

8

The Emerging Maturity of Reason

The 1954-1955 weaning away from the SWP affected my first wife and me differently. For her, embittered by the decay for a different reason than I, the result was simply to move away from political life toward a liberalism informed by her approximate decade of experience with the SWP. For me, it was a matter of superseding a useless sort of mediocrity.

She, increasingly, perceived me as embodying a potentially brilliant business career, and resorted, increasingly, to her impressions of her family background, and to current impressions guided by that perceived background, to attempt to guide my policies to that end. For me, income and position were merely conveniences; it was the problem-solving aspect of consulting which gratified me.

A notable, if simmering, conflict was already developing by the time of the August 1956 birth of our son.

By spring 1957, the conflict within the marriage was becoming severe on account of the acceleration of our differences in outlook, method of judgment, and direction. My limited active involvements in the SWP during 1958, 1959, and 1960 were an important,

complementary feature of the process which ended the marriage. She was opposed not only to my occasional involvement with the SWP, but also to my determination to continue a consulting practice—even, on the latter account, to the point of sabotaging my business affairs at a number of points by intervening with associates. She was particularly embittered against my research work.

Under those circumstances several developments killed the marriage.

The most crucial was the matter of a former Freedom Rider, Griswold. He had been passed to me for personal counseling by an acquaintance. He had visited me periodically, and had progressed to the point of developing a résumé and securing a more suitable form of employment. An intruded household scene, during which my first wife carelessly included savage complaints against my “uncompensated” help to Griswold, so profoundly disturbed him that I never heard from him again—until being informed, some months later, of his suicide. That news “killed my last strong feeling” for the marriage. It was not the incident itself, or merely that it served as a sort of last straw to an accumulation over several years. It exemplified the irreconcilable difference between two opposite views of being human and alive.

That aspect of experience was most useful in separating me from the last residual carryovers of adolescent weaknesses, in establishing a deepening ruthlessness toward any aspect of personal life which corrupted the dictate of conscience in respect to the

duties of public life. My first wife's developing view was that personal family life, as she defined it, was primary, and that that ought to determine public life. My own view was opposite. The breaking up of the marriage put the conflict between the two views to a test.

Since then, she has gone on to become "successful" in a manner consistent with her views, and I according to my own.

Just as the individual in society is the mediation of the historical process, so the individual event sometimes embodies within itself the concentrated expression of an entire process, and in that way transmits an importance way beyond the apparent content of the incident taken by itself.

That decision, and associated actions, to permit nothing but my public purpose to govern my course of action and life, is the breaking-point in my "emotional life" which provided the necessary complement to the developments in my intellectual life. Since 1963, as I separated myself from then-vestigal association with a computer-applications entity I had founded in 1959, my course of action has been a steady march into the present realities.

Building a Seed-Crystal

The most important thing about people is not what they do or think at a given moment, but the direction of intellectual and moral development of which they are manifestly capable under appropriate circumstan-

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