

DECENTRALISM PAST AND PRESENT

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS will see Taylor Caldwell's novel *The Captains and the Kings* dramatized on TV. Fewer will pick up the book and read its first words, which tell why it was written:

"This book is dedicated to the young people of America who are rebelling because they know something is very wrong in their country, but do not know just what it is. I hope this book will enlighten. . . There is indeed a 'plot against the people,' and probably always will be, for government has always been hostile toward the governed. . . This has nothing to do with the customary ideologies or forms of government or any of the other catchphrases generously fed to the unthinking masses. It has nothing to do with race or religion, for the conspirators are beyond what they call 'such trivialities.' . . The people of all nations are helpless, whether they live in America, Europe, Russia, China, Africa or South America. —They will always be helpless until they are aware of their real enemy!"

On page 299 of the book Miss Caldwell has her conspirators state their objective: "It is ridiculous that your Washington would be so weak and government so decentralized. . . Centralized power is the only guarantee of profits and controlled wars. . . Progress depends on war."

On page 786 the opponents of the power-mad centralists speak, "Wars of this century will be fought to control men's minds and souls, to dehumanize mankind. . . They will be wars of governments against their own people. . ."

Centralism, in any of its forms, is rule by the few. *Decentralism* is the only ideology which opposes centralized power and the rule of the few in both its forms of Marxist Socialism and Corporate Capitalism. When the centralists say that America and Russia are becoming more alike, they don't mean that the Russian people are gaining more freedom but that the American people are losing theirs.

Winston Churchill feared "a new dark age lit only by the lights of perverted science." The fact

that the allies won World War Two has not ruled out that possibility. At the beginning of our nation George Washington spoke a warning against blind trust in government. His words were, "Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; government is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

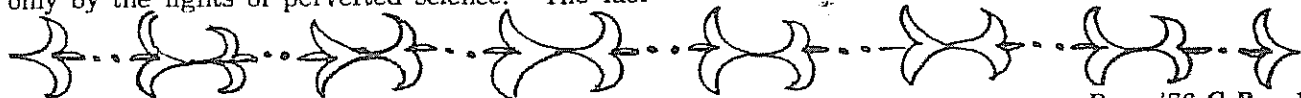
A few decades later Andrew Jackson warned us of how concentrated economic power can undermine political democracy. "The farmer, the mechanic and the laborer are in constant danger of losing their fair interest in the government. The mischief springs from the power which the moneyed interest derives from a paper currency which they are able to control and from the multitude of corporations with exclusive privileges which they have succeeded in obtaining in the different states."

Decentralism has many implications, including about the issuance of money. With respect to technology, decentralists believe in the kind that doesn't concentrate power and wealth into the hands of 'managers.' Instead they wish to use 'alternative technology' — technology on a small scale — thereby giving a boost rather than a blow to individual freedom and personal self-sufficiency. Technology can have a human face; can be employed for human ends.

Thus to be a decentralist implies much more than supporting or participating in the back to the land movement. Those who consider themselves radical in today's America are going to be looked to for a *philosophy* — a philosophy native to America and patently so to the masses.

Something must be fashioned by our generation from the soul of America if America is to see future generations who aren't merely survivors of an overwhelming catastrophe.

Walter Chase



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