as to threaten the very foundations of Americanism. So, too, _private debts and mortgages_ constitute a problem of some sort of equitable adjustment for the unreasonably unfair confiscation of homes and property from thousands

of the nation's best citizens. Finally, there is the dilemma of _public debts and balanced budgets_, the practical problem of obtaining at the very present moment enough funds to carry on the decent obligations of public affairs and to meet the obligations of previous commitments now falling due and of maintaining a stable financial equilibrium.

Among the generic problems in the way of attaining the ends of a new democracy, there are many which are still traditional, partly abstract and partly technical. Yet there is opportunity for new focus upon the regional foundation of both cause and effect, past and future. _The distribution of wealth_ is essentially a problem of reworking our economic institutions and regional arrangements to the end that the rewards of labor and the resources of Nature may be more equitably distributed and adjusted. _The “new” equalization of opportunity_ is in reality a readjustment and expansion of earlier methods made necessary because of the bigness of our civilization and especially because of a complex urban and industrial life in conflict with the past and with natural societies and rural institutions. _The guarantee of security_ is a comprehensive social problem involved in the adjustment of labor to technological invention, to machinery production, and to radical changes in occupations and economic conditions, as well as age and equipment levels of the people and their distribution in relation to resources. _The promotion of education and social welfare_ is an enlarged problem of equalization arrangements among regions as well as of training for citizenship and leadership and of amelioration that involves children, youth, the socially deficient, the physically handicapped, the future quality of the people. _International relations_ assume new problems not only of world community, of nationalism, of war and peace, and of financial equilibrium, but of regional commodities and of tariffs and exports of cotton and wheat and paper pulp and starch. _Group conflict and adjustment_ include the threatened conflict between the new labor classes, race and ethnic groups, religions, radicals, conservatives, and all their interregional adjustments. All this means a _re-examination of the Constitution_, a reinterpretation of the theory of powers and functions and especially an adaptation and revitalization of its provisions in the light of regional inequalities, and of many changing conditions in the modern world.
The group of needed special techniques is no less impressive and includes problems which also involve practical ways of attacking the larger problems of readjustment already enumerated. But they require adequate technical procedures well tempered with human values. \textit{Taxation and governmental finance} is essentially a problem of the marginal points between nation and states, between individualism and social obligations, as well as being a technical problem of economics and political science. The problem of railroads and highway traffic requires new approaches to a mobile nation, to a new world of decentralization, as well as to financing, on the one hand, and to control and regulation, on the other. \textit{Banking and finance} is a continuation and extension of the effort towards economic security and stability generally estimated as the first essential for economic recovery, but also involves problems of stability and overconcentration of capital wealth. The technical \textit{problem of the dollar} in relation to the gold standard or commodity value is assuming increasingly critical importance. The \textit{control and use of utilities} is the old, all-important problem, the conservation and utilization of power and natural resources in relation to human wealth. The \textit{conservation of natural wealth} has become a societal problem rather than merely an economic one and calls for \textit{regional planning} of a new order. \textit{Social insurance} is a new demand for technical ways of equalizing opportunity and guaranteeing security with reasonable standards of work and living. \textit{Governmental reorganization} is commonly estimated to be fundamental to both immediate recovery and to the stability of the social order. It is a continuation and extension of the movement towards service, efficiency, and economy. There is a new problem which approaches dilemma, namely, that of \textit{optimum production}, which is a problem of balance between production and consumption, with special reference to new modes of financing and distribution, and of new standards of consumption. Closely related to this is the problem of some \textit{agricultural adjustment}, or more authoritative action by the government toward the parity of prices as between agriculture and industry, involving fundamental issues of curtailment of production or increase of use. Finally, the ends of \textit{co-operative enterprise} stress as never before the problem of organization and co-operation in agricultural and industrial enterprise. Here are testing grounds of the new social order and especially of the centralization and concentration of commerce and industry, and of governmental control and supervision of economic processes. The problem of \textit{state and regional readjustment} represents both a composite approach to all of these, yet also in itself is an increasingly important dilemma involving the relation of federal to state organizations, special state and regional problems, as well as problems of state lines, of consolidation of minor units, and of \textit{co-ordinated} efforts.

Emerging from this multiplicity and complexity of problems and from the prior critical examination of the organic nature of regionalism, there appear to be four major fundamental problems that transcend all others. These relate to the twofold background which we emphasized in the earlier part of this chapter, namely, the American background and current technological civilization. The first two focus upon the American scene. The first of these is a matter of plain physiography, namely, the continued adjustment and better readaptation of the nation to its geography; of its people to the land and resources through the conservation, development, and utilization of the great basic physical wealth of the nation. This is a major phase of Americanism. The second is the problem of liberty and freedom within the flexible, geographic framework of representative democracy, which must continue to develop, conserve, and give opportunity to every individual and demotic unit through such social arrangements as will develop a richer human culture in a superior civilization. This, too, is a major aspect of “Americanism.” Both of these are tangible, definable, and susceptible of flexible adaptation to whatever new social order may emerge. The third problem is one of universal culture seeking to achieve enduring civilization in harmony with the natural heritage. The fourth is the problem of progress which consists in the mastery of the physical, technological, and societal forces, and the resulting human-use ends, through which the continuity of human evolution may be attained.

Now all of these are basic and elemental. They reflect needs of organic structure and totality rather than super-specialized function. Inherent in the framework of regionalism are ample postulates for such evolutionary progress, and implied in its frame of reference is the power and facility for implementing the combined knowledge and skills of the nation and its people. Yet, the essential reality of the new regionalism must be found in the basic consideration that, so far from being a panacea for the artificial reconstruction of the nation, it is the most natural thing in the world. For, regionalism, pointing equally to the past or future, assumes the totality of all environmental factors of nature and of all cultural forces such that
there can be no single deterministic force but rather what may be termed societal determinism. Such regionalism manifestly points to balance and equilibrium between and among all the forces and implies a quality culture in a quantity world.

Again, we may characterize regionalism as tool and technique for various objectives of planning and of attaining equilibrium and balance, decentralization and distribution, in particular as these relate to population, to wealth, and to sovereignty. This is of particular importance and vividness in relation to the adjustments between agrarian and urban culture, between natural and human resources, and in other essentials upon which wealth, in its finest sense, and civilization, in its richest implications of a balance of man in harmony with his natural heritage, find their basis.

Regionalism may, however, be featured as symbol and reality of the new frontiers of American life and as current mode of that high motivation which has characterized the American people. This motivation would tend to be of several sorts. First is that of making the nation "regional conscious" instead of "sectional-minded," an objective that is far from being merely academic. Second is the desired objective of making the states less provincial and more regional and national-minded to the end that greater unity and richness of national life may be attained. Third is the contrariwise objective of conserving state and regional autonomy in the ever-encroaching centralization of power and functions of the Federal Government and the consequent trend toward bigness and over-centralization everywhere, with also the natural danger of dictatorships. A fourth is found in the motivation for planning, for looking forward to abundance and to the reality of experience, rather than looking backward or to the futility of utopian abstractions. There is a fifth type of motivation inherent in regionalism, and that is its possibilities for vivid portraiture of the nation, for interpreting the drama of its history and crises, and for creating new interest and new patriotism among the American people. Thus, Lewis Mumford appraises the regional guides of America as indispensable toward creating that new sense of the regional setting and regional history, without which we cannot have an informed and participating body of citizens who will understand the problems that grow out of their intercourse with the earth and with other groups; citizens who will eventually learn the art of socialized living and regional planning and will make the earth their collective home. . . . They will give to contemporary Americans the opportunity to know and understand in-