

THE "WAR" OF BUREAUCRACY WITH SOCIETY

Ivan Chapman, Oklahoma State University

Bureaucracy is a new culture, society is an old culture and bureaucracy is at war with society (Hummel, 1977: 56, 57; 77-79). This war can be seen in the conflict of normative prescriptions for social action of the two cultures. Bureaucracy prescribes precision, stability, discipline, reliability, calculability of results, formal rationality, formal impersonality and formal equality of treatment. Society prescribes justice and freedom, violence and oppression, happiness and gratification, poverty illness and death, victory and defeat, love and hate, salvation and damnation. Bureaucracy is systemic, society is humanistic. The bureaucratic prescriptions are one-way directives for meeting system needs. The social prescriptions are twoway consensual understandings for meeting human needs. If bureaucracy wins this war, the administrator, the coordinator, the con artist and the social engineer will replace social consensus with one-way system decrees.

W. I. Thomas anticipated the intellectual warfare of man with himself as a conflict of the elements of spontaneity and organization in man, with the statement; there is "Always a rivalry between the spontaneous definitions of the situation made by a member of an organized society and the definitions which his society has provided for him" Thomas, 1966:42). This rivalry is between individual thought and cultural prescriptions, between living thought and directives of the dead hand of the past. This is warfare of the living with the dead with the burden of the dead being to kill the living and the burden of the living being to resurrect the dead. Viewed from either side the task is of great magnitude for mortal humans. When the welfare of humanity is imprisoned in this kind of either/or logic of war, it is a tribute not to superior ability to reason but to the inherent need to submit to some external "absolute" such as that postulated by natural law, by natural science

or by death itself. People's anxiety in the process world, or a nonroutinized world has driven them to a self-execution logic from which they seem unable to escape. This is a logic of habitual, routinized, bureaucratic absolutes that are binding upon the spontaneous definitions of everyone.

Karl Mannehim has prescribed the methodology employed in the warfare; "Only in a world in upheaval, in which fundamental new values are being created and old ones destroyed, (read the new values as bureacratic and the old ones as social) can intellectual conflict go so far that antagonists will seek to annihilate not merely the specific beliefs and attitudes of one another, but also the intellectual foundations upon which these beliefs and attitudes rest" (Mannheim, 1966:57). This is the method of warring against oneself resulting in the annihilation of the intellectual foundations of human thought. When these intellectual foundations are destroyed, humanity no longer has the ability to form abstract concepts of self and relate them to lower level concepts of self. Thus, one cannot conceive of oneself as both an empirical person and a rational person or as a particular person and general person. This inability to hold oneself together conceptually makes room for abstract and general ideas of one's human nature to appear legally and rationally as superior to and more powerful than the less abstract and more particular idea of mankind. Where this is the case a person perceives one intellectual construction of self as good, true and useful while at the same time one is forced to perceive another intellectual construction of the self as bad, false and useless. In this internal conflict, me perceives a good, true self at war with a false, bad self wich seems impersonal and anonymous. Thus the warfare between social man and bureaucratic man is fought at an abstract conceptual level which is difficult if not impossible for the whole person to comprehend. One can no longer form particular and general concepts of self and relate them together, but is captured intellectually by forces external to the self which are routinized, bureaucratized, systematized, and generalized self concepts.

Humanity's captivity is enhanced by an

either/or Aristotelian logic to which Western people have become habituated through conversion and devotion to the mythical demands of "natural science", "natural law", and "objective facts". The logic of "natural science" requires that a wide range of perspectives be destroyed in favor of a single perspective thus, making possible a dogmatic assertion of an "absolute" or the "truth". This conceptual warfare which is used to convert social humanity into scientific humanity is the same logic used to capture social humanity by bureaucratic humanity and is a conversion from two-way social logic to one-way bureaucratic humanity and is a conversion from two-way social logic to one-way bureaucratic decree. This intellectual slavery to Aristotelian polarized thought is particularly devastating to personal, social and cultural data as they are forced into a single absolutist perspective by "objective" observers and interpreters aspiring to be "natural scientists" and by administrators operating in one-way bureaucratic structures.

Aristotelian thought is a technique of thinking which destroys many perspectives of thought by magnifying a single perspective to be the whole of thought. A spade is a spade forever instead of spade¹, spade², spade³, and so forth, where spade¹ is not spade² and spade² is not spade¹ and so forth as in non-Aristotelian thought. The habitual and unquestioning acceptance of Aristotelian techniques of thought makes possible the exaltation of one-way bureaucratic routinized thought as truth and destroys the intellectual foundations of two-way social thought. By one-way thought, we mean rigid, directive, and unyielding thought. By two-way thought, we mean adaptive, flexible and accommodative thought. One way thought is decisive, and definitive; two way thought is reflective and abstract. Fortunately, one-way logic is not the only kind of logic available to social humanity. If this were the case, there could have been no society in the first place as the very foundations of society rest upon a two-way logic in which two or more separate social entities not only exist, but are legitimized in their existence. This two-way social

logic allows a whole person to conceptualize the self at the same time as both a subjective and an objective human; as both social and a bureaucratic person without invalidating one perspective or the other and without forcing one intellectual perspective into conflict with another.

In *Science and Sanity*, Alfred Korzybsky gives examples of non-Aristotelian logic which allows the same person to be both Smith¹, and Smith², Smith³ and so forth (Korzybsky, 1958: Introduction XXX). Aristotelian logic requires that there be always only one Smith. The use of this one-way logic as social thought makes impossible the recognition of whole ranges of social data and prevents examination and explanation of these data. This is annihilation of the intellectual foundations of social thought so that spontaneous definitions which rival routinized, habitual definitions cannot be formed because of conceptual strangulation.

Aristotelian logic is like the bed of Procrustes, as a technique for thinking. If data exceed the size of the bed, then chop them to fit; if they fall short, then stretch them to fit. Where the social person is both an "I" and "Me" chop her to a "Me", where the social person is both particular and general stretch her to the general. C. H. Cooley explained consciousness in a non-Aristotelian manner, "There are, then, at least three aspects of consciousness which we may usefully distinguish: self-consciousness, or what I think of myself; social consciousness (in its individual aspect), or what I think of other people; and public consciousness, or a collective view of the foregoing as organized in a communicating group. And all of these phases of a single whole" (Cooley, 1956:12). Cooley's use of two-way social thought allowed consciousness¹, consciousness², through consciousness³, to exist as valid and legitimate while at the same time they formed a single whole. In this view whole consciousness is consciousness¹, through consciousness³, not consciousness¹, or consciousness², or consciousness³.

Talcott Parsons and George Homans departed from Cooley's two-way social thought as a means of analyzing social data and chose to explain social humanity by

means of the technique of one-way, routinized logic of the bureaucracy. Homans' and Parsons' use of Aristotelian logic forces social humanity to be either particular psychological humanity, as theorized by Homans or to be general systems humanity, as theorized by Parsons. This polar view of the person as particular at the one pole, and general at the other pole introduces an irreconcilable conflict between the subjective and the objective person. The one-way logic of science and bureaucracy immediately raises the question: "Is the subjective, spontaneous person real valid and legitimate, or is the objective, constructed, general person real, valid and legitimate?" The answer can be provided by one-way logic only by a war between Man¹, as subjective man, and Man², as objective man in which Man¹ survives and Man² is destroyed or where Man² survives and Man¹ is destroyed. Either one in particular destroys humanity in general or humanity in general destroys humanity in particular. Only then can real humanity shine unclouded by the shadow of any other person. This issue becomes more clear as we follow the argument between Homans and Parsons. Parsons criticizes Homans' explanation of social behavior based upon psychological principles, "The point is that Homans has never attempted to show how the 'reduction' of sociology to psychological principles is useful at the macroscopic levels, yet he generalized his doctrine to sociology as a whole" (Parsons 1961:207). Homans' reply to Parsons is "Let them therefore specify what properties of social behavior they consider to be emergent and show, by constructing the appropriate deductive systems, how they propose to explain them without making use of psychological propositions. I guarantee to show either that the explanations fail to explain or that they in fact use psychological propositions, in however disguised a form" (Homans 1971: pp. 167, 376).

The one-way logic used in the above argument prevents both Homans and Parsons from theorizing that the whole person or the social person is both a psychological and a systems person and that to conceptualize

the social person as both particular and general is valid and legitimate.

The whole issue of the psychological versus the systems person resolves itself into an ideological conflict between sociologists as to who shall define social action. Either social humanity defines itself spontaneously, or it is defined by some external system by a system definition. This warfare has little value for understanding the social person in his full range from the particular person to the general person. It seems evident that psychological constructs externalized, formalized and given political power along with mass media dissemination are in a position to contend successfully with the subjective personal repertoire of facts possessed by many persons and successfully to dominate these persons' spontaneous definitions. In this way, they become general social facts when accepted by the masses. Where this is the case of the social facts which can explain the psychological facts of the accepting masses cannot explain themselves. To do so they must relinquish their generality and their superiority as they become individual psychological facts of the person who formulated them, either a politician, a theorist, or an ideologist. Thus system facts and psychological facts are one, and social facts are both generalized and particular facts. They are Macro-Micro aspects of the same definitions of the situation. One is not socially complete without the other. In the same way a person is inseparable from his shadow when in the sunlight and from his foot prints when walking in the sand and from his finger prints, when touching things. But one's shadow does not fully explain one's behavior nor does one's behavior fully explain one's shadow. Neither do one's foot prints nor one's finger prints fully explain one's actions, nor one's actions fully explain one's foot prints or finger prints. It seems trite to mention these things in this way and yet in organizational structures the paper shadow (file) of the organizational person is more important than the social person because it is used to explain fully social man who is casting the shadow. One's use of habit as having a threefold meaning sheds some light on this process of inversion.

1. Habit is a way of life that one is "used to doing", that he does regularly.

2. One follows this way or norm which he has established for himself as a binding command. His subjective creation now has objective form and validity and is applied to his behavior as prescriptive, demanding, commanding.

3. This way or norm becomes expressive of ones' volition or will; of his psychic disposition to act, reinforced by the sentiment of pleasure, he loves it is attached to it and wants to preserve it as it compels him to a certain conduct and action (Tonnie 1971: 29-31).

Bureaucracy is a habit, a "lazy brain" way of life were the individual acts one-way, means one-way not only in bureaucracy but habitually in society as well. Where a person in particular is an individual man and the person in general is a bureaucratic person, one-way thought tends to become habitual for the person in particular as personal needs are successfully blocked by the defined needs of humanity in general. Habitual commitment of the whole person to the goals of the bureaucracy requires a displacement of personal goals. This goal displacement is achieved by habitual Aristotelian rationalization so that bureaucratic goals are seen as superior to goals of the social person. Habit requires a projection of awe upon the bureaucracy which denies the social person and regresses him psychologically to the lower animal needs for subsistence, forcing the individual to surrender the higher human and social capacities of defining and achieving personal and social needs.

It may be that the task of being fully human through the maintenance of two-way social relations has become too burdensome and abstract for the social person so that the cost of being human must be reduced to the economy and efficiency of bureaucracy, and from the one-way commands of bureaucracy to nothingness and death. Habitually one loves bureaucracy, becomes attached to it, and wants to preserve it, as it compels one to conduct and actions of self-destruction. Humanity at war with itself may very well succeed in destroying itself. It is certain that the burden of being human falls fully

upon the intellect of each individual. Bureaucracy has declared war upon such nonsense.

REFERENCES

- Cooley, Charles H. 1956 *Social Organization*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press.
- Homans, George. 1971 "Commentary" in *Institution and Social Exchange*. Edited by Herman Turk and Richard Simpson. Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merill.
- Hummel, Ralph P. 1977 *The Bureaucratic Experience*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Korzybski, Alfred. 1958 *Science and Sanity; An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*. Clinton, Massachusetts: The Colonial Press, Inc.
- Mannheim, Karl. 1966 *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1964 "Levels of Organization and the Mediation of Social Interaction". *Sociological Inquiry* 34:207-20.
- Thomas, William I. 1969 *The Unadjusted Girl*. Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith.
- Tonnie, Ferdinand. 1971 *Custom: An Essay on Social Codes*. Chicago, Illinois: Gateway Edition.