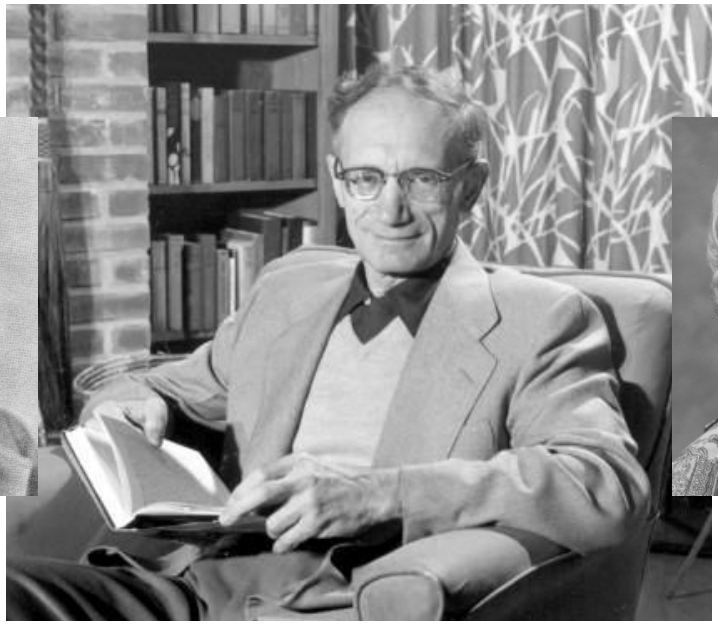
The Essential Ralph Borsodi



Myrtle Mae Borsodi



Ralph Borsodi



Mildred Loomis

Bill Sharp

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Bob Flatley, co-founder of Transition Centre and a Borsodi inspired homesteader, brought my attention to Ralph Borsodi and over the years provided encouragement and insights into restoring the legacy he founded.

My wife Priscilla has provided steady support for my work over the years including editing this and other writings.

Bob, Priscilla and I formed Transition Centre which incorporates Borsodi's work as a cornerstone for forming resilient communities: www.transitioncentre.org.

I assume responsibility for all errors in this work. The Borsodi legacy was lost and restoring it has been a slow and uncertain process. The bulk of that research is found in the two manuscript volumes made available publicly in the hope of encouraging further research:

Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: The Green Revolution:
https://archive.org/details/ralph-borsodi-a-confident-future-the-green-revolution

Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living:
https://archive.org/details/ralph-borsodi-learning-and-living-book

The mentors: I have been blessed over the years by a series of incredible men and women who in many ways exemplified Borsodi's vision of each developing our own potential so that we may nourish others and our communities.

Cover Photo: The legacy of Ralph Borsodi is integrally linked to the lifelong collaboration with his wife Myrtle Mae and close associate Mildred Loomis.

Introduction

Life is problematic. The essence of Ralph Borsodi is that he sought to give us a program for solving these problems. His approach was practical, seeking concrete results in our lives. Those results can be defined as "the good life."

I'm going to argue that Borsodi was an iconic figure in the dramatic unfolding of American democratic society. He lived through some of the worst of times for this country, not only politically and economically but also on the personal level. He worked to stem the tide of social decline. We have not solved those problems yet, and there are more of them today.

You can make your own list of issues, but I think high on that list is recent years have demonstrated that American society is increasingly stressed. We are facing mounting crises in our way of life – a just, secure and equitable life that is the foundation of a democratic society. The global economy is unstable and unsustainable. We are depleting resources, and there is a mounting crisis in the environment. The 2021 IPCC report was a red flag. Population continues to rise globally. Agricultural production has been stretched to the point of diminishing returns. The COVID pandemic and recession of 2020 and the adjustments that follow have tested the fabric of both US and global society. That pandemic has become endemic. This third decade of the twenty-first century may well prove a turning point in the history of this civilization.

With crisis, however, comes opportunity. The human brain evolved to solve problems. What we need is knowledge and skill, leadership, organization, and above all we need community. We need an alternative way of life and a way to achieve it.

I have worked to restore the Borsodi legacy because I found much value in his work. Borsodi was what has been termed a "Renaissance Man" - a man ahead of his time. Perhaps now is his time. He gave us a program for clarifying the nature of the problems we face, for drawing on the accumulated wisdom of humankind, and for putting solutions into practice.

Borsodi's achievements over a long, creative and productive lifetime are simply remarkable. He had a lot of ideas. He wrote several books (15). Above all, he did things. Two of his most enduring accomplishments were achieved when he was in his 80s.

Ralph Borsodi had two primary objectives:

1. The wellbeing of individuals, families and communities
2. A lifelong program of education to support that objective.

The story of Borsodi's two objectives can be found in these two volumes:

Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: The Green Revolution, which is about his homesteading work, and

Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living, which is about his work in adult education.

These two books can be downloaded from the Transition Centre website (link)[1]:

[1] Transition Centre Home Page: www.transitioncentre.org

There is also a Hermitix podcast that provides insights into Borsodi's life and work link[2].

The two legacy volumes are essentially a critical biography. They are a detailed, albeit highly condensed, narrative about his life and work presented in more or less chronological sequence. This book *The Essential Ralph Borsodi* summarizes his principles and practices and describes the incredible work of his close friend and association, Mildred Loomis. It brings their work up to date and sets it within a broader context. It is intended as a handbook to assist developing resilient communities.

Borsodi focused on a cohesive, inclusive, local community. He gave us a program of education, of learning for living. Now that the legacy has been largely restored and made publicly available, it is time to see what we can learn from him and apply that knowledge to meet the needs of this day.

Borsodi: A Brief Introduction

Ralph Borsodi was born in Vienna, Austria in 1888. He joined his father, who had started a highly successful publishing business in Manhattan, at about age five. He was sent to a private boarding school. At 15, working for his father in advertising and publishing, he settled into his own apartment and started an avocation in cultural change through which he first rose to leadership in the Henry George movement.

In 1920 Borsodi moved his family to a small farm during a serious recession and lethal pandemic. While maintaining his business in the city, he and his wife established a model homestead and began training others for independent life. He launched his School of Living enterprise at the depth of the Great Depression. Following World War II, and the emergence of the Cold War and a global economy, after essentially turning the reins of daily operation over to Mildred, Borsodi began a series of projects to develop his educational program. These two paths define the two legacy volumes.

The final chapter of *The Green Revolution* volume, "Borsodi Memorial[3]," details his projects, provides a chronology and conveys something of his personality. It and the first two chapters of the book should be your start to understanding his legacy. A detailed summary of his accomplishments follows.

Borsodi Personality:

From what we know, Ralph Borsodi was an extraordinary personality. He was of average height, slightly built and balding. He had incredible energy. He usually wore a jacket and bowtie. Even at 80 he had an erect posture. He had a presence, a steady gaze, a resonant and commanding voice with a slight eastern European accent. He was brilliant, well-informed, and articulate. He was a voracious reader with a retentive mind, absorbed details and summarized vast bodies of work. His attention to detail could be exhausting. He was passionate; you might say driven. He was highly self-reliant, inner directed. He had a refined philosophy of life and was highly disciplined. He was a health advocate in healthy eating and exercising. He was a knowledgeable organic farmer and loved his garden. He was handy with tools.

[2] The Work of Ralph Borsodi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cASxh2o76ZI
[3] The "Borsodi Memorial" chapter concludes this book as well.

Borsodi was a man of integrity and principles – he clearly believed in what he offered – and he was morally driven. He was a humanitarian, a man of action and prone to act decisively. He had enduring friendships and was respected by many distinguished persons. He was an indomitable experimenter and innovator and he faced disappointment and frustration with firm resolve. Many times he shrugged off setbacks and went on to the next project.

Friends remembered Borsodi as polite, humorous, thoughtful and compassionate, but could be direct and candid. He could be devastating in debate. He was engaging in conversation. He listened but also talked a great deal, drawing on an encyclopedic memory. He could excite an audience. He liked working with students at both the undergraduate and graduate level and with faculty. His friends included some of the best minds of the time. He didn't want people to agree with him; he wanted an energetic exchange of ideas. He was Socratic, always probing with questions.

Borsodi Accomplishments

The following contributions made by Borsodi were recorded at the 1973 Jubilee session by Mildred:

- Diet and food reform,
- Organic agriculture,
- Composting,
- Homesteading,
- Community,
- Extended family,
- Family planning,
- Natural childbirth and breastfeeding,
- A precursor to today's ecological and environmental concerns,
- The changing attitude in medicine towards understanding minds and bodies instead of emphasis on pills and drugs,
- Grassroots, anti-government centralization movements,
- But the most important, they agreed was his work on adult education,
- Including work in classifying the world's wisdom around problems of living,
- Clarified free market economics and set real reforms in motion,
- Championed and practiced home and small-scale technology.

In short, he laid much of the groundwork for what is today's sustainability movement.

My own list of his astonishing accomplishments (my Borsodi Resume) is as follows:

- About 1903, Borsodi became active in the Henry George movement, gave speeches, edited the newsletter and taught classes. In 1919 he was the chair of the association.
- In 1920 he relocated his family to an independent homestead outside of New York City where he achieved, and documented, personal financial independence. He built a remarkable stone home and named it Dogwoods for the flowering trees that surrounded it.

- During the 1920s he wrote three books critical of the American economy, including *This Ugly Civilization* (1929) which anticipated the Great Depression.
- *This Ugly Civilization* was serialized in a major national magazine, drew the attention of Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband Franklin who was then governor of New York. The book inspired a back-to-the-land movement, including Scott and Helen Nearing who over the coming years popularized "the good life." With it Borsodi established the basic, three-part, outline of the work that would occupy him throughout his life.
- In 1933 he published his popular *Flight From the City*, a homesteader's handbook, which documented the economic advantages of homesteading.
- In 1933 he was called to advise on the Dayton Homestead Project. There he expanded his vision from personal homesteading to community. He left as the New Deal Homesteading Division took over (and they failed).
- In 1934 Borsodi established his School of Living with a mission to provide practical and philosophical foundations of the good life.
- In the second (1935) edition of *Flight From the City* he described the School of Living association and a life-long, adult educational model for the improvement of our understanding and achievement of the good life.
- In 1935, Borsodi formed the Independence Institute to fund homesteading land trusts.
- He formed the first of two homesteading communities in Rockland County, New York in 1935. This project inspired the formation of many other land trust communities.
- Borsodi organized a variety of craft guides and production units. They built houses for homesteaders. (I know the School of Living made looms.)
- Borsodi and friends launched a decentralist movement to promote localized and self-sufficient economic production. This included a journal, *Free America*, started in 1937. Borsodi became a leader of the movement.
- 1938 – 1939, he and his wife produced a series of popular Homesteading Bulletins (booklets) entitled "How To Economize" to demonstrate the productive economics of household tasks. These sold well at a quarter per copy.
- In 1938 Borsodi published *Prosperity and Security. A Study in Realistic Economics*, in which he established a comprehensive economic framework for his homestead community model.
- In 1939 he co-authored *Agriculture in Modern Life* with two senior US Department of Agriculture staff, where he further elaborated his economic model.
- During the World War II years, he developed a peace plan that anticipated the United Nations.
- In 1943 Borsodi published *Inflation is Coming and What to Do About It*. It went through a number of editions and sold some 500,000 copies. This book was also popular in the 1970s during another period of troublesome inflation.
- Towards the end of the war, he was giving well-attended seminars on the universal problems, both theory and practical application.
- In 1945, Borsodi closed the School of Living at Suffern and transferred the headquarters to Ohio under the directorship of Mildred Loomis. Mildred would

continue to lead that branch of the School of Living for four decades. Borsodi focused on his education model.

- Following World War II, he articulated his educational principles in *Education and Living*, two volumes, published in 1948. In this book he described optimal living at the personal, family and community levels.
- In *Education and Living* he also established the framework of the universal problems of living which defined the following three decades of his lifework.
- In 1950 Borsodi sold Dogwoods, moved to Melbourne, Florida and opened a new School of Living program there.
- In 1952 Borsodi and wife traveled to Asia (an around the world cruise) on an extensive fact-finding mission and later published *The Challenge of Asia* in which he examined the impact of global industrial development with particular emphasis on India. He made friends in India at that time with whom he kept in touch.
- In 1954 Borsodi launched the Melbourne University experiment. He developed a graduate level curriculum for the problem-centered system. It offered both a masters' and doctorate degree.
- 1955 – 1957, Borsodi published *The Journal of Praxiology* in which he promoted problem-centered education and practical application.
- In 1958 Borsodi returned to India for a two-year stay during which he worked closely with an agriculturalist who was a disciple of Gandhi.
- In 1958 Borsodi published, at the request of Indian colleagues, *The Pan Humanist Manifesto* in which he outlined his decentralist views (renamed *The Decentralist Manifesto*).
- In 1961 Borsodi returned to the US and settled in Exeter, New Hampshire. He found it an idyllic place to live and work.
- In 1963 he published *The Education of the Whole Man*; a book written while working in India, in which he systemized his problem centered framework and provide curriculum material for university level education.
- In 1967 Borsodi incorporated the International Independence Institute (III) to support the idea of land trusts. With friends he developed an organization to promote this model. From this emerged the Community Land Trust, which is one of his enduring legacies.
- In 1968 at age 79, he published his monumental *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*. With this book he provided a textbook, a taxonomy of approaches people had throughout history used to solve the problems of living, and elaborated on his rationale and philosophy.
- In 1972, Borsodi incorporated Independent Arbitrage International which issued the Constant, an inflation-proof local currency.
- In 1973 he incorporated the International Foundation for Independence in Luxembourg and established an international banking system to support an alternative, inflation-proof currency worldwide.
- Borsodi died in 1977. He left an unpublished manuscript for a comprehensive book on economics.

In Summary:

Borsodi lived nearly 89 active years. He wrote 15 books and over 100 articles. He was granted a master's degree by St. John's College (a prestigious private college) and a doctorate by the University of New Hampshire. He founded, or cofounded, perhaps a dozen corporations. He founded or co-founded, and edited, several popular journals. He delivered uncounted lectures and seminars. He had a long list of distinguished friends in the US and in India.

The Reason Why

Borsodi left no systematic statement of his philosophy but his basic values and beliefs can be found scattered throughout his works. As this legacy was explored, it became clear that two things were needed: First, a clear statement of that philosophy, the reason why he devoted his life to this work; and second, a coherent presentation of his methods. This book will attempt to achieve those objectives.

We need to understand that Borsodi was not a linear, compartmentalized, thinker. He was a pioneer in what became general systems thinking - a holistic view of the life we are given. There is great synergy in such systems if you understand how they work; and that perception involves reason, facts and intuition. Borsodi knew that we must have emotional as well as intellectual education. He knew we must go beyond abstract ideas – and he was adept with them – to practical things, and he was clever with that too. He advocated drawing on the accumulated wisdom of humankind. He explored that vast scope of knowledge and created a taxonomy of the ideas that have guided human choice through the ages.

Borsodi was absolutely committed to individual autonomy. Some have suggested that he was a libertarian, but I do not think that concept applies to him. (In later life he referred to libertarians as "them" and he had reservations about the then emerging libertarian party movement.) He, as far as I can determine, was never a member of any party or outspoken about any political candidate. What he believed was that each individual must work to develop a personal philosophy and be given the opportunity to develop their greatest potential. In his view, only healthy individuals can form healthy families and healthy communities.

What Borsodi detested was centralized control of the economy, government or anything else. Like Thoreau, he believed that the best government was the least government. He believed that individuals, families and small communities could take care of most of their own problems; indeed, that our problems could not be solved on the level of "society." His individualism and decentralism are like two sides of a coin.

We are not born free. Throughout most of history, societies have not had anything like the concept of liberty we find today. And few of us ever become liberated from the constraints of society. Indeed, we are conditioned to conform, to be a part of the "machine," to be agreeable and predictable. Even in modern democracies we must learn to be free, to be self-sufficient and self-reliant, or, as Maslow put it, self-actualized.

Saying that, Borsodi was a profoundly moral person. He was a humanist. He devoted his life to the advancement of human well-being.

With this we move to the foundation of Borsodi's system: education. And he called it "right-education." He spent most of his life developing this system.

In 1940 Borsodi made the following statement about the development of his work at a conference presentation:

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is the supreme value, the School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind."*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, the School of Living aims to assist adults in becoming aware of and the defining of <u>the major problems of living</u> common to all people.*

With that statement, Borsodi clearly indicated where he was going. As noted, during the war years he gave a series of summer seminars about his problem-centered framework that drew many people. After the war he gave seminars around the country, mostly at colleges and universities, and in 1948 published his universal problem system in *Education and Living*.

Education and Living was an important threshold to Borsodi's educational model. It provided a withering critique of mass, progressive, education. He proposed the alternative. He went into considerable detail concerning the outcome of life-long learning, what he called the "normal," defined as optimum, human being. He provided detailed descriptions of the normal individual, the normal family and the normal community.

There was much yet to come from Borsodi regarding his educational model. Largely influenced, I believe, by his many distinguished friends in academia, he undertook to develop a university-level program. Working with friends he incorporated the University of Melbourne. He spent several years during the mid-1950s developing a graduate curriculum for his problem-centered system. In 1956 Borsodi published *The Challenge of Asia* (Melbourne University Press). In that book he described his experience in 1952 exploring the damaging impact of western industrialization on Asian societies. He also devoted several chapters to describing his University of Melbourne curriculum.

Borsodi was invited to return to India in 1958. He spent two years working with Gandhian agrarian educators and writing his *The Education of the Whole Man*. This book provides a systematic theoretical framework for his system. It was addressed to university students and teachers who were preparing to be leaders in India's rural renaissance. That was Gandhi's objective.

Finally, Borsodi wrote his *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society* which brought his educational work to a conclusion. He was just short of his 80th birthday when he finished and published it. It is a demanding book. I have to define it as something of an encyclopedic dictionary. Borsodi's approach was always to lay out the entire range of ways people had attempted to solve their problems through the ages. (One could call this array of ideologies the good, the bad and the ugly.) He insisted that we had an ample record of how our problems could be solved, how they had been addressed through the ages, that explored the full spectrum of human experience, that was instructive about human nature, and that we could choose from them the good, the true and the beautiful. Most importantly, we had to make choices and take action to solve the problem at hand.

The following quotes from *Seventeen Problems* provide what I think is the best insight into, and Borsodi's final full statement about, his method:

> *The most important problem in the world today is the problem of the philosophy by which men live and the philosophy by which society is animated. This, however, is just another way of saying that the most important problem in the world is the educational problem. For this in practice is the problem with which education deals; it deals with the whole process by which not only the rising generation, but also older generations are imbued with the philosophy all are supposed to practice and which the whole social life of the community is supposed to reflect …. The essential character, sentiment and disposition of a people, of a community or country, a society or culture; the spirit which animates its manners and customs, its practices and institutions, and which is reflected in its ideals, and especially in its values – in its ethical and esthetic, its economic and teleological [purposes] attitude and practices."*

As a conclusion to that book, he wrote:

> *The holiest temple is not a church but a school. The holiest man is not a priest but a teacher. The holiest book is not a bible but a dictionary. The holiest study is not science, not art, not philosophy, not religion, but the study of the truth about how to live, how to treat your fellow men, and how to use what has been entrusted to us like decent and honest, sensitive and concerned, cultivated and considerate human beings."*
>
> *Only by rightly educating ourselves can we equip ourselves to honor those who have, in the long history of mankind, bequeathed to us all their art and science and all their painful labors and heroic sacrifices. What has been entrusted to us, we must multiply, and with it endow those who follow after us.*
>
> *Of all these products of right-education, neither courage alone nor wisdom alone are quintessential. For without courage, wisdom becomes a sharp tool in hands afraid to use it, and without wisdom, courage an equally sharp tool in hands which do not know the use to which it should be put.*
>
> *Only with courage and wisdom can mankind deal with ignorance, with folly, with greed, with violence.*
>
> *Only with wisdom and courage can mankind be saved."*

The Essential Ralph Borsodi

In this book I will abstract and summarize the key ideas, principles and methods Borsodi developed over a long and productive lifetime. This book is divided into four parts:

1. "Borsodi, the Land and Living," provides a summary of background information about Borsodi, his early homesteading experience, his founding of the School of Living, and carries this theme to his development of the land trust.
2. "Decentralism" describes Borsodi's essential philosophy. He was an individualist. He saw the centralization of government, the economy and social institutions as barriers to personal liberty. And he believed the modern urban-industrial culture was, in general, seriously flawed.
3. "The Green Revolution" focuses on the life and work of Borsodi's close associate over nearly a half century, Mildred Loomis. She was not only a devoted supporter of Borsodi but a creative personality in her own right.
4. "Education and Living" describes Borsodi's problem-centered education system. It does so relatively briefly. More detail is in the *Learning and Living* volume.

In closing this book, I will summarize Borsodi's basic philosophy and point to further development. That is the work of Transition Centre.

Part One: Borsodi, the Land and Living

We start this story with Ralph and Myrtle Mae Borsodi moving from New York City to a small farm at Suffern, New York, some 40 miles from mid-Manhattan. Borsodi gave as a reason the rising rents in the city. There was also a serious recession and lethal pandemic, and he was looking for a healthier, country, lifestyle for his family. And, as we will see, he had a mission.

They arrived April 1, 1920. There was an old farmhouse, no electricity or indoor plumbing, and a cluster of rundown structures. Borsodi bought tools and building materials and began remodeling the house. He was a city guy and had to learn to do the work. He quickly came to enjoy it. They started a garden. Myrtle Mae had been raised on a farm and Ralph took to gardening with a passion. The garden, shop and writing desk were integral parts of Borsodi's life from that time.

He brought in electricity and bought an electric range. He installed an electric pump at the well and plumbing in the house and a hot-water heater. The kitchen was a high priority. They canned and preserved much of their food, most of it raised in their own garden. Borsodi was a student of efficiency. He sought to make homesteading productive and free of drudgery. They considered their first year a success.[4]

Self-sufficiency

Borsodi's objective was family self-sufficiency. The family farm was an American tradition then. Before the railroad, communities had to be largely self-sufficient; roads were poor, and freight was horse drawn. The railroad turned agriculture into a market-driven business.

With World War I the process of centralizing the economy and government was accelerated, and agri-business was born. Agriculture was mechanized. Tractors replaced horses, and trucks hauled freight to rail depots. This new economy was not to the benefit of the farmers; there had been protests some years earlier. Henry George wrote his best seller, *Progress and Poverty*, in 1879, which sold millions of copies.

George grew up poor, went to sea and settled into journalism in California and became a leading, and still read, American economist. He saw that speculative holding of land by the rich made it unavailable to working people and advocated putting productive land into a public trust and a single tax levied against not the land and property but actual production.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a Country Life Movement was formed that advocated going back to the land. President Theodore Roosevelt became a leading advocate of the movement, and it gained considerable traction.

I have written about these agrarian movements in my *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: The Green Revolution*.

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[4] This story can be found in full in his 1933 book, *Flight From the City*. Free, downloadable pdfs are available online and reprints are also available.

As a youth, Borsodi knew and was influenced by Bolton Hall, who was a friend of his father. Both were active in the Henry George (Georgist) movement. Hall became interested in urban agriculture and started a large community garden project in New York City, a garden with quarter acre plots on which people could raise a good deal of their food. He also advocated small farms around cities to supply the local food market. He wrote two books about the back-to-the-land movement. These books undoubtedly inspired young Ralph Borsodi. Ralph himself became active in the Georgist movement, speaking, teaching and editing the association's newsletter, and in 1919 he was elected chair of the Georgist association. The following year he made his flight from the city. As Hall was the leading back-to-the-land advocate before World War I, Borsodi took that role after.

It is clear that Borsodi was already planning an educational enterprise. The Borsodis invited friends from the city to spend weekends to learn gardening, work with tools, building and other knowledge and skills to prepare them to start their own homesteads. He taught skills but obviously had a broader agenda: a philosophy of life lived well on the land. He was troubled by the economic, social and psychological effects of massive industrialization not only on the economy but on the conduct of life and advocated an alternative lifestyle.

Domestic Production

Borsodi first described his homesteading experience in *This Ugly Civilization*. He then wrote *Flight From the City* at the request of his publishers. It is a handbook on homesteading. In that book he wrote five chapters on domestic production. Three of these were:

- Food, Pure Food, and Fresh Food
- The Loom and the Sewing-machine
- Shelter

Food Quality

The Borsodis had an ample garden for producing fresh food in season and for canning. Myrtle Mae bought a rather expensive pressure canner and set about to produce 400 quarts annually of canned fruits, vegetables and meats, enough to easily carry the family through the winter.

Borsodi attached a used electric motor to a small grist mill to grind flour and animal feed. Whole-grain breadstuffs became the centerpiece of the homestead table. Though E. F. Schumacher got the credit for "appropriate technology" in 1970, Borsodi had pioneered the idea some 50 years earlier. Of domestic machinery, Borsodi wrote in *Flight From the City*:

> *Machinery enabled us to eliminate drudgery; it furnished us skills which we did not possess, and it reduced the costs of production both in terms of money and in terms of labor. Not only do we use machines to pump our water, to do our laundry, to run our refrigerator – we use them to produce food, to produce clothing, to produce shelter."*

Borsodi kept exacting records of the time and costs of canning and preserving their food. This included time spent raising the food (or cost of purchasing it in bulk) and all the details that went into the process such as initial cost for the purchase of canning jars and maintenance. He found that the cost per pound of their home-milled flour was one-quarter

of that purchased in a store. They also ground their own cornmeal for less than one-fifth the market cost. He concluded that the cost of producing food at home was 20 – 30% lower than the price of factory-made products. In short, it took less time to produce food at home than it would to earn the wages to buy it.

Borsodi made a case not only for the lower cost of food produced at home but also for its better quality. He was an early health food advocate. Before leaving the city, he had attributed a wide range of health issues related to processed foods, so the family stopped eating them. The health benefits of consuming fresh food over factory-processed, "pre-digested" stuff, was even then obvious[5]. The Borsodis were pioneers in organic gardening, and this work became a foundation of the organic/health food movement of today. They were also getting ample exercise in the clean open air of the countryside, living closer to nature, and became more relaxed and content.

The Loom

A loom being a major part of their home production, Borsodi created a special room for it in his home architectural plans. Borsodi's father may have been the inspiration for home weaving. He had told Ralph of a tradition in Hungary of making their own sheets and linens, which lasted for decades, as opposed to factory linens which Borsodi noted had to be bought every other year or so.

They bought a loom that wove 44-inch-wide cloth, a four-harness loom that provided a greater range of design. After he added a flying shuttle, they could produce a yard of cloth per hour. It took only seven yards of cloth to make a three-piece suit which Borsodi was proud of. For a suit or overcoat, the cost including yarn, weaving time and home tailoring, came to much less than what you would pay in Manhattan for a store-bought item of lesser quality and durability, let alone a comparable professionally tailored item. They wove blankets, wall hangings and draperies. They bought a good sewing machine, and Myrtle Mae wrote an article about making her own suits with fabric she had woven using a *Vogue* pattern modified to her taste. There is a picture of Myrtle Mae in a very nice wool coat made of the cloth she wove. Years later, after the School of Living was formed, a division was set up to manufacture looms with the School of Living label.

Shelter

The house the Borsodis first acquired was very old. It had hand-hewn timbers assembled with wooden pins. It had no modern amenities. Borsodi devoted a year, full-time, to remodeling the house, learning to use his tools as we went. He started building furniture with lumber made from chestnut trees that had been killed by blight.

Remodeling the new building included implementing innovations in the water system. At the time, much of rural America lacked electricity. Borsodi had a power line installed, and as noted, used an electric pump for the well to supply fresh water and installed an electric hot water heater. He also constructed an up-to-date septic system. He prepared an accounting of the ample savings compared to using public utilities. It should also be noted that today when houses are built on agricultural zoning, water wells and septic systems, much as he developed, are still common.

[5] Borsodi published two popular consumer advocacy books.



The Borsodis soon expanded their homestead and built a large house from local stones. He did much of the work. They called their homestead Dogwoods, named after a flowering tree that grew in abundance there. The home had the usual amenities plus some things he was already building into his model of the productive family homestead. Dogwoods is no simple farmhouse; it is an elegant structure – more like a manor house – built on a hilltop. It was not merely a dwelling place but a living place with a library, pool room, a room for a loom, an office on the third floor of a tower, an efficient kitchen, pantries, a good workshop – everything you need to enjoy the self-sufficient homestead life. It was a place for people to come to visit. Borsodi wrote:

> *[W]e built three houses and a barn from stones picked up on our place; we weave suitings, blankets, carpets and draperies; we make some of our own clothing; we do all of our own laundry work; we grind flour, corn meal, and breakfast cereals; we have our own workshops, including a printing plant; and we have a swimming-pool, tennis-court, and even a billiard room."*

Publications

Over the years both of the Borsodis produced a number of articles, pamphlets and booklets about homesteading. Myrtle Mae was the driving force behind domestic production. Growing up on a farm, she had the requisite skills in the garden and kitchen. She became a champion of domestic production and received numerous invitations to speak. The University of New Hampshire holds the following articles by Myrtle Mae Borsodi, and these were the ones published prior to the founding of the School of Living. Her writings from 1929 to 1932 included:

- "A Full-Time Job At Home," *New York Herald Tribune Home Institute*, Nov 24, 1929
- "Home And Children," *New York Herald Tribune Home Institute*, Jan 5, 1930
- "Women and Machines," *Advertising & Selling*, Nov 26 and Dec 10, 1930
- "The Home Laundry Earns Money," *Electrical Merchandising*, Feb 1931
- "Earning An Electrical Kitchen," *Electrical Merchandising*, Apr 1931
- "Our Electrical Household Equipment Paid For Itself," An address delivered before the Women's Committee Session of the Fifty-fourth Convention of the National Electric Light Association, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Jun 9, 1931
- "Cleaning...An Unavoidable Task," *Electrical Merchandising*, Jul 1931
- "The Ironer Is Hot," *Electrical Merchandising*, Sep 1931
- "Cheaper and Cleaner," *Electrical Merchandising*, Nov 1931
- "Weaving One's Own Clothing," *The Handicrafter*, Mar - Apr 1932
- "Two Dollars Grow Where One Grew Before," *The Silent Hostess*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 1932,
- "My Home Is My Career," *The Silent Hostess*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1932

The School of Living

In 1933 Borsodi was invited to consult with the Dayton, Ohio Homesteading Project. He worked there for nearly 1½ years. It was there that he developed a vision and a plan for homesteading communities. Against his advice, the homesteaders, hoping for an infusion of government cash, invited the US Homesteading Division to take over the project. Borsodi went back to Suffern in July 1934 and on September 3, 1934 founded his[6] School of Living. He found a place near his homestead outside Suffern with a meeting room, moved his library there, and set up seminars. He apparently closed his business interest in New York City at that time to devote himself fully to his program.

Borsodi believed that people wanted to move from the city and seek greater personal independence. But he also knew that both city and farm people dreaded the drudgery of grubbing in the dirt. He proposed a middle way – the family homestead near large cities – a dual life in the garden and in the office or factory or personal craft, trade or business.

He also knew that city dwellers lacked the knowledge and skills needed and sought to formalize the program he and family had developed at Dogwoods. And he knew that a new philosophy of life was needed (he found that painfully true at Dayton). He saw modern urban-industrial commercial life as problematic. He wrote:

> *Industrial civilization is either on the verge of collapse or of rebirth on a new social basis. Men and women who desire to escape from dependence upon the present industrial system and so have no desire to substitute for it dependence upon a state controlled system, are beginning to experiment with a way of living which is neither city life nor farm life, but which is an effort to combine the advantages and to escape the disadvantages of both."*

Borsodi had a personal philosophy about self-reliant life and that was the cornerstone of his School of Living. His objective was an alternative culture, a rural, agrarian culture. He emphasized that this movement wasn't just people seeking escape and going back to a simpler life; it is "a conscious and planned movement" that requires "distinguished leaders in education" and with that he introduced "schools of living." In the second edition of *Flight From the City* (1935) he announced that the first such School of Living had been formed "this winter in connection with a homestead project near New York City at Suffern, New York." He outlined the purpose of the school:

- To associate a select group of artists, craftsman and teachers in a demonstration of the contribution which decentralized, self-sufficient living in the country may make to redress the economic and psychological insecurity of our industrialized civilization
- To study and develop the possibilities of the home and homestead as a productive and creative institution
- To furnish to men and women the opportunity to follow a carefully developed plan of learning and experiences in living securely, comfortably and richly and in leading others to live equally well

[6] A small and subtle point; when I use "his" in reference to Borsodi's School of Living, I should clarify that I am referring to the organization, principles and practices he established. Mildred had her own, still highly complementary, interpretation of the School of Living, essentially a stalwart champion of Borsodi's ideas. Following her death in 1986, the Borsodi legacy was largely lost and there are few left who have a grasp the essence of his ideas and programs.

- To offer those who may be able to come for short visits only a place to see and study the relationship of homesteading and domestic produce:
    - To the past, present and future
    - To our present industrialized, centralized, organized, political society; and
    - To make life more meaningful to themselves here and now.



It was at the time of the founding of the School of Living that the tree of life became its iconic symbol. As they gathered that first day in September, they formed a circle outside and transplanted a tree from Dogwoods. Mildred Loomis reported the dedication (and this became the motto of the School of Living): "Let this tree," said Borsodi, "be a symbol of life and living." His son added: "Let a tree of life be the emblem of the School of Living." Myrtle Mae spoke next: "Let the tree remind us that Creation dignifies labor, justifies suffering and gives significance to life." A tree has been the symbol of the School of Living from that beginning, and there was a tapestry of the tree of living, possibly woven on the Borsodi loom (depicted). Over the years the image of the tree changed a number of times, but the symbol remained prominent in publications.

School of Living Curriculum

There were two parts to the School of Living curriculum. The first was homesteading skills. The Borsodis, as noted, invited friends from the city to join them on weekends to learn the skills they had acquired. He had a small library of books and documents, many from the US Department of Agriculture (listed in the bibliography of *Flight From the City*).

Division

The School of Living was a complex organization. George Weller in an article in *Free America* reported five divisions of the School of Living at the time:

- Homemaking (see below for a list of the publications of this division).
- Agriculture, or rather gardening: the cultivation of vegetables, orchards and raising of small farm animals from fowl to goats.
- Crafts: Workshop practices including making furniture, weaving and production of other household implements and farm products. Looms were manufactured by the School of Living with its label.
- Building: Borsodi learned to remodel and built Dogwoods and other structures. This was a natural part of homesteading life. The Bayard Lane community, a guild with several groups of workers, was formed to do construction.
- Small Business: Training in how to establish a personal business. This was also called "Applied Exchange."

Seminars

Borsodi loved to hold conferences and give lectures. But he also admired the seminar, and he picked up an excellent model from St. John's College, in Annapolis, Maryland, with which he became involved in a long association. The St. John's Great Books curriculum was established about three years after the School of Living was founded. St. John's president, Stringfellow Barr, was a visitor to the School of Living. As described elsewhere, during World War II, Borsodi drafted a plan for them to become a self-sufficient institution, a college of living.

St. Johns, then and now, sought to preserve the humanistic tradition of the classical past. Students at St. John's study the Great Books, the writings of the greatest minds down through the ages, and rather than attend lectures they gather in seminars, under the guidance of tutors, to discuss these texts, to critically examine them, to engage in dialog, and to develop their own insights and, for that matter, personal character.

Borsodi understood that there was much to be learned from the great heritage of human experience. He firmly believed that we need an institution that provides not only the basic skills required to achieve a livelihood on the land but also a deep understanding of what it means to be a human being. The objective of this institution is to promote critical intelligence, clarity, and self-reliance – the integrated personality.

Publications

The School of Living Homesteading Division produced many more publications, and we know they had wide circulation.

1933-1936, Additional articles by Myrtle Mae Borsodi

- "The Argument Laundries Cannot Meet," *Electrical Merchandising*, Mar 1935
- "Food Costs and Range Sales," *Electrical Merchandising*, Apr 1935
- "The Cost of Feeding A Family," *Electrical Merchandising*, May 1935
- "Dough in the Range," *Electrical Merchandising*, Apr 1936
- "Shall We Build Homes Our Apartments?" *Advertising & Selling*, May 7, 1936
- "What Should the Home Contribute?" *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 28, No. 6, Jun 1936
- "For Budgeteers," *Electrical Merchandising*, Jun 1936
- "Cutting Laundry Costs," *New York Herald Tribune Home Institute*, Oct 4, 1936

1937-1938

- "The Modernized Old Homestead...And What It Can Do For The Electrical Industry," *Electrical Merchandising*, Feb 1937
- "The New Woman Goes Home," *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. CI No.2, Feb 1937
- "The Kitchen That Pays For Itself", *Electrical Merchandising*, May 1937
- "Discovering Self-Sufficient Farming," *Electrical Ruralist*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1937
- "Home Laundry Earns Money," *Electrical Merchandising*, May 1937
- "Bread Baking Electrically and Making Money," *Electrical Ruralist*, Jun 1937
- "Oven Cooking," *Electrical Ruralist*, Jul 1937
- "Home Canning Made Easy," *Electrical Merchandising*, Aug 1937

- "Sweet Dough Baking Profits," *Electrical Ruralist*, Oct 1937
- "Cutting The Cost of Thanksgiving Dinners," *Electrical Ruralist*, Nov 1937
- "The Cost of Running Water," *Electrical Merchandising*, Mar 1938
- "Home Laundry Costs vs Commercial Laundry," *Electrical Merchandising*, Apr 1938
- "Are Housewives Slaves? - A Debate - I. The Sisyphean Struggle (by Sara S. Moser); II. Creative Freedom (by Mrs. Ralph Borsodi)," *The Forum*, Sept 1938
- "The Facts On Home Laundry Savings..." *Electrical Merchandising*, Nov 1938
- "Making Household Equipment Pays Its Way," *Seventh International Management Congress*, 1938, pp.40-43 (offprint). Undated manuscript of an article on the comparative cost of using a commercial laundry vs. doing the laundry at home, 6pp

Myrtle Mae contributed to a series of *Homesteading Bulletins*, each about a domestic art, of which we have the following list (Ralph wrote the first three):

"How to Economize: …

1. In Building Your Home
2. In Financing and Construction of Your Homes
3. In Buying Land for Your Home
4. On Laundry
5. On Bread, Cake and Pastry: A Manual on Baking at Home
6. On Flour and Breakfast Foods: A Manual on Milling at home
7. In Buying Food: A Manual on Storage and Refrigeration
8. On Fruit: A Manual on Fruit Growing
9. On Vegetables: A Manual on Gardening
10. On Canned, Bottled and Preserved Foods: A Manual on Canning and Preserving
11. On Milk and Cream: A Manual on the Home Dairy
12. On Butter: A Manual on Butter Making
13. By Sewing at Home
14. By Weaving at Home
15. By Knitting at Home

Each of these "How to Economize" publications were a finely printed pamphlet of 9x12" with ample illustrations. About 130,000 copies were sold at a quarter each.

We also know there were newsletters and probably other documents for each Division. Unfortunately, the documentation for this period has been lost. Borsodi and friends also started the journal *Free America* focused on the topic of decentralism and increasingly, during the war years with Borsodi as the lead editor, on homesteading practices. This story will be told below[7].

During the summers of 1944 and 1945, Borsodi delivered extended seminar series at Suffern that were well attended (those topics are listed below). He conducted a series of seminars around the country following the war. I believe much of this material went into his *Education and Living* volumes.

Following World War II, there were two associated enterprises formed. The first was the School of Living Institute chartered in January 1945 "to promote this new type of

[7] Allan Carlson edited a number of articles from *Free America* in *Land and Liberty: The Best of Free America* (2019)

education" — "the scientific study of normal living in various communities." Carl Vrooman, of Bloomington, Illinois, formerly Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, was Chancellor of the Institute, and Mildred Jenson Loomis, of Brookville, Ohio, its Dean. The institute was headquartered at the Loomis' Lane's End homestead (see below). Local study groups were identified in Bethlehem, Pa., Columbus, Coshocton, Cincinnati and Cleveland, Ohio.

The second associated enterprise was Bayard Lane, Inc., Publishers, set up to print books and periodicals dealing with subjects of interest to the School of Living. Herschel Papiroff was President, Frank G. Chiles, Vice President and Edward M. Borsodi, Secretary-Treasurer.

A publication from the 1946 reported that:

> *The activities of the School fall into three main divisions: (1) Research and Publications, (2) Education, and (3) Demonstration. …. the following is a brief outline of its present educational activities.*
>
> *The regular day at the School is divided into periods each of which is used as a basis for studying the practices of living. Every part of the day – including the rest and recreation period – thus becomes an integral element in the effort to obtain insight into the problems of living. The Seminars on the principles of living were conducted under the leadership of Mr. Borsodi afternoons and evenings. The Morning Experiment Period under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Toms begins with a discussion of activities and experiments planned for each day.*
>
> *Among the projects and practices which will be the subject of experimentation, are the following: Allocation of Time; Indoor and Outdoor Chores; Nutrition; Weaving; Recreation and Recuperation; Gardening, Pruning, etc.; Cows, Goats, Chickens, Ducks, Rabbits; Butter and Cheddar Cheese making; Freezing and Cold Storage; Preserving, Canning and Drying of Food; Economics of Home Production; Modern Laundering; Beekeeping and Pollination.*

There was also a substantial library of perhaps 2,000 volumes organized according to the problems of living rather than subjects.

Land Trust

High on the list of Borsodi's School of Living objectives was a better land trust model. At Dayton he had developed a model for small, collaborative homesteaders' communities. The property would be put into trust, as George had advocated. Borsodi called these "colonies" and each would consist of 40 homestead families. The plan was to have these units, 50 colonies, scatter around Dayton in a 15-mile radius[8]. Small parcels, one to three acres, would be made available as a 99-year lease. Occupants would build their own homes and other structures and these they would retain personal ownership of.

Borsodi published a series of reports, mostly written by himself during the Dayton project, which developed the idea of the homesteader's community.

Borsodi's vision was:

> *The outstanding fact about these homesteads is that they are designed not only for family gardening, but for family weaving and sewing and family activities in all the crafts which have been neglected for so many years. The loom room and the workshop, with all their opportunities for self-expression and creative education, are once again to become part of the American scene. …. that they fulfilled in the early American home – to furnish economic independence, security and self-sufficiency."*

[8] The location near the city presumed that as jobs returned, workers could commute to them from their rural homesteads.

Borsodi again made his case for more efficient technology to eliminate drudgery and increase productivity. He added:

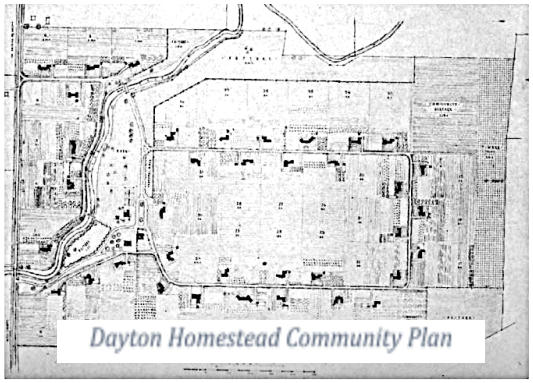
> *The homestead will furnish the security of which industrialism has deprived us. What I called domestic machinery in my last book, in contrast to factory machinery, is to be given a chance to free the unemployed of Dayton from the dependence upon industry and make possible a higher standard of living than they ever before enjoyed."*

Borsodi argued for decentration, "making the home rather than the factory the economic center of life and turning to education and the artist-teacher rather than to the politician and the technical specialist for a way out."

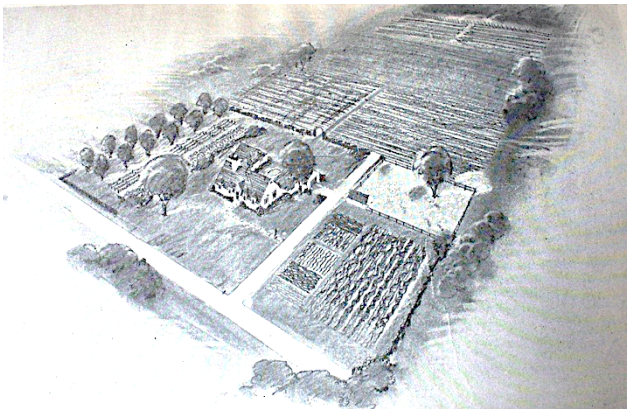
Borsodi's "Postlude" expressed what he thought the philosophy of the Dayton project should be, and, summarizing his article in *The Nation*: It, first of all, "represents an attempt to solve the dilemmas of the machine age along entirely new lines." Second, is to provide production for consumption, not for sale. Third, it is "not only a temporary solution for the problem of unemployment but a permanently better way of living for every man, woman, and child now struggling for happiness in our industrial civilization."

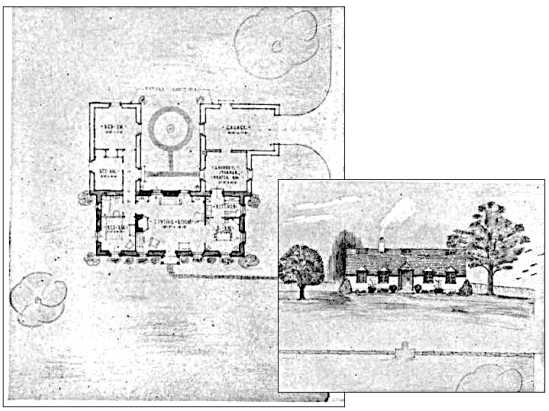
"Thus, Dayton is making social history. …. Something really new is emerging from its struggle with the problem of relief."

With the first property secured, Borsodi developed a detailed plan. He laid out the homesteads, roads and commons. The project budget included, first, the acquisition of the property, 160 acres, cost of repairs to existing buildings, road building, a community tractor and implements and community building machinery such as saws and a concrete mixer. It came down to a $286.42 investment per home (roughly $5,800 in 2021 dollars).


Dayton Homestead Community Plan

His "Estimated Cost of Establishing the Dayton Homesteads" was a detailed breakdown including initial investment and investments in housing materials, wells and pumps, barns and equipment, agricultural implements, domestic machinery, livestock, seeds and plants and trees, and groceries and feed sufficient to carry the family to first harvest.





His budget tables detailed the costs of well pipe, fencing, lumber for hog-pen, pressure cooker and 500 canning jars – five pages in all. While the dollar cost would have to be adjusted for inflation, the itemized list is still generally correct for a current development effort. The complete list can be found in the second and subsequent editions of *Flight From the City*.

Money would be made available for loans to homesteaders and he calculated interest, insurance, etc. What the money was needed for was also exactingly detailed.

He had an aerial view of a three-acre homestead and a house plan:

Borsodi drafted a homesteader's agreement. The extract, something of a constitution or declaration of independence, stated:

> *We the undersigned, in order to secure the opportunity to:*
> *Satisfy our needs and desires directly by production for our own use through intensive husbandry and home craftsmanship*
> *Achieve a permanent basis of economic independence and security*
> *Develop a progressively higher standard of living*
> *Provide for our youth as soon as they are ready and assure our aged as long as they are able, participation in productive and creative activities.*
> *Enrich family and home life by reducing drudgery and releasing creative activity through the use of domestic machinery*
> *Increase control over our destinies by solving our problems through simple family and neighborhood activities rather than through large, complicated and impersonal civic and industrial relationships, and*
> *Furnish to the community of Dayton, which is assisting us to establish ourselves on homesteads, an example of effectual and beautiful living, to associate ourselves together to form a community of homesteads and pledge ourselves to abide by the provisions of this constitution.*

He added a right of members "to the development of a completely individual life."

Borsodi again stated that he planned to extend the network to 50 homestead communities surrounding Dayton. The outcome would realize Borsodi's dream of a post-industrial economy, one that would be free of economic instability. He argued that this would make Dayton a national model for subsistence homestead communities. From there, the idea could be spread around the country. To make it a national movement, Borsodi asserted, is not only an economic or agricultural problem, "*but primarily an educational problem*." He wrote:

> *The really difficult problem is that of inspiring and training families – for this is a family undertaking – to change their notions of the good life, and their ways of securing the necessities and satisfactions of life. In some way they will have to be taught to think in terms of years instead of weekly pay-envelopes; to look upon the earning of cash as something to which they ought to devote only part of their time, and to secure their satisfactions out of creative and self-expressive activities instead of out of conspicuous consumption and vicarious play. Homesteading is, then, in the last analysis, a problem in adult education and as such must secure the right kind of educational leadership."*

Borsodi concluded this article with "[t]hree things are needed in order to realize the possibilities of the movement:"

First, definition. Among those working at one phase or another of the back-to-the-land movement there is the widest disagreement as to what constitutes a subsistence homestead. Is it only half an acre, or can it be as much as fifty acres? Should homesteading be confined to areas around places where industrial employment can be secured, or should it include farm colonization projects in which crops such as cotton furnish the cash income of the homesteader? A National Conference on Subsistence Homesteading is meeting in Dayton[9] as this issue of Survey Graphic is in press and may furnish a definition.

Second, an organizing and educational institution covering the whole country. To provide the continuous education needs for a period of years, as well as to furnish the government with responsible local institution for supervising homestead groups which loans are made, the cooperation of established institutions, such as state agricultural and mechanical colleges, must be enlist in the movement.

Finally, there is the necessity for securing ample capital finance for the homesteaders and the communities they establish. While thousands of families have or can secure the little capital needed to start homesteading individually, there are hundreds, thousands well fitted for homesteading who are unable to consider it because of lack of finances. The $25 million government funds available at present is sufficient only for a comparatively small number of these families. Therefore, as soon as the division is ready for the expansion of the work, Congress should appropriate ample funds for this purpose. In what better way could government money be spent in an effort to help thousands of hard-working families rendered helpless by the depression and to bring about business recovery? Most of the money would actually be used to purchase lumber, cement, hardware, tools, tractors, agricultural implements and small machinery of many kinds and would therefore increase employment in the very industries now operating at the low levels. I therefore suggest that Congress consider carefully the possibility of appropriating at least a billion dollars for this purpose in 1934. By this means the business of putting the new land and population policy into effect would be promptly got under way.

Borsodi's big picture dream attracted some interest from the faculty at the University of Ohio who became involved in developing educational material, and at some point, a long-term working relationship was established with Antioch College at Yellow Springs, near Dayton.

An article written by an independent party summarized the project in these terms:

"The advantages of this plan for homestead colonization recently summarized by a writer in *The Architectural Forum* present the views of a competent and disinterested observer:

1. *The advantage of great individual freedom which can be enjoyed by the households on the various homesteads together with the possibility of as much collective activity as the group freely chooses to carry on.*
2. *The emphasis on family life where a family as a unit will produce its basic necessities and therefore where the influence will be in the direction of binding the family together rather than driving the members apart in the case of the present situation.*
3. *A sense of permanence and economic security which will grow out of the homes actually owned by the homesteaders to which they will be attached because the homes will be largely the work of their own hands and the result of their own planning.*
4. *The combination of small electrical machinery with subsistence farming will give families ample food and clothing with much of the drudgery eliminated.*

[9] The Subsistence Homesteading Conference met March 24, 1933 at the Miami Hotel in Dayton. It was organized by the Dayton Unit Committee. Borsodi spoke about subsistence homesteading.

Borsodi was able to secure $50,000 from the federal government with no strings but that soon ran out. The project, with its 50 colonies, as he envisioned it, would require $2,500,000. The government seemed inclined to provide the funding, however, there would be strings attached, indeed, the government would send in bureaucrats to take it over. In July 1934 the homesteaders voted to accept the federal proposal. Borsodi threw in the towel and returned to Suffern. The funding never appeared, and the Dayton project was soon shut down.

A Learning Community

Within weeks of returning to Dogwoods, Borsodi incorporated his School of Living. There were two primary objectives. The first was, of course, education and research. The second was to develop an effective method for acquiring land for homesteading communities.

School of Living Philosophy

The core principles of the School of Living included what I would call Borsodi's triptych:

1. He proposed a learning institution, the School of Living, which promotes adult, problem-centered education where people could draw on the accumulated wisdom of our species, develop critical thinking and form character.
2. He placed the School of Living at the center of a community, a small, collaborative community, which provides collective security.
3. In order to break the shackles of economic thralldom, each family of the community must achieve financial independence. This is accomplished through the homestead. The necessary training would be provided.

The homesteading community and the School of Living are not two separate things. The idea of two sides of a coin is almost an understatement in describing the intimate association between these two seminal ideas.

The idea of education in a free society has deep roots. American democracy was founded upon self-sufficiency and education. Emerson, for example, wrote and spoke extensively about the creation of a noble character through focused learning, living on the land and pursuit of the ideals that define our humanity.

The School of Living is the catalyst of a self-sufficient body of people that forms community. It serves a society of people who enjoy a special quality of mind which is found in communal association with people seeking an optimal way of life. Society is part of our human DNA. The community Borsodi envisioned is small and autonomous – really a mere village of a few hundred[10]. They would be self-governing. Borsodi railed against bigness and centralization. A world of such communities would change the course of history, eliminate war and poverty, and let us get about the business of pursuing a human destiny.

[10] The human mind evolved to be comfortable with a group of 150 to 200 people – you can know everyone. This takes natural form in tribes, villages and successful organizations.

The creation of the School of Living posed the question: Can we educate people to become more fully human? In *This Ugly Civilization,* Borsodi defined quality life and linked it to the homesteading lifestyle. Such a life, he wrote, starts with physical, financial, as well as personal independence. But there was more:

> *For quality-minded men and women, the economic independence which such a homestead would furnish would be of revolutionary consequence. For note this: while freedom from dependence upon the factory would prove a boon to all types of men, in it lies a distinctive value for this minority of mankind. In our factory-dominated civilization it would enable them to 'sell' their talents without having to prostitute them. If the majority of our artists, writers, architects, engineers, teachers, musicians, scientists were in this way to secure the freedom to refuse to do work which outrages their tastes, life for everybody would undergo a radical change. The mere fact that business men would lose their power to dictate to the idealists of the world; that they would have to solicit the services of idealists rather than that idealists should beg them to utilize their services, would be sufficient to change a society in which emphasis is placed upon money into a society in which emphasis would be placed upon ideals."*
>
> *But it would go farther. It would furnish a better pattern of how life should be lived because it would furnish mankind a more intelligent social leadership. Our plutocracy, which today furnishes society with its culture patterns, makes accumulation seem the most desirable thing in life. It stimulates all of mankind to a reckless race for material possession on the theory that wealth is the key to happiness. An economically independent, intellectual aristocracy would very quickly demonstrate the hollowness of a life of mere acquisition."*
>
> *How can the quality-minded create such a society unless they free themselves from an economic servitude which makes them ridiculed and despised by their fellows?"*

The School of Living program was life-long adult education. This is not remedial education for dropouts but what Borsodi called "re-education." It is a "higher" education. Borsodi had a vision, a mission in life, to transform personal values. Mildred summarized it in the subtitle of her Borsodi biography "Reshaping Modern Culture." It was not about reform but an alternative lifestyle, a counterculture if you will. I will repeat the statement Borsodi made at a conference in New York City in 1940 (which I have called his credo):

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is the supreme value, the School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind."*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, the School of Living aims to assist adults in becoming aware of and the defining <u>the major problems of living</u> common to all people.*

I would also reiterate the three-paragraph statement Borsodi made in 1946, quoted five pages above, about the three main divisions of the School of Living, in short: Research and Publication, Education, and Demonstration; and the daily program followed.

The School of Living came out of Borsodi's fertile creative mind. It was a deeply researched, carefully crafted, systematic program of education and living. Borsodi attracted men and women of considerable talent to his ideas. He had a comprehensive and integral philosophy of life. I can't sufficiently stress the two words "comprehensive" and "integral." He believed there were fundamental principles and practices that must be learned in order to achieved personal independence and self-reliance.

Bayard Lane

Borsodi, with the support of friends with means, incorporated the Independence Foundation, it appears in 1935, to raise funds for homesteading communities. He first purchased 40 acres just north of Suffern. It was named for the Bayard family who had owned it and for the road into the property, Bayard Lane. Borsodi created a private land trust agreement that would allow members to acquire a few acres with a 99-year lease. They would pay between about five and eight dollars a month to cover taxes and basic maintenance. Ground was broken for the first residence in June of 1935 and by 1938 there were 14 homestands. A second property was acquired at nearby Van Houten, named Van Houten Fields, in 1937 and development quickly started there. These two properties were independent. Other properties were acquired but not developed, largely due to the mobilization of a war economy.

The idea of intentional communities was not new but Borsodi's idea of a land trust was innovative. He inspired other communities including Bryn Gweled,[11] 40 families on 240 rolling acres near Southampton, Pennsylvania.



Borsodi constructed his School of Living headquarters at the center of the Bayard Lane development in 1936 and there he pursued his mission with considerable vigor. The headquarters building was on four acres and had its own garden where staff grew their food. The main floor had a library, a large meeting room, office and kitchen. Upstairs was a dormitory. The project was completed in 1937[12]. The School was dedicated on July 4th, Independence Day (1938). It was dedicated to the: "economic independence of the American people." As noted, it taught the essentials of do-it-yourself agrarianism, including canning, poultry raising, animal husbandry, masonry, carpentry and the use of tools and household equipment." It was also a center for continued research and publication.

From 1934, the School of Living offered programs to develop what we might call today a higher state of consciousness. People came out from the city on weekends for workshops in homesteading and domestic arts. The also attended seminars during which the topic of the barriers listed in *This Ugly Civilization* were addressed. There was a good library. Fruitful conversations were engaged.

With the war economy producing jobs, the members of both Bayard Lane and Van Houten Fields soon broke the land trust and assumed title to their land fee simple. The School of Living continued until 1945 when the land and building were sold to a private owner and the headquarters of the School was moved to the Loomis homestead just west of Dayton, Ohio.

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[11] The Bryn Gweled community continues to this day: http://www.bryngweled.org.
[12] The original School of Living building still stands and is owned by a private family.

Melbourne Village

Borsodi was to have one more personal land trust experience, at Melbourne Village in. Florida, another project inspired by him.

Melbourne Village was formed by three women who had been associates of Borsodi's at Dayton, Virginia Wood, Elizabeth Nutting, and Margaret Hutchison. Around the end of World War II, Elizabeth Nutting began spending considerable time at Suffern attending Borsodi's seminars. She became committed to setting up a homesteading program along Borsodi's lines. She agreed that seeking government aid for Dayton was a mistake, that a private land trust was needed.

At Suffern Elizabeth met Norman Linington who was on the School of Living board. He sold real estate in Florida and convinced her to look at property there. She acquired a parcel near Melbourne and on returning to Dayton in 1946 she, Virginia and Margaret founded the American Homesteading Foundation (AHF), incorporated in Ohio in May 1946. An organizational meeting was held in July 1946 at Virginia's home in Dayton. About a dozen other people attended. Pierce Wood, a Dayton attorney was named legal adviser and Borsodi as a consultant.

At the first AHF meeting bylaws were presented. The purpose of the project was:

> *To establish homesteading groups and provide therewith opportunities for these and other groups to study the principles, practices and further possibilities of modern homesteading.*
>
> *In furtherance thereof; it is proposed to buy, sell, mortgage, lease and otherwise deal in real and personal property; to establish and maintain schools; to publish relevant literature; and to do all other things necessary and convenient to the encompassments of the foregoing purpose.*

The bylaws made it clear that members of the community must support its mission.

Borsodi suggested they consult his friend Arthur Morgan at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio. Morgan, who had led the Tennessee Valley Project, was a recognized leader in community development. Virginia and Elizabeth met with Morgan. He gave them advice on creating small communities. He suggested landscape architect Louise Odiorne who became personally interested in the project and agreed to undertake the planning of the first 80 acres in return for a lot and membership. She drove to Melbourne in September 1946 to start the plan.

Virginia Wood was clearly the driving force. She was a major financier of the original land purchase and of a number of projects and subsequent community needs. Nutting's idealism, Hutchison's organizational and business skills, Norman Lund's knowledge of community, Odiorne's community planning skills and the countless hours of dedicated work by many others turned vision into reality.

Borsodi and his School of Living were on the AHF agenda. In late 1949 Margaret Hutchison described the Melbourne Village program "as a plan of action that would enable the villagers to help others as well as themselves in times of economic crisis[13], when growing food and bartering skills would serve as cushions." She added that Borsodi saw homesteading as a return to the "early American ideal of individual initiative and democracy" without any lowering of the standard of living."

[13] Borsodi had been a driving force in fighting inflation before and after the end of World War II.

Elizabeth's brother, Notre Dame professor Dr. Willis Nutting, whose family had their own productive homestead in Indiana, added his perspective on "Why We Homestead" at the first annual meeting of the AHF. From the minutes of that meeting we read that:

> *He emphasized the values in this way of life for individual development, real and satisfying family life, and a richer and more stable community setup. He stressed the greater security families may enjoy when they live in their own homes where they can raise most of their own food the year round and where in case of depression, members of the community can barter their various skills, thus maintaining a high standard of living regardless of the value of the dollar. He also stressed the importance to our natural life, of a leavening of people who are independent and secure because, as he put it, 'Each would become increasingly his own boss.'"*

In Borsodi's own terms (from an interview September 3, 1956 – the 22nd anniversary of the founding of the School of Living in Suffern):

> *The founders of Melbourne Village hoped to fulfill this ideal by having modern family homesteading in a small community with as much local government and jurisdiction as possible. Modern family homesteading implies several things: (1) The home and land is owned by the family and is of itself a basis of security. (2) The economic life is centered around the family as much as possible with commodities produced by the home for use of the home. (3) Modern machines, equipment and methods are used for production."*

In another prospectus Borsodi laid out four principles for the new community:

- Real democracy, not just votes but "constructive group thinking and voluntary cooperation."
- Productive homes where families can produce much of their needs themselves. This was "early American independence."
- Development of people which places normal living above material means.
- An education-centered community "dedicated to the development of well-balanced effective human beings." It was intended to serve the needs of the villagers.

A brochure made it clear "that the purpose of Melbourne Village was not to subsist but to attain a higher standard of living, not to return to primitive living but, in the philosophy of Ralph Borsodi, to use modern technology with its time and labor-saving devices for more creative living."

The brochure also highlighted Florida's climate. It described Melbourne Homestead Village as "A beautiful Florida Shangri-la—Where There's Magic in the Good Earth." Its homesteading school offered "the thrill of independence and fuller self-expression in this unusual setup, where neighbors will be neighbors indeed, and where a community and family program of production for use can supplement even a small cash income to provide abundant living in good times—or bad," where "members will have a share in the planning," a "democratic community where each Member has one vote." It would be just a great place to live. It would have all the amenities. But, as we will see, that "great place" would be the undoing of the community vision.

The brochure went on to say that The American Homesteading Foundation was non-political and non-sectarian; "realists, with practical common sense, there must be, but not the disillusioned, not the fear-ridden nor the cynical."

During the winter of 1947–'48, the first group of the homes were completed and occupied at Melbourne Village. Virginia Wood's home was the first completed. Within the first year, 32 memberships had been accepted and lots secured. Another 40 acres of land was acquired. In 1949 yet another 80 acres were acquired and in 1951 another 80, bringing the total to 280 acres with 375 house lots. In 1950 a Village Credit Union and Village Coop were established. By 1950 35 houses had been built and membership was up to 106. That year Borsodi personally contracted for 40 acres (the "Borsodi Forty"). In 1952 there was a library.

In 1948 Melbourne Village formally applied to Borsodi's School of Living (incorporated in the state of New York) and received a charter to establish a School of Living in Melbourne Village. Borsodi offered a series of seminars there on the "Philosophy of Normal Living" in December 1949 and the following January.

Borsodi's wife, Myrtle Mae, died December 1949. He told Mildred that he no longer wanted to live at Dogwoods. In 1950 he met Clare Kittredge, whose husband had recently died and who had already purchased land in Melbourne Village. In September 1950 they were married, Borsodi sold Dogwoods, and they built a house in the Village.

Borsodi became a leader of that community working in close partnership with the three founders. They intended to create a School of Living homesteader's community. Borsodi offered seminars on his problem system, and in 1952 he incorporated the School of Living of America, Inc. in Florida.

While, theoretically, all members of the Village association embraced the School of Living principles, in fact, most of them soon represented a middle-class retirement lifestyle more interested in the climate and amenities than ideals. Tension soon developed and in fact reached a head in 1952. That year Ralph and Clare decided to take a cruise around the world.

During the cruise, Borsodi spent a lot of time in Asian countries exploring the impact of western industrialism. He was appalled with what he saw: Asia was diving into economic and political centralization with a host of injustices. This is what Gandhi had striven to avoid.

Mildred Loomis wrote:

> *In many countries Borsodi talked to leaders of thought – in the Philippines, Japan, Nationalist China, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. A friend in India, Shyam Chawia of The Ambala Tribune, made contacts for Borsodi in Gandhian schools and universities. In many places the Borsodis lived with common people."*
>
> *He went to discover, if possible, what Asia could contribute to solve the modern crisis. In the great struggle between Liberty and Authority, which would Asia choose – agrarianism or industrialism, decentralization or centralization?*

Borsodi eventually published his findings in *The Challenge of Asia*.

Returning home, Borsodi and friends set out to develop a graduate university based on his problem-centered system. Borsodi had already proposed a college community plan for St. John's in an 80-page thesis in 1942 for which they awarded him a M. A.

St. John's

St. John's College, at Annapolis, Maryland, is one of the oldest in the US, founded in 1696. Stringfellow Barr, as President, and Scott Buchanan, took over the college in 1937 and set up a new curriculum based on the Great Books of the Western World. This curriculum was derived from the Great Books project at the University of Chicago under Robert Maynard Hutchins[14] and Mortimer Adler. It was modeled after John Erskine's two-year liberal arts, or Honors, program at Columbia, which Adler had attended[15]. Encyclopedia Britannica mass marketed tens of thousands of 54 volume sets of the Great Books to homeowners. Most libraries had a complete set. There were discussion groups organized across the country. St. John's was the only college to fully adopt the Great Books model – no majors.

As noted, I believe Borsodi was attracted to St. John's largely because of its unique program of instruction. The texts are the classics of the western world. There are no lectures. The students read the book and seminar leaders apply the Socratic method of asking penetrating questions. This develops critical thinking, articulation, and acquaints students with the accumulated wisdom of the world. (Although Borsodi faulted it for not including the great literature of the non-western world).

At the time of his thesis, during World War II, students were few. The young men had gone off to war and women had not yet been admitted to St. John's, and the college was suffering financially.

Borsodi began the plan with an argument for "community," rather than "institution" – an association of people with a common purpose. He proposed to form a Charter Community.

Borsodi made a list of members of the St. John's community at the time which included faculty and their families, employees and their families, students and their families. There was a total of 430 people of which less than half were students.

Borsodi also compiled a list of projects and enterprises associated with the college. Some were social and cultural, some primarily economic and several administrative and fiscal projects. And, of course, there was the educational program.

A community shares a high degree of common economic life. In short, he proposed a complete reorganization of the economic and social structure of the college and the people associated with it. His plan included a bank, a credit union and a script of its own. He addressed housing, power plant and farms. He constructed a detailed budget which ended, and I think this proves the focus, with a detailed assessment of the food requirements of the community – loaves of bread, dozens of eggs, quarts of milk – the entire food needs for each person and the entire community (with the dollar value of each item).

However, the war came to an end and St. John's returned to prosperity, and Borsodi's plan was forgotten.

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University of Melbourne

In 1954 Borsodi amended the articles for the School of Living of America for the University of Melbourne. He wrote:

> *The University of Melbourne has been organized by a group who recognize that, in dealing with the problem of creating a sane and peaceful society, neither religion, nor science, nor patriotism, nor revolution has saved us. They believe that the time has come to consider whether the failure of the institutions upon which mankind has pinned its hopes may be due not so much to the political, economic and social errors of its organization, but fundamentally to the mis-education of the leaders and the rank and file of mankind. They believe that the time has come to consider whether the challenge of our times does not call for a crusade aimed at re-education and right-education.*
>
> *What the University of Melbourne is doing is to concentrate on the study of the missing factors in education. It furnishes its students with a means for forming a philosophy by which they can live genuinely serviceable and satisfying lives; a method of choosing among the conflicting philosophies of life from which modern man must make a choice. It initiates them into a method of education which can be introduced in some form into any school, and which may become the basis of a curricular revolution which will build a real sense of moral responsibility and inspire students with ethical and esthetic values which are genuinely civilized; which are both cosmopolitan and indigenous; which are, in the final analysis, the values of normal human beings.*
>
> *It is not an intellectual department store. It is universal because its one objective, the study of Praxiology, is universal in nature; its approach to study (surveying and integrating the knowledge and wisdom in all the arts, all the science, and all the philosophies and religions of mankind), is universal in scope; its course of training in how to write and speak is of universal utility. It believes not only that knowledge can be integrated, but that it must be, and that such integration is an essential prerequisite to graduate study – that without such integration, the graduate runs the danger of becoming a highly trained and specialized barbarian instead of a genuinely civilized human being.*
>
> *Its curriculum is organized not in terms of subjects but … in terms of problems – of the basic problems of living – [which] leads to integration: to the examination of all the arts, all the science, all the religions and philosophy of mankind for the purpose of evaluating what each has to offer, in the way of answers to the basic problems with which living like a civilized human being confronts every man and woman, everywhere.*
>
> *It considers that learning how to earn a living without consideration of how to live is not higher – but the lowest kind of – education.*
>
> *It carefully restricts its student body to a small number of men and women who are representatives of different cultures, different nationalities, different religions; who are sufficiently mature, intellectually and emotionally, to seek the root-cause of everything; with whom sheer association will itself constitute a liberal education. Since intimate fellowship in such a small group is unavoidable, right selection of membership is itself a contribution to the education of the entire student body.*

In March1955 Borsodi started the *Journal of Praxiology*, "A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Integration of Knowledge on the Basis of the Major Problems Involved in the Humanization of Human Action."

Land was acquired near Melbourne village and the cornerstone of a new building was laid October 6, 1955. Borsodi fully developed a formal, problem-centered, graduate level, curriculum. The experiment, however, was short-lived. In 1958 Borsodi returned to India for what would be an extended visit. I do not believe he ever returned to Melbourne.

The Education of the Whole Man

Borsodi was invited to India by B. D. Patel, Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth, a rural university some 75 km (47 miles) southeast of Gandhi's ashram located in the Sabarmati suburb of Ahmedabad. Borsodi was invited for a six-weeks lecture and study tour. What Borsodi found there was a learning community developed much as he had envisioned for St. John's. It was then run by a group of Gandhian agrarian educators.

The Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth was founded as a rural university in 1955 (renamed, after the founder, Sardar Patel University in 1968) in the Anand district of the Indian state of Gujarat. Patel was an ardent Gandhian. He established the university in a rural setting for the purpose of supporting Gandhi's vision of a rural, agrarian, village-based economy.

The land was acquired from local farmers who contributed around 500 acres of lands initially. One-tenth of the donated land was returned back to the farmers as a residential plot.

There were 4,000 students and a fine library there at that time. Mildred wrote that Borsodi found that it had "a true decentralist atmosphere." Borsodi could not have found a more appealing place.

Soon after he arrived, Borsodi was asked to describe decentralism, a subject dear to his Gandhian friends, and produced his "Pan-Humanist (Decentralist) Manifesto" in October 1958. The full text can be found at this link[16]. In it he called for a cultural renaissance led by teachers.

That pamphlet resulted in a group being formed to host him for an extended visit for the purpose of developing a problem-centered curriculum to produce the type of teacher-leaders he had proposed. During the next two years he traveled, lectured, researched and wrote his master text on education, *The Education of the Whole Man* (published in 1963).

Community Land Trust

Borsodi returned from India in 1961 and settled at Exeter, New Hampshire. He loved the place. He found it an idyllic community, a Eutopia. It was a quaint New England town. It is home of the Phillip Exeter Academy which gave it a refined intellectual climate without the stuffiness of a university. But he also became a frequent visitor and lecturer at the University of New Hampshire just to the north.

Borsodi made possibly two trips back to India during the mid-1960s. In 1966 he met with J. P. Narayan who had worked with Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's spiritual successor, on a project known as the Gramdan Movement. Bhave pursued Gandhi's vision for a decentralized and self-reliant rural economy. Beginning in 1951, the year before Borsodi first visited India, and for 13 years, Bhave and followers traveled India on foot asking landowners to set aside some of their land for poor families. Within the first three years they had managed to secure over three million acres and by 1955 there were 812 Gramdan

[16] Pan-Humanist Manifesto: https://hgarchives.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/borsodi-a-decentralist-manifesto-1978.pdf

villages. The number peaked at nearly 160,000 a decade later[17]. Borsodi made his extended stay in India during that expansive period and was deeply impressed by the movement.

Narayan had called a meeting in India in February 1966 about forming an international movement, an organization to provide leadership and raise funds, and a trip to the US to raise support. Borsodi shared that vision and wanted to establish an organization in the US.

Borsodi proposed a plan for a "Rural Renaissance" to Narayan for both India and the rest of the world. Borsodi had established his School of Living to pursue a rural renaissance, sometimes stated as a revolution, a Green Revolution – a peaceful revolution along Gandhi's line. Borsodi's plan called for a micro-loan program with funds drawn from private investors and not government sources. He proposed an inflation proof bond secured by a basket of commodities. Collaborator Bob Swann reported that Borsodi and Yale University's Irving Fisher had developed this commodity basket idea during the Great Depression. Much of the "loan" was actually seeds, equipment and other things rather than money. The loan was repaid in kind. Many of the principles Borsodi proposed, wrote Swann, were later incorporated in the Grameen Bank model in India in 1983.



Exeter News

LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IN ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

EXETER, N. H., THURSDAY, NOV. 23, 1967

MY COUNTRY IS THE WORLD MY COUNTRYMEN ALL MANKIND
WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

Officials of the International Independence Institute were photographed Sunday afternoon as suite of offices and classrooms in the Seward Building were given a house warming. Left to right: Henry Bailey Stevens, director emeritus, UNH Extension Service, Institute faculty member; Erick Hansch, Portland, Ore., assistant field director for Latin America; Mrs. Jean Rau, Strafford, treasurer; Ralph Borsodi, Exeter, director; Mrs. Harriet S. Greer, Exeter, secretary, and Prof. Richard S. Dewey, UNH sociology department, Institute faculty member.
(Ben's Foto Shop)

Independence Institute Opens Here

In 1967, Borsodi and friends formed the International Independence Institute (III), headquartered in an office near Borsodi's home in Exeter, New Hampshire, with Borsodi as Executive Director. They organized a conference to support the Gramdan model.

With the founding of the III, Bob Swann became a field director with responsibility of promoting the Gramdan model in the US.

Swann had made connections in the South that would represent a pivotal turn of events for III and the community land trust model. Swann was a homebuilder. He had traveled south to help rebuild burned-out churches and there met Slater King, a cousin of Martin Luther King, Jr., and other activists, both Black and White. An organizing group formed to explore developing a land trust for African American farmers in Georgia.

Several of the group traveled to Israel to study the Jewish National Fund program. Returning from Israel, they organized New Communities which was incorporated in 1969 as "a nonprofit organization to hold land in perpetual trust for permanent use of rural communities." They began to look for land and took an option on 5,735 acres in Lee County, Georgia, paying over $1,000,000[18]. Swann wrote the story of the struggle to secure the funds for this land purchase in his autobiography. He added that, "We, however, developed

[17] As with Borsodi's experiments in the US, these villages reverted to private ownership, declining to some 5,000 by 2009.
[18] Paid off over 15 years by selling agricultural products.

what I believe were the first positive criteria for social investing, and New Communities was the first example."[19]

New Communities was an African American enterprise that provided an agrarian economic cornerstone to the Civil Rights Movement. It was a collaboration of African Americans and whites and drew on an international movement and particularly India and Israel. It put "Community" into Community Land Trust. Borsodi's III laid the foundation for that development. Bob Swann was a creative element and provided leadership. It was clearly a turning point in the development of the land trust model, and this was just the beginning of a powerful evolutionary social movement.

Borsodi, in his eighties, turned management of the III over to Swann, and Swann went on to standardize the Community Land Trust. In 1972, the International Independence Institute produced *The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America* (reprinted in 2007). It was written by Swann, as Director of the International Independence Institute, and staff members Shimon Gottshalk, Dick Hansch and Edward 'Ted' Webster, with editorial assistance from Marjorie Swann.

The Community Land Trust is defined in these terms:

> *A Community Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization with membership open to any resident of the geographical region or bioregion where it is located. The purpose of a CLT is to create a democratic institution to hold land and to retain the use-value of the land for the benefit of the community. The effect of a CLT is to provide affordable access to land for housing, farming, small businesses, and civic projects. This effect can be achieved when a significant portion of the land in an area is held by a CLT . . . .*
>
> *A CLT acquires land by gift or purchase and then develops a land-use plan for the parcel, identifying which lands should remain forever wild and which should support low-impact development. A CLT fosters healthy ecosystems and an appropriate social use of the land. The planners solicit input from residents of the region to determine the best uses of the land—recreational space, wildlife preserve, managed woodlots for a local industry, secure farmlands for the region, affordable housing, or affordable office space. The land trust then leases sites for the purposes agreed upon. The lease runs for ninety-nine years and is inheritable and renewable on the original terms. The leaseholder owns the buildings and any agricultural improvements on the land but not the land itself. Upon resale, leaseholders are restricted to selling their buildings and improvements at current replacement cost, excluding the land's market value from the transfer . . . .*
>
> *The CLT is a democratic institution, with the potential to hold most land in a region. The leasehold method provides both security and equity for leaseholders by encouraging their long-term investment and helping them to establish deep roots in the community.*

In summary, Henry George suggested putting land into public trust in his 1879 *Progress and Poverty*, an internationally bestselling book advocating land reform. Borsodi had championed this idea but he noted that land reform had made very limited progress. The Dayton experiment was a bitter pill for him, and, as a result, he created the private land trust. Borsodi worked tirelessly over the years to promote personal and community independence. His connection with the Gramdan movement in India was a catalyst for taking the next step and it was a major evolution in land reform.

[19] While that land was eventually lost, New Communities continues to operate.

At this writing (2021) it has been 84 years since Borsodi established the Independence Foundation, his innovative model of a land trust, acquired funding and began his first land trust community. It has been 54 years since Borsodi established the International Independence Institute. In a very real sense, Borsodi and friends created a practice to realize Henry George's idea of land going into the public domain. Transition Centre is building on that legacy. Our objective is Resilient Communities. And at the center, we propose a community university.

Part Two: Decentralism

World War II brought Borsodi's homesteading project to a virtual halt. Indeed, it shut down the entire New Agrarian movement. Men and women went into uniforms and factories. Agriculture was industrialized. Victory Gardens would grow 40% of the country's fresh produce. The Templins and Keenes kept the Suffern School of Living homestead and core operations going, and Mildred and John Loomis built their own model homestead in Ohio. Borsodi completed his St. John's plan, developed a peace plan that anticipated the United Nations and wrote a book to address the inflation that typically follows wars. He developed and delivered a series of seminars and served as leader of the decentralist movement.

It is clear that Borsodi began a more concentrated focus on decentralism during the war years. He was a founding editor of *Free America* and the School of Living newsletter was named *The Decentralist*.

Centralized entities are tightly structured, rule-bound, and disaffirm individualism. Ant hills and beehives are highly centralized social organizations; they have no individuals, save perhaps the queens. Since the founding of civilization, both church and state have centralized authority, often absolutely. Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia were persuasive examples of the dehumanization of massive centralization.

Modern society, including governments, religious organizations and even schools at all levels, are centralized and work to produce uniform (factory like) "products." Corporations have highly centralized management, strictly defined corporate cultures, and an iron grip on the global economy. The media (especially today's digital media) is also a centralizing influence.

Decentralism, a revolt against the increasing centralization of government and the economy, has deep roots. It is a debate that unfolded in the US at the very beginning of the American Republic.

The point should be made that what Borsodi called decentralization is not the same as more commonly used today. "Decentralization" is a common organizational practice. Banks decentralize into branches, the postal service to local post offices, retail outlets to malls, etc. But all these little pieces are tightly bound to the hierarchy of the massive entities they represent: There is one CEO and board, the paychecks all come from some central office, and the products are delivered from distant warehouses – in essence, a hive style.

In brief, decentralism, as Borsodi wrote about it, addresses the issue of personal independence verses centralized authority, be it church, state or commerce. It is the foundation philosophy about a lifestyle free of the influences of outside, coercive authority. It is about striving to achieve our highest potential as human beings.

The root of Borsodi's decentralism was his personal practice of individualism. Borsodi was an individualist--a highly self-reliant individual. Borsodi considered individualism an essential quality of being fully human. Without self-determination we cannot live up to our potential. This came out in his idea of "normal" living in *Education and*

Living. Borsodi had a humanistic, you could say, compassionate, attitude towards individualism. In a sense he reflected the ideals of Jefferson, Emerson and Thoreau, Nietzsche and later Abraham Maslow.

The term "decentralism" became ubiquitous in the works of the School of Living and was featured on the banner of its journals. The ideal School of Living homesteading community is decentralized and autonomous. The people who form such a community are individualistic, self-reliant and voluntarily collaborate for the sake of the advantages of these small communities. While these communities would likely engage in regional trade, they would be, as communities once were, largely self-sufficient. This was the way it was before the advent of the industrial revolution, the railroad in particular, following which these self-sufficient communities begin to disappear, particularly in the US, and we became a part of a mass, hive-like, society.

This Ugly Civilization

At Dogwoods, Borsodi began his writing career. He wrote two critical books in the early '20s about the centralization of commerce in the US. These were essentially popular consumer advocacy books. He was a pioneer in the field. His third book, however, was a major shift. It is a radical text, a scathing criticism of centralization, a critique and an indictment of American urban-industrial society. He called it, appropriately, *This Ugly Civilization*. The book was serialized in a national magazine and then published in 1929, just before the start of the Great Depression. It went through several editions. The book was reissued in 2019 on its 90th anniversary with a new introduction by this author.

This Ugly Civilization established the philosophical foundation for what Borsodi would work on for the rest of his life. It addressed three themes:

1. The injustices and overall inhumanity of modern industrial society.
2. His first report on his homesteading experiment.
3. The foundation for an educational program advocating the formation of an alternative, agrarian culture.

As an economist, he understood that the expansive, speculative, economy of the late 1920s was perilous. The timing of *This Ugly Civilization* couldn't have been better. With the Great Depression, Borsodi quickly gained a degree of celebrity.

The Depression began in late 1929 shortly after Herbert Hoover became president. As a conservative he was reluctant to get the government indebted by administrative involvement in solving the problems of the post-WWI economy. He thought it would be over soon. When that didn't happen, he encouraged local communities to form collaborative programs to deal with their unemployment problems. Hundreds of communities around the country begin programs to get displaced families on a plot of ground where they could raise their own food and have a secure home. That happened at Dayton, where Mildred Loomis had been working.

Mildred met Borsodi in 1932. As she was completing a graduate degree in education and theology, she was given a copy of *The Ugly Civilization* by a professor. She found the book "dynamite" and went to Suffern to visit with Borsodi. Following graduation, she returned to Dayton and soon Borsodi was invited there by the local social service group

organizing relief. That story is fully told elsewhere in my *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Green Revolution*. Its conclusion was definitive for Borsodi (and others). The Roosevelt New Deal administration was asked to fund the project and they decided to move in to administer it. They did so with projects across the country. Borsodi didn't think federalization would work, and he was right--it soon failed because, he believed, the homesteaders and city administrators lacked a philosophy, an understanding, of the underlying purpose of homesteading. It wasn't about relief. His program was a lifestyle. It was a personal philosophy – a way of life. And it clearly needed an educational foundation.

A Philosophy

Borsodi considered personal liberty something of a sacred right and he found justification of that in the founding documents of the American Republic. All forms of authority are coercive. You can be fined, imprisoned or executed for violating the norms of a rigid society or the demands of a tyrant. Coercive power also applies to industry and commerce, both increasingly centralized and powerful. In *This Ugly Civilization* he wrote:

Now what has the factory done to the worker, and what is it continuing to do to him?

> *1. It relentlessly mechanizes the workman and reduces all workers, except the few "blessed" with administrative genius, to mere cogs in a gigantic industrial machine.*
> *2. It decreases the number of workers engaged in productive and creative labor by reducing the number of workers required to produce things and by condemning the remaining workers to elaborate methods of flunkeying for one another.*
> *3. It arrays worker against employer, separating capital and labor into two independent and mutually antagonistic interests, and inflicts upon society an unending succession of foolish and often bloody strikes.*
> *4. It makes it almost impossible for individual workmen to be self-sufficient enough to develop their own personalities.*
> *5. It destroys the skilled craftsman to whom work is a means of self-expression as well as a means of livelihood, by offering work only for machine feeders and machine tenders, thus making it more and more difficult for skilled workmen to find employment.*
> *6. It creates workers without initiative and self-reliance and fills the state with citizens who lack a sustained interest in public affairs and good government.*
> *7. It transfers the satisfying of the economic needs of the worker from the home to the factory, robbing the worker, his wife and his children, of their contact with the soil; depriving them of intimacy with growing things--with growing animals, birds, vegetables, trees, flowers; and destroying their capacity for fabricating things for themselves and of entertaining and educating themselves.*
> *8. It condemns not only the natural robot, but those capable of creative effort in the crafts, the arts and the professions, to repetitive work, because it leaves open no field in which they may exercise their talents and earn a livelihood.*

In that book, Borsodi made two responses. One was a report on his highly successful homesteading experiment. The second was education. Education became the focus of his work during and after World War II.

The real problem he found, was that of changing the mindset of the American public to make it receptive to a transformation back to a human-scaled life. The mindset of the ugly civilization is what he called the "quantity mind." The quantity mind is about stuff, about numbers and dollars and cash flow. The economy is about the numbers. Economists are "scientists." It is driven, then and even more so now, by the financial industry, the

source now of nearly 40% of corporate profits. This is profits on the trade of money[20], not of goods and services. It is wealth harvesting, not producing.

The drivers of the commercial world seek, in Borsodi's words, a mass or herd mentality – John and Jane Consumer. We must break free from both the herd mentality and the quantity mentality and develop "quality mindedness," he asserted.

Borsodi was realistic in understanding that not everyone would, could, or wanted to break free. Psychologists, such as Erich Fromm in his *Escape from Freedom*, have documented this phenomenon. Borsodi clearly saw that the tool for liberation from the herd mentality was an alternative education. This is a view he shared with other leading minds of the day. It was shaped by the Populists and Progressives, two movements defined by Jefferson's ideals that a self-governing people must be well-educated and informed and that the farm was still the foundation of American life and values.

Borsodi was seeking a revolution and a renaissance. In his words:

> *Social changes find their genesis in three forces: (1) the forces set in motion by great natural convulsions--changes in climate such as those caused by the movement of the glacial ices--and which are independent of man[21]; (2) the forces set in motion by the efforts of ambitious individuals to sate their appetites for self or power--the forces set in motion by an Alexander, a Caesar, a Napoleon, and to come up to date, by the forces set in motion by the activities of a John D. Rockefeller, an Andrew Carnegie, a J. Pierpont Morgan; (3) the launching of new ideas, as for instance, the forces set in motion among men by the idea that the world is round; by the idea of immortality; by the idea of equality; by the idea of democracy.*
>
> *It is the operation of the second of these forces that explains most of our social, economic, and political history. Quantity-minded men, in their struggles to sate their ambitions, have been able to impose their wishes upon mankind because of their domination of the herd-minded masses and the dependence upon them of the quality- minded individuals.*
>
> *Let the quality-minded individuals free themselves from this dependence upon the quantity-minded and the civilization of the future will be built upon the basis of intelligent ideas of what changes are desirable in society and how it is most desirable to bring the changes about.*

Borsodi sought to identify and describe the quality minds of his age and offered this outline, from the works of Harvard President and progressive educator Charles W. Eliot, of what the quality-drive person should take from his or her education[22]:

> *1. An available body. Not necessarily the muscle of an athlete. Good circulation, digestion, power to sleep, and alert, steady nerves.*
> *2. Power of sustained mental labor.*
> *3. The habit of independent thinking on books, prevailing customs, current events. University training, the opposite of military or industrial.*
> *4. The habit of quiet, unobtrusive, self-regulated conduct, not accepted from others or influenced by the vulgar breath.*
> *5. Reticent, reserved, not many acquaintances, but a few intimate friends. Belonging to no societies perhaps. Carrying in his face the character so plainly to be seen there by the most casual observer, that nobody ever makes to him a dishonorable proposal.*

[20] Money or fictitious financial commodities such as derivatives.
[21] "Changes in climate" today is caused by humans and is having increasingly devastating impact of society and economies.
[22] These are qualities that can be found in the works of Emerson and Thoreau.

This is an insightful statement about the values to which men of superior qualities attach importance. But it is most interesting as a revelation of what Eliot himself considered the "durable satisfactions of life."

In simple terms the difference between the quantity-minded and quality-minded person can be found in these two statements:

The quantity-minded react to how many; how large; how expensive.

The quality-minded react to how fine; how unique; how beautiful.

The quality-mind person, I should add, is by Borsodi's definition a self-sufficient homesteader. Only by freeing ourselves from the domination of the quantity-minded, the economy and society which they command, can we hope to achieve liberation. Emerson called it self-reliance. Abraham Maslow describes such a state as self-actualization.

Homesteaders' Community

Building community is an immensely challenging undertaking. Most "homesteaders" today are, in fact, at least marginally standoffish. Both formal studies and practical experience tells us that many have the attitude of hermits to some extent - "just leave me alone." Very few, however, are remotely self-reliant and are, therefore, highly dependent on the global factory system they, for the large part, despise. Repeated efforts to build communes and communities have had relatively rare instances of great success.

Americans are, by definition, highly individualistic. But that is not the same as Borsodi had in mind. Too often this translates into "isolated and alone." Alienation is a way of life. A scattering of friends, perhaps; a communal association based on profound emotional commitments, rarely. This is not a normal state of being for human beings. We are social animals, tribal by instinct. As Buddha said, life has no meaning without human association. The practice of social distancing coming out of the 2020 Pandemic in many ways reinforces this isolation. It is also producing new tools for remote connectivity. We will have to wait to see how this works out in terms of community, but the prospects are not promising. Community requires personal connection.

Our history before industrialization is one of communities, of Main Streets, of a sense of place and neighbors who cared for each other. True, they had conflicts, but so does any family. It takes deep emotional bonds to make a community work.

The failure of community in America, the result of urban-industrial development, is arguably the greatest crisis of our time. Creating a true community continues to be one of the most challenging issues. Unless and until we achieve a communal and agrarian reengagement, it is unlikely there will be any real prospect of building a better way of life.

Communities are made up of families. Borsodi envisioned homesteading communities of 40 or more families. He saw families as three-generation units. This makes for a "village" of between two and three hundred individuals. That happens to be one of those as yet not well-understood numbers that represent the scale of successful human social organization. It is also the number necessary to provide a division of labor sufficient in scope to assure a high degree of local self-reliance.

Since we no longer have the institutions around which a successful community can be formed, Borsodi proposed a School of Living as the center of the homesteading community. This is not a school in any way like those we see today. In *Education and Living*[23] Borsodi did indeed acidly critique modern education; and we've gone a long way downhill since.

The formal organization of the School of Living marked a turning point in Borsodi's work. As noted, Borsodi outlined a School of Living program in the second edition of *Flight From the City* in 1935. He had, by that time been working with prospective homesteaders for over a decade at Dogwoods. In the "Security Versus Insecurity" chapter of *Flight From the City*, Borsodi made the case for personal and family economic security.

At the nadir of the Great Depression, nearly a third of those normally employed were out of work. They and their families represented over 37 million people affected by unemployment. Those with access to farmland when the Great Depression started had some security. This supported Borsodi's case for personal security on a small piece of land. However, many city dwellers needed training, they needed access to land, but above all they needed a philosophy, and an education in the achievement of the good life.

The purpose of the Borsodi's homesteading program was to help families improve the quality of life, but quality is more than homegrown food and fiber. A "normal" human being requires a quality education not only in basic skills but in critical thinking and access to the world's accumulated store of knowledge. For those of us already "educated," this requires reeducation.

Education and Living

In *Education and Living* (1948) Borsodi elaborated his critique of centralization with a focus on how it has adversely affected public education at all levels. This involves not only schools but "educational" media such as advertising, radio and TV, and social media in general. Most of volume one (of two volumes) consists of an analysis of "mis-education." He advocated decentralization in the form of his School of Living.

Borsodi defined the idea of decentralization in these terms: "Decentralization … is not merely the opposite of Centralization; it is not merely the negation of Centralization. Decentralization is communitarian, cooperative, and provides local autonomy. It is a positive process in the governance of affairs and promotes personal freedom.

Borsodi's decentralization is not a political model at all. It is first and foremost a model for development of human potential and the means to that end is education. We need not a new state but a new state of mind. The second volume of *Education and Living* explains Borsodi's vision of achieving decentralization in detail. The second volume is in two parts: "Right-Education" and "Re-Education." It explains how to educate for the "normal" human being and for achieving the "normal" way of living. This is not the "normal" of the bell curve, the average of a population. This is normal in terms of what a human being is innately capable of being. It is not the "normal" of "the noble savage" but the norm of a person whose capacity for life, whose capacity for action, has been nurtured

[23] Available on-line and for download at (Vol. 1) https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1wQ6T5I3eBVY2RyWjZjcmpKUFk/edit, and (Vol 2) https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1wQ6T5I3eBVd0FabTZUdGR6aGM/edit.

by education and training for life – one who is the product of a School of Living. Volume two provides an insightful description of what and how a person of high individual and social potential can be developed.

Borsodi developed a university program to support his educational system during the 1950s using *Education and Living* as a textbook. During this period, working with a group of dedicated supporters, he developed and refined his problem-centered system. This was clearly an important phase in the progress of his system.

In *The Education of the Whole* Man (1963), Borsodi's master text on his educational model, he outlined what he hoped would be a sequence of volumes, each devoted to one of the major aspects of human life; in short, a detailed outline of the curriculum of The School of Living. *The Education of the Whole* Man was, as I learned exploring his archives, his treatise on the problem of education volume.

Borsodi wrote *The Education* in India, drawing in no small part from the inspiration of Gandhi. Borsodi proposed his curriculum for the preparation of men and women most receptive to uplifting the human race who in turn would become the teachers in their own communities. This was Borsodi's model of leadership: the teacher.

There are four qualities, he said, that distinguish this natural leadership:

1. *They are thoughtful. They have not only learned but seek to penetrate and understand what they have learned.*
2. *They are concerned. They realize this is an age of crisis and personal involvement in addressing the issues of that crisis.*
3. *They are courageous. They are willing to struggle and sacrifice for the cause of human advancement.*
4. *They are dedicated. They are devoted to achieving something of greater than personal scope.*

This book started as a pamphlet Borsodi wrote just after he arrived in India. Following some lectures, Borsodi's Gandhian friends asked him to write a statement about his decentralist views. It came out in a few weeks as his "Pan-humanist (Later Decentralist) Manifesto" (1958). In this pamphlet Borsodi outlined his philosophy of life centered on decentralism, starting with these lines:

> *A new world is being born.*
>
> *If this new world is to be a better world than the one now dying and to make possible a fuller fruition of the human spirit, then it will be very different from the Capitalist world of today, and different from the world which the dictators of Russia and China are providing, and different from the Socialist world into which most of the world is now drifting.*
>
> *Concerned and thoughtful men and women are challenged to arrest the present drift and drive into a mechanized barbarism, and to contribute to the birth of a world in which persons will be free to realize their potentialities as creative beings. Such leaders must have the courage to assert themselves and must discipline themselves to think about all the institutions essential to such a world.*

The pamphlet is in three parts:

1. Humanization and Social Renaissance
2. Political Liberty
3. Economic Justice

It begins and ends with a call for leadership, a leadership not of warriors, kings, priest, politicians, businessmen and financiers, but of "concerned and thoughtful teachers," writers, artist, poets and even men in women in professions who "consecrate themselves to the search and realization of what is true, what is good, what is beautiful" -- in short, the quality minded. Above all else, these gifted people must teach.

How we achieve decentralization is through education, learning, and moral re-education. It is also about how to revive the small community and how the small community is nested within the larger human social system; an ethos Borsodi called "pan-humanism." All human beings, all around the world, he asserted, have the right to a quality life, to a just and secure form of life that is denied them by the predatory practices of established and dysfunctional urban-industrial social institutions.

Borsodi's friends in India then invited him for an extended stay to develop his ideas. They were Gandhians, agrarians, educators and social leaders. *The Education* was written as a university-level curriculum to achieve this objective.

American Agrarianism

Throughout the course of civilization, the vast majority of people lived and worked on the land. It took a long time before the farmer – often a peasant, serf or even slave – became the American ideal. In North America, and particularly the British colonies, far from the centralized authority of church and state in Europe, the freely held small farm became an honorable way of life, at least in the northern colonies, while aristocracy and slavery dominated the southern colonies.

By the time of the Revolution, which was a revolt against encroaching centralized British authority, a free, democratic, agrarian culture was securely in place in the American colonies. With the American Revolution, the farmers became the soldiers, and the English tyrant and his armies were sent packing. Well into the twentieth century the agrarian ideal was the bedrock of American character. Much of Borsodi's personal philosophy came out of this period of American culture. It was during his lifetime, however, that industry finally came to dominate the economy and undermine the agrarian way of life, and the values of life on the land faded into history[24]. There is a background story to this transformation. It starts with Alexander Hamilton.

Alexander Hamilton and American Industrialism

Alexander Hamilton was arguably the founder of American industrialization. He was Adam Smith's apostle Paul to the United States. As the new United States' first Secretary of Treasury, Hamilton was the architect of the American financial system. He was a gallant patriot, scholar, leading lawyer, and public servant. He was born on the Caribbean island of St. Croix in 1757. His birth was illegitimate, but he was raised in a privileged family and received the best education available on the island at the time. He was small in stature but vast in personality, brilliant, driven and a born leader. At age 15 he ably managed the largest store on the island for an absentee owner. Wanting more than the island could offer a man of his ambition he sailed to Boston in 1772 to further his

[24] I saw that happen in the agrarian community where I grew up during the last decade of Borsodi's life.

education. He quickly sided with the rebellion. He made speeches and wrote pamphlets for the colonial cause.

With the outbreak of the American Revolution, at age 19, Hamilton was commissioned an artillery officer. His skill, efficiency and bravery under fire brought him to George Washington's attention and the General asked him to serve as his personal aide and secretary, promoting him to Lt. Colonel. Hamilton was known for his refined manners, as a "finished scholar," his knowledge of French and his ability to resolve difficult problems in Washington's favor. Hamilton fought with Congress over war finance. He came away from this encounter with a poor regard for weak and indecisive government and a growing preference for a strong Federal system. Along the way, he met the daughter of a prominent New York family who became his wife.

Hamilton was already known as the Little Lion and Alexander the Great. His ambitions and the family he married into drew him to New York City where he took the bar exam and settled into a career as both one of the city's leading attorneys and a commanding political activist working to establish the new nation.

When a convention to rewrite the Articles of Confederation was called, Hamilton, age 33, was chosen as one of 55 national delegates. He was widely known as a monarchist. He despised common democracy and the "fickle voice of the people." He believed that, if not a king, a virtual monarch should be elected for life with total veto power over the legislature. His view was unpopular, but his personality and reputation were irresistible. The other two delegates from New York represented the idea of states' rights and a weak central government.

There were two basic ideologies in a contest to define the shape of the new Republic: The advocates of states-rights and the Virginia plan, led by James Madison, for a stronger central government. Hamilton sided with neither party but rather gave a long speech in favor of his idea of a virtual monarch. Most politely disregarded his ideas. Nonetheless, it can be argued that his position helped to weaken the state's-righters, and the Federalists narrowly prevailed. Hamilton affixed his signature to the new US Constitution but proclaimed it a "wretched compromise."

Ratification took two years against strong opposition. While not satisfied with the Constitution he supported its ratification because it would advance his interest in forming a stronger central government. He realized that public ignorance of the issues involved were a principal impediment to acceptance, so he wrote the first of a series of letters in which he brilliantly argued for its passing. Madison and Jay joined him in this series that systematically responded to contrary public and political opinion. Of the 85 papers, Hamilton penned 50. These articles are known today as *The Federalist Papers* and are considered founding documents of the American Republic. In the end he fought a fierce political battle in New York that narrowly won that state to the new government.

Under the new Constitution, George Washington was elected the first President and John Adams Vice-President. Washington asked Hamilton, widely known for his financial acumen, to join his Cabinet as first Secretary of Treasury. There were many able financiers in the country at the time, many, like Hamilton, foreign born[25]. He was not Washington's

[25] Jefferson, too, would select a foreign-born financial genius for his Secretary of Treasury, Albert Gallatin.

first choice. Hamilton accepted despite the severe reduction of income public service represented. He saw it as an opportunity to work his ideas into the new government.

A close student of Adam Smith, Hamilton sought a scientifically based, planned and expansive economy. He was also a member of the nation's moneyed class and a resident in one of its largest states. He sought to turn the Federal government into a centralized instrument for increasing the wealth of the new nation.

The job was not one many would want. The country was deeply in debt, defaulting on loans from countries that had supported the war and from individuals who had invested their personal fortunes to support the cause. The new government had little taxing power. Hamilton had demonstrated a financial genius wresting money from a reluctant Congress that Washington needed to fight the war. He was headstrong and unafraid of opposition. Under Washington's Presidency, he applied himself to the problem of resolving the debt incurred. He took a central role in developing the architecture of the Federal government, the organization of its finances, and the establishment of the nation's commercial financial system.

During his first year as Secretary of Treasury, Hamilton produced five reports on the financial condition of the country. These included two reports on public credit, one on excise as a source of revenue, one on the establishment of a mint and one on the state of manufacturing in the US. He offered to have the Federal government assume the war debt of the states. This gave him considerably more leverage raising money. He established a national mint to provide a supply of cash and to regulate money in the country, and he established the first national bank. His report on manufactures, while largely ignored, was an exercise for his brilliant mind in the strategy of national economic development. He pushed each of these issues through against staggering opposition, overcoming every barrier; each setback seemed only to spur him to new effort.

The national bank was a fiercely contested issue. At the time there were three large state banks, in Boston, Philadelphia and New York (which Hamilton helped establish). Hamilton insisted that a foundation must be laid for the nation's financial transactions. He wanted the US to be able to compete with the European powers. Goods from Europe controlled the US market. The answer was to grow US industry with US capital until the country was economically independent. There was no provision for a central bank in the Constitution. Again, he prevailed. He arranged for the Federal government to have a 25% stake in the national bank.

Hamilton's efforts to create this new, extra-constitutional financial system met with stiff opposition from Jefferson and friends and resulted in a strong partisan division between the Federalists (Hamilton and friends) and Jefferson's anti-Federalists. He was criticized for tightening the bonds between the moneyed class and the government. His excise taxes spurred Shay's rebellion and a virtual civil war. It spurred secessionist sentiments even in the North. At the end of six years as Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton had, however, achieved every objective he had set out to accomplish and retired back to his law practice in New York City. His days however were numbered.

Hamilton made many political enemies, including Aaron Burr. Burr was a native New Yorker, a distinguished patriot and an accomplished politician. Like Hamilton he was

of short stature but had an excellent mind and commanding personality. He only narrowly lost the Presidency to Jefferson, a decision deferred to Congress after a tie vote. In 1804, after an exchange of insults, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel during which he mortally wounded Hamilton who died the following day at age 47.

As an aside, I would like to note that The Bill of Rights came out of the Federalist-Anti-Federalist conflict. This historic document represents the first ten amendments to the US Constitution. They were first introduced into Congress in 1789, just months after the Constitution went into effect, and became law (ratified) in 1791. These provisions, in brief, established the freedom of speech (First Amendment), the private ownership of firearms (Second Amendment), separation of church and state, due process in criminal proceedings, the right to trial by jury, and states' rights. The provisions of the Bill of Rights applied to the Federal government but not necessarily to the states. The right of states to practice slavery was guaranteed until the US Civil War. Over time more amendments were added to the Constitution and the US Supreme Court undertook the long political process to apply the principles of rights uniformly to all US citizens in all of the states[26].

The US Constitution and The Bill of Rights remain the law of the land but over the years have been stretched and interpreted. Our basic mode of civil life has been transformed from agrarian to industrial and is now morphing into a new phase of instantaneous global trade, competition and communications. Its primary purpose, defending the well-being of its citizens has been highly polarized. The borders that defined it have faded under the influence of international trade and trade agreements. Even the New York Stock Exchange is owned by foreign multinational corporations. Multinational corporations, with vast fortunes and armies of lawyers and lobbyists, are major players in legislatures and courtrooms. Major corporate revenues are larger than most countries' economies. In short, the modern world is daunting, and it is increasingly centralized.

Industrialization

Borsodi believed in the principles of individual liberties which he saw as a legacy of early American history. But he considered them to have been distorted by industrialization and commercialization. These changes, he asserted, had made civilization "ugly" and he made his case in some detail. Let's take a quick look at the US industrial evolution.

As noted, modern industrialism started at the time of the founding of the United States. The transition was initially slow. At the time of the American Civil War, the vast majority of Americans lived on small farms. Following the American Civil War (the first industrial war), our industries and cities grew to gigantic size. Railroads and telegraph lines stretched across the continent. In barely a lifetime the vast wilderness known as the American Frontier was settled and the pioneering, agrarian, era drew to a close as the nineteenth century came to its end.

Until the industrial revolution, economies were by default highly localized. Transportation and work were mostly muscle-powered – man and beast. Water mills were

[26] The US Supreme Court decision called Citizens United (2010) is one more battle in the issue of money and power versus a just and equitable social order. The decision permits unlimited funding from rich and powerful corporations and other individuals, and yes corporations are considered to be "individuals," to support campaigns for and against political candidates and issues.

common, but mostly served local needs. Wind did that work at sea. Then came steam power, and from steam, we moved to electricity and internal combustion; from horse and buggy and oil lamps to automobiles, airplanes, electric lights and home appliances, telephones and radios. Life became increasingly more complex and interdependent. Many Civil War veterans lived to see this transformation.

Big industry and great cities were twinborn. Centralization as we know it today is a product of urban industrialization. This trend was anathema to rural farm life. When the American Republic was established, closer to the Jeffersonian and New England ideals, government was limited. With industry (ironically, since it resists regulation), came more government intrusion and oversight. The proponents of economic growth, the Federalists, wanted stronger government for the very purpose of advancing industry. Publicly supported central banks mobilized vast sums of capital and created a national monetary system. Growing cities required huge bureaucracies to keep services going. Industrial distribution networks demanded exacting organization and careful timing. The standard time zones were introduced in 1883 to coordinate transportation across the continent (along with the standard gauge railroad track). Time zones spread around the world to facilitate global commerce the following year. England with its vast merchant marine and navy, became the baseline of the global time system. The Federal government slowly grew, and became more centralized during the First World War and vastly more so during the mid-twentieth century.

The Decentralist Response

The decentralist movement was established early in the 19th century in both the UK and US and steadily grew over the century. The Populist and Progressive movements, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mobilized massive sympathetic support for agrarian values. The Country Life Movement also championed agrarian values. It was a losing battle.

Borsodi became a leading champion of decentralism just as the US New Deal administration launched the most massive program of centralization in the history of the country. But that was only the dress rehearsal for the quantum leap in centralization that occurred during World War II. Bureaucratic authority has steadily grown since, and business corporations have developed into massive bureaucracies. Today, digital technology gives these authorities intrusive and almost instant influence over every aspect of life.

Borsodi's decentralist attitude is clearly seen in *This Ugly Civilization*. It can be seen in his work at Dayton and his formation of the School of Living. I believe his leadership in the movement may have emerged with the start of the journal *Free America*.

In January 1937, Borsodi, with Herbert Agar, Chauncey Stillman and others, founded and edited *Free America*. This journal promoted a strong decentralist agenda advocating rebirth of local, agrarian democracy, splitting up large corporations, promoting homesteading, consumers' and workers' co-ops, and competitive pricing of goods and services. It drew a large following and ran for ten years.

Herbert Agar was a prominent figure in the movement in his own right. He graduated from Columbia University and received a Ph.D. in English from Princeton (1922). He taught English and then went to London as a journalist and press attaché for the American ambassador to Great Britain. In England he was influenced by English distributists Hilaire Belloc, Douglas Jerrold and G. K. Chesterton. He became a critic of plutocracy and an advocate of the distribution of property. In 1935 he published *Land of the Free* which established him as a leading proponent of a "propertied society." He admired the US colonial family farm agrarian culture and believed America could again be "a nation with a majority of small proprietors." *Free America* was the sole journal devoted exclusively to the thesis of decentralization[27]. During the war, with Agar and Stillman serving as officers in the US Navy, *Free America* became increasingly influenced by Borsodi's back-to-the-land thinking.

An American Ideal

Decentralism is uniquely rooted in the American agrarian experience. As we have discussed, these ideals were at the root of the founding of the new Republic and became embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

The early American agrarian culture included several major features. The first was the self-reliant farmer, an ideal Borsodi, Loomis and other homesteaders exemplified. The second was a local, self-sufficient and self-governing community. The third was education. A true democracy can only be achieved in a well-educated, well-informed, society.

The same year that the Declaration of Independence was signed (1776) could also be used as the date for the beginning of the industrial revolution and our capitalist economy. That was the year Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations*. James Watt had recently perfected the steam engine. As Jefferson and others pursued the agrarian ideal, Alexander Hamilton, as noted, began to build the foundation of the American industrial order. During the nineteenth century, industries became massive and so, too, did the financial institutions that capitalized them. Over the course of the twentieth century, government agencies became larger and increasingly regulatory.

The threshold between the older agrarian order and the modern industrial order was reached about a decade before Borsodi was born (1888). America had become a major world industrial power but that was just the start. An agrarian revolt, the Populists, emerged. Henry George had been a leader in this movement. Borsodi's father was an ardent Georgist and Borsodi himself became a Georgist champion, once editing the Georgist *Single Taxer* newsletter and, in 1919, elected chair of the New York Single Tax organization. In short, Borsodi grew up in this movement, and he spent much of his early adult life promoting the back-to-the-land movement. The Great Depression gave his work new focus on education and community. During the war years he continued his homestead and his work on his School of Living model.

To prevent a return to Depression economics, before the end of the war, Roosevelt and Churchill launched a program for post-war economic recovery. A key figure in this program was economist John Maynard Keynes who advocated a strong role for

[27] Allan Carlson assembled a number of *Free America* articles in *Land and Liberty: The Best of Free America* (2019).

governments in economic development. Following the war, and a deep but relatively brief recession, the US economy, building on its war industry, soared. More than ever, the US evolved into a consumer culture. That culture continues to shape American character, many say not for the better.

One of the outcomes of post-war industrialism was the massive multinational corporations. They became a separate reality in their own right, transcending political boarders, domineering national economies and, to the extent they could, politics, in the interest of profit. In 2016, of the 100 largest economies on the planet, 31 were countries and 69 were corporations. Corporations are highly centralized organizations, indeed, at least as centralized as a communist society. They developed a highly structured and tightly integrated global market system.

The Decentralist

In 1943 the School of Living started publishing *The Decentralist*, a small monthly magazine. The banner of *The Decentralist*, the "ORGAN OF THE SCHOOL OF LVING," contained the symbolic tree of life/knowledge that was the icon of the School of Living, and the following credo:

For	**Against**
Sovereignty of Man	Control remote from Man
Ownership by the user	Ownership out of circulation
Husbandry of all resources, and	Exploitation of men and wealth and the
Creative wholeness in living	Artificiality of modern specialized existence

When Mildred first met Borsodi she had socialist leanings, but she came around to the decentralist cause and became just as ardent as he. Her life gave full and practical expression to the ideal.

Mildred's role in the decentralist movement is suggested by the following item from the Winter, 1943 issue of *The Decentralist*:

> ***Bibliography on Decentralization***
>
> *All readers of THE DECENTRALIST will do well to have copies of the excellent annotated booklist, Decentralization – The Reaffirmation of Life, which has been prepared in mimeographed form for the Fellowship of Reconciliation[28] by Mildred Jensen Loomis. These are available for five cents each on request. Mrs. Loomis' booklist is comprehensive and useful. A brief introduction explains the rise of decentralization resulting from the steady development of industrial centralization and its blighting effect upon the family and human life and liberty. The sectional headings of the booklist are Philosophy, Industry, The Cooperatives, Agriculture, Health, Art and Culture, Politics, History, and Magazine and Shorter Articles. Though the list is not intended to be inclusive, a very good beginning has been made. Mrs. Loomis and the Fellowship of Reconciliation are to be congratulated. Mrs. Loomis is a former associate director of the School of Living and a member at present of the Board of Trustees of the School.*

[28] The Fellowship of Reconciliation was an interfaith, pacifist, organization formed in 1916 by leading social activists, in opposition to the World War. The Fellowship agenda is social justice, including overcoming racism and economic injustice through nonviolent means.

The announcement of Mildred's new role as the chief publicist for the School of Living came with the Spring & Summer 1945 issue of *The Decentralist*, which may have been the last. The following notice was printed:

> ***The Interpreter: Decentralist Journal***
>
> *A journal of interest to all who seek freedom by way of decentralist principles and action is The Interpreter, emanating from Lane's End Homestead, Brookville, Ohio, with Mildred Jenson Loomis (Mrs. J. A.) and Ralph Borsodi, editors. The particular function of The Interpreter is to evaluate current events from the point of view of family and personal action as well as voluntary group action, and is a welcome addition to the Decentralist movement. It is issued twice a month ($2.00 a year, or three subscriptions for $5.00) and includes discussions of current affairs related to all the eleven major problems of living as Ralph Borsodi has classified them. It was launched in January of 1945 and is already serving highly interested group leaders in American thought.*

That year Mildred became the School of Living Director of Education, and the headquarters was moved to her homestead in Ohio. While offering a variety of practical programs, *The Interpreter* became the major focus of her work for some years to come.

Years later, towards the end of her life, Mildred published a book on decentralism: *Decentralism: Where It Came From – Where Is It Going?* (1980). It was revised and republished as *Alternative Americas* in 1982. In this book Mildred gave a short history of decentralism but focused on where the School of Living was taking the idea. There is some insightful history about the School of Living and its role in the decentralist movement of the day in this book. This was written just as the Counterculture, a movement Mildred was named grandmother of, was ebbing. It was the dawn of the Reagan era and the globalization of the American economy – a massive new stage of economic centralization.

The Interpreter

The Interpreter started life as an 8 ½ by 11, four-page (one folded sheet), bi-weekly, professionally printed issue. While Borsodi was technically co-editor, the work was done at Lane's end. Mildred put considerable time into writing, soliciting articles, editing, organizing, and mailing (postage, bulk rate was a one cent stamp). There were 700 subscribers.

The banner of *The Interpreter* carried this theme: "A Semi-Monthly Comment on Current Events for People Concerned with the Achievement of Normal Living Through Education and Decentralization."

Each issue also included a Credo:

> *The Interpreter believes that careful study and scientific experimentation discloses a pattern of living normal for human beings and for society as a whole.*
>
> *It believes that the individual is a fractional organism who can only complete himself in the family, and that country life and local community life are essential to normal family life.*
>
> *It believes that human beings can solve their own problems and must be educated to take the initiative in doing so.*
>
> *It believes that human personality grows through choice and responsibility, and that therefore voluntary personal action and group action must replace government and compulsory action in all but the barest minimum of situations.*

The Interpreter was the official voice of the School of Living for thirteen years. It appears that about 250 issues were published. This was only the beginning of Mildred's School of Living publishing career; three other periodicals followed it in sequence: *Balanced Living, A Way Out* and finally, from January 1963 to the end of her life (and continued to December 2018 when discontinued) the *Green Revolution*.

From the beginning, in 1945, *The Interpreter* was organized around the major problems-of-living framework. Mildred started with nine major problem topics: Possessional, Civic, Ethical, Occupational, Ontological, Psycho-physical, Epistemological, Operational and Educational, and finally thirteen when *Education and Living* was published 1948. Mildred organized articles according to the problem they addressed. It is clear that she was well informed in the development of the model and already a principal promoter.

The Interpreter not only replaced *The Decentralist*, but also took over from the other decentralist journal, *Free America*. Mildred called *Free America* a "champion decentralist" journal. It had an office and staff in New York City and a mailing list of about 3,000 names, an audience far larger than the School of Living. It ran for ten years until mid-1947 but by then it could no longer pay its way and closed.

The end of *Free America* shifted the burden of leadership of the American decentralist movement to *The Interpreter*, that is to say, to Mildred. She reported that *The Interpreter, Free America's* "little sister," received its mailing list and, in essence, replaced it as a voice for decentralism.

Mildred's reports on the decentralist movement are insightful. In 1947, for example, she wrote that Rodale's Organic Gardening circulation had reached 65,000 subscribers (of whom my own mother was one). Rodale had consulted with Borsodi and spent time in the School of Living library before starting his (still flourishing) organic gardening organization. Mildred also wrote about annual decentralist conferences which she was apparently organizing. Decentralism, problem-centered education and normal living were always foremost.

Borsodi's *Inflation is Coming* also received much attention. Since the end of the war several editions (between 400,000 and 500,000 copies) had sold. Inflation had soared following World War I and, as Borsodi predicted, again after World War II. There was a series of economic recessions, about every four years, following World War II. Mildred reported that Borsodi was promoting an alternative, inflation-proof, currency (a topic they would bring to fruition in the 1970s, another period of rollercoaster economy, when inflation was again serious in the US). Money and inflation were part of the discussion of the Possessional problem.

The Interpreter employed, in issue after issue, a decentralist critique of "abnormal" thought leaders, be it the works of important economists, the stranglehold of government regulation on all aspects of life and liberty, and perhaps particularly, the educational system. There were also many items about homesteading. She encouraged readers to contact other decentralists and homesteaders across the country (often listing addresses) who appeared in *The Interpreter*.

Mildred frequently published letters and short articles from readers. In January 1951, for example, she published an item sent to her that had originally been published in *Rural India*, an India quarterly with Gandhian roots:

> *The present "ugly civilization" that is the product of the factory-dominated, wealth-accumulating and government-regulated way of living has set men thinking all over the world.*
>
> *Education and Living is the reflection of Mr. Borsodi after years of study and experimentation, the central theme of which is the "scientific validity of decentralization."*
>
> *If his reflections are pondered over by every teacher the coming generation would emerge with a mind more principled, yet more flexible; both more idealistic and more realistic."*

Borsodi in a Nutshell

I have been trying to present Borsodi in, as they say, a nutshell. I've described the shell, but I'm not sure I've yet got the nut. The question remains, just what was Borsodi's personal philosophy? Borsodi was a very private man. Little is known of his personal life and his deeper thoughts. He didn't, as far as I know, keep a journal. His letters are businesslike. He rarely expressed his private thoughts. His written legacy is programmatic, not philosophical. Mildred, his closest associate for over 40 years, probed this question in her biography of Borsodi. She listed authors who she knew influenced him, some from the distant past, others from the founding of the American Republic, many related to educational and economic innovation. She described his works and writings, but she was never able to articulate his personal philosophy; however, it is clear that decentralism was the foundation.

I think the root of Borsodi's philosophy is a principle even deeper than decentralism: Individualism. It is clear to me that he was a radical individualist. He was independent from the age of 15, living in his own apartment and earning a living. He shunned school and preferred the library for his education. He read voraciously and surrounded himself with books. His pioneering homesteading was not only the back-to-the-land hallmark of self-reliance that inspired many, but also a declaration of his own independence. He clearly exhibited the qualities that Emerson called "self-reliance" and that the celebrated humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow (who was a personal friend) called "the self-actualized personality. "He was, however, not withdrawn; he was a humanist and an organizer and a leader. He devoted a long and productive life to projects that had the singular intention of liberating individuals and building a livable society.

Is anarchy part of this model? The short answer is no. If anarchy means disorder and protest against established political regimes, that was not a part of Borsodi's vision. Anarchy as a political-economic theory has a historical association with violence. The objective of such revolutionary anarchy tends to be a socialist, centralized, state. Today anarchy is associated with survivalists, preppers, doomsters, and the like, and their interests turn to guns and talk of violence and definitely anti-communitarian. That is definitely not a part of Borsodi's vision. He was communitarian to the core and, as we shall see, a man of peace. In his view, the good life comes through voluntary collaboration among psychologically healthy people.

The Individual and The School

The other core aspect of Borsodi's work is a distinctive style of education. Borsodi, as noted, was self-educated. Although he was awarded Masters' and Doctorate degrees and founded a university, there is no evidence that he ever attended college, and there is some doubt he even graduated from high school. Those who met him, including renowned scholars, remarked on the breadth of his knowledge and understanding of literature. His writings clearly illustrate a well informed and retentive mind.

The reason Borsodi did not leave a statement of his personal philosophy is perhaps that it would be essentially counter to his idea of individual self-determination. He did not want to become a "guru." He didn't seek disciples. He sought not to just inform others but to motivate them to ask the questions, to read, to dialog, and to form their own individual views of life. He sought to motivate them to a life dedicated to self-reliance, self-sufficiency, an unassailable self-esteem, and service to the uplifting of humanity. This was to be accomplished through a systematic seminar program of re-education.

His problem-centered, adult self-education, is about removing dependencies in life. It is not an academic or scholarly pursuit per se. It is about learning how to live well. While he had a powerful intellect, his interest was always focused on the practical problems of living.

I find Borsodi's School of Living model very carefully thought out. As I probe into the depths of the thinking it was built on, I find there is far more to it than meets the eye. I believe his decentralism involves two ideas: The first, as mentioned, is the individual, who is the product of the second element, the "school." Both are stories about the human essence. Let's go a bit deeper into the idea of the individual first.

The individual

Decentralism is about the institutions that govern society. It probes the question of how little governance, which translates into coercion, is necessary to maintain a stable social order. Norms, or rules, define the structure and function of a society or of an organization. The question is, how much structure do we need? If we do not wish to have rules and coercion, we need an alternative framework to make community work. For centralized organizations, the rule is imposed from without. For a dogmatic religion[29], the rigidity of a monastery or seminary is necessary to shape the norms of congregations. If we are not self-reliant, we get controlled. For a truly free society, it is a different matter. For the "Normal" human being, social order must come from within.

Our individual uniqueness is inescapably inherent in our DNA and in our personal consciousness. The biological feature that defines us is a highly evolved brain with a complex cerebral cortex. What defines us behaviorally is that we are intensely self-conscious, and we have an extraordinary capacity for language that allows us to think as no other species we know of can do[30]. Language allows us to imagine vividly. We are each essentially unique. Indeed, we are virtually non-additive. Until recent times, however, we have always had a sense of community. I have argued that our struggle with

[29] The word "religion" is derived from the root "religio," or rule.
[30] We also have extraordinarily dexterous hands and eye-hand coordination.

individuality is a product of the breakdown of community. That is difficult for most people, but is an opportunity for others. True individualism requires discipline, self-esteem and determination. These are decentralist principles.

Individualism as we know it, found in a democratic society, is a very modern expression of behavior. It took a long time to develop this ideal. The European Renaissance and Enlightenment laid the groundwork. The fruition of the idea came to modern form for the first time with the creation of the American Republic. The early American Republic had a system of laws that guaranteed individual liberty to an unprecedented degree. We have developed a large literature and practices for self-development, but it is a constant struggle to maintain personal liberty.

Even in a democratic society we have created levels of government from town to county to state to national, each defining the political context of increasingly larger groups of people. Each level is defined by the authority of the larger governmental entities (counties, states, national), for example, local ordinances must be in compliance with state and national law. Government administrative structures, rule-bound bureaucracies, have become larger, more complex and less flexible. Industrialization created a higher level of standardization. Our culture has been "homogenized."

During wars, and during the Great Depression, national governments took control, and massive government has since become the norm. There are those who believe that the solution to the world's problems is to form a world government, representing even more massive centralization and complexity, to subordinate national governments. Massive corporations control the economy and digital technology culture, and the schools standardize the formation of young adults. The young around the world are, through schools and the digital media, becoming more identified by age cohort than by place of birth. They are shaped by the media, by advertising, by fad and fashion. Developing countries, as Borsodi warned, are becoming economically and culturally standardized.

In short, as centralization continues, we become increasingly more dependent and thus less individual -- more hive-like. The decentralist manifesto holds that the health of society, indeed its survival, depends on individuals and the individual pursuit of truth, understanding and creativity.

The Dark Side of Individualism

Individualism has a light and dark side, several dimensions of this, in fact. Some of these traits are perhaps genetic, but many are learned. On the dark side, individualism can be expressed as egoism, self-centeredness, selfishness, hedonism, and narcissism. There are sociopaths and psychopaths. And there are those born with autism who lack, in varying degrees, a capacity for emotional or empathetic attachment. There are a variety of mental illnesses, including depression, neurosis and psychosis, that affect social functionality. And there are addictive behaviors.

Modern science has cast doubt on our capacity for individualism. In psychology, Freud proposed that there is a deeper and darker layer in the psyche that dominates personality. Behaviorism does not accept the idea of a thinking and self-determined mind. Darwinism, and more modern forms such as social biology, interpret human behavior in

terms of raw animal instincts. Not all cultures or political systems accept individualism. Some sociologists, historians and philosophers have voiced disdain for individualism and/or democracy. Marx, for example, placed historical determinism over individuality. Spengler predicted a dark future of society reverting to a feudal form of rulers and virtual slaves. Nietzsche and Carlyle had no use for democracy – they championed aristocracy. Alexander Hamilton favored a plutocratic aristocracy for the new American Republic. Periods of severe social instability tend to turn people towards authoritarian figures (we are seeing that today in the US and elsewhere). Erich Fromm, in his *Escape From Freedom*, made a psychological study of how people flee the responsibility of individualism. Eric Hoffer also wrote of the role of the loss of individuality, of meaning and purpose in life, as the root of mass movements, in his classical *The True Believer*.

The dark side of human nature is not really a new story: it is found in the ancient religions and it is given graphic expression in Manicheism, Zoroastrianism and the Hindu sagas – the struggle between light and dark, good and evil. Christianity gave us Satan and his demonic horde. Christianity considers "man" as a fallen creature, most of us doomed to eternal damnation. In a sense, it seems science and religion can be in agreement about a baser quality of human nature.

The Bright Side of Individualism

Humanistic psychology, on the other hand, has given us a literature and practice for developing the healthy personality. From Emerson to Maslow, we have a thoughtful literature about self-reliance and self-actualization. There is something here that speaks to an essential quality of our humanity. But it is a quiet, small voice that is easily lost in the clamor of modern life.

We are also a social species, indeed one of a very small class with a highly evolved instinct for society, a class of only 19 species, out of millions, which E.O. Wilson classified as eusocial. Such species are instinctively unselfish towards their own kind, or at least kin. We are the only higher form of life in that group, and we are the only species that can choose to be otherwise.

Our social instinct is profoundly reinforced by our distinctive capacity for language. Language gives us the capacity for self-awareness and unprecedented powers of communication, but language is a social phenomenon. Individually and collectively, we have an extraordinary capacity for learning, for defining and solving problems, and for passing on what is learned from generation to generation. We thus have the unique capacity for a rapidly evolving synthetic society. The flip side, however, is that, as we detach ourselves from the natural world of which we are a part, we lose something essential in our being. Borsodi, in going back to the land and advocating for healthy families and healthy communities, sought to reestablish that connection with the natural world. We also have a unique capacity for self-deception. As the Red Queen told Alice, "Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

There is a paradox in the two sides of our nature: a profoundly social species that is individualistic to the ultimate extreme. That paradox has troubled us throughout human history. But this is a yin-yang symbiosis that has slowly evolved our society to modern form. It took thousands of years of cultural evolution to make us who and what we are

today. Emerson, Thoreau, Nietzsche, Jefferson and Paine, Franklin, George, Gandhi, Maslow, Borsodi and a host of others worked diligently to promote, and increasingly to preserve, individuality as a birthright. But we have just begun (at least I hope it has begun) to transform ourselves into a more humane state of existence. To do so requires education. The nature and content of education has attracted many generations of thoughtful individuals. Borsodi devoted much of his life to it with a distinctive perspective.

Healthy individualism is harder to explain than pathological behavior, but it seems to be associated with a commitment to larger ideas, which is to say a morality. These include justice and fairness. This rational moral imperative distinguishes the healthy from the unhealthy individual. It appears to be essentially a cultured behavior.

Is Individualism Cause or Effect?

The movement towards individualism is a delicate balance. We need to better understand the forces behind this process. I think the most important question we need to ask is whether individualism, as we know it today, is a product of the evolution of society towards democracy; or is it a product of the breakdown of normative order? To put it another way, did the Enlightenment, for example, which opposed the authority of church and state, facilitate the decline of the old order, or was it the product of that decline?

Individualism first appeared during a period that historian Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age, more or less 2,500 years ago. The concept of the individual appeared seemingly spontaneously across the then known world from Europe to Asia. A new literature emerged with the Greeks in the west, to the Hebrews, Zoroastrianism, the Hindu Vedas, Buddhism, Lao Tzu and Confucius as we move across the east. These philosophies and religions defined much of what we think today. Each sprung out of a time of trouble, during a breakdown of their respective societies. That they all occurred over the course of a few centuries is intriguing[31].

I will argue that the decline of the European Medieval order made individualism an imperative. It started more or less with the formation of the Renaissance. Individualism as we know it today is a new state of consciousness and, as indicated in the evolution of human society, one that is not in accord with our preferred state of being which is intensely communal. Freedom, and the responsibility that goes with it, the consequence of self-choice, can be frightening. Relatively few readily embrace it. We are steadied in our growth when guided by those who have made progress in this direction; that is, through the agency of teachers and mentors.

While the Enlightenment, which defined much of modern individualism, may have challenged their authority, church and state were in fact already in rapid and irreversible decline. Leadership, both sacred and secular, was failing and continues to do so. The type of community that defined the tribe and village, from ancient times through the Middle Ages, was disappearing. Early twentieth century sociologists, humanists and agrarians lamented the loss of communal values in Europe and the US. The existentialists following World War II expressed despair. Established communities, from rural towns to urban neighborhoods, went into dramatic accelerated decline toward the end of the third quarter

[31] There appears to have been a significant climatic event prior to the Axial Age.

of the twentieth century. Postmodernism, the philosophical movement of the late twentieth century, echoed this sense of despair and nihilism. This trend is continuing into the 21st century. It has left us increasingly adrift and disillusioned.

Personal freedom can be a terrible burden. Individualists are required to choose their actions and embrace the consequences for themselves. They live on the edge of the law, so to speak, always on shaky ground. Social capital, which comes out of our instinct for cooperation and interdependence, is rapidly declining. It increases our sense of isolation and urge to adapt. People feel increasingly powerless in an era that is becoming progressively complex and chaotic[32] and the institutions our forebears relied on have clearly failed. This is overwhelmingly true of government and of religion. Many, indeed, now turn in desperation to individualistic "designer" forms of exotic spirituality, and even Christians have increasingly chosen to be unchurched and craft a religion of their own, describing themselves as "spiritual beings" rather than "religious persons."

It is clear that the defining feeling of the age is alienation, or anomie, a term that means "without norms," or more precisely, a condition of society that provides little moral guidance for individuals. Over a century ago, Durkheim coined that term in his classic study of suicide. He attributed it to industrialization. People in modern society, he concluded, kill themselves out of despair that is due to the loss of a sense of belonging[33] that had eroded in the industrial age. It is ironic that an age that gives people longer lives encourages more to end theirs prematurely.

Eric Hoffer, in his *The True Believer*, wrote of a disturbing social consequence of alienation. His concern was with the effect of massive social dislocation channeled into mass movements, particularly under Hitler, Stalin and other twentieth century tyrants. In many cases people who had lost hope turned not away from but toward strong leadership – to centralized, tyrannical movements. They gave up their individuality for a hive-like existence. In this twenty-first century we see this fanaticism in global terrorism, and we have seen it emerge in increasingly polarized politics at home.

Modern industry works to artificially fill the void it created in our souls. Factories spew out shiploads of stuff that advertising claims will make our lives easier, sexier, and make us admired by others. Social media, in reality an advertising media, is all about "look at me." Mass market hedonism and narcissism, however, far from liberating us, actually threatens to enslave us. Digital and social media replaced face-to-face meetings with tiny, cold screens. The 2020 Crisis has taken social distancing to a new level.

We live in the information age. Access to knowledge is virtually instantaneous making us potentially the best-informed people in history. But the media is the message, and the digital media represents an overwhelming flow of stimulus, much of which is fantasy. There is little time to assimilate, little time to think, not enough attention devoted to the world beyond the screen. Our attention span has been reduced to seconds. But this too has become a comforting escape from reality. We are losing cultural cohesion. We have become culturally illiterate, and, as a result, we are losing a sense of innate meaning in life.

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[32] There is a profound difference between "freedom" and independence.

[33] There are those who believe the high level of suicide among veterans may be as much or more the result of the loss of comradery and solidarity of fellow soldiers than the trauma of prolonged lethal encounter with an enemy.

The quick fix, hedonism, narcissism, social media "look at me," and anarchy are not expressions of nor the means to achieve individualism but, as described by Fromm in his book by this title, an "escape from freedom."

A Path to Liberation?

Borsodi cataloged all of these ills. He did so, as was his manner, to clearly define the problems before us, and then he worked diligently to provide a framework for solving those problems and restoring quality living. He created his School of Living to provide the organization and framework for preparing people to make the transition in their lives to become more self-reliant, better family builders and community leaders. The need to raise the bar on the problems of man and society have become increasingly apparent over the years since -- and particularly since 2020, with the pandemic, increasing political polarization, resource depletion and the dire predictions from climate scientists.

Borsodi developed a formal statement of decentralist economic theory in his *Prosperity and Security* (1938). It was a model for the productive family homestead, and it laid the groundwork for his writings about normal living in *Education and Living*.

Borsodi did not believe there were "social" problems. He believed all problems were personal, that they had to be solved by individual effort. Only an individual can respond imaginatively and creatively. By doing so, we take responsibility for our lives. We end the cycle of confusion, of despair, and of conflict that defines life today.

The Problems of Life

In *Education and Living*, Borsodi first published his problem-centered educational framework. There were thirteen problems of living at that time. The story is that he started this process by making notes on 4 x 5-inch note cards of the problems people brought to him, and by jotting down the problems he found in his reading. Those cards were specific about the time and date, person and statement of the problem. At around 1,000 he began to sort them. At first, he tried to match them with the barriers he wrote about in *This Ugly Civilization*. Over time, in what he later described as a challenging process, he began to realize that he needed a new way to organize his system. He decided that it was about the problem. At first, there were eight, then eleven, and then thirteen problems (later fourteen and finally seventeen). There are many topics, many subjects, related to each problem. He created a taxonomy. He reorganized his library to address the problem rather than by subjects as found in the Dewey system and academic curricula.

As reported above, in 1940 Borsodi made the following statement about the development of his work at a conference presentation:

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is the supreme value, the School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind."*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, the School of Living aims to assist adults in becoming aware of and the defining of <u>the major problems of living</u> common to all people.*

By 1944, during the last years of the war, perhaps earlier, Borsodi began offering a comprehensive program of weekend and summer seminars at the Suffern School of Living,

"Seminars on the principles of Normal Living," which were well attended. They were two categories: Seminars on the Thirteen Major Problems of Living and Seminars on the Implementation of Normal Living.

The first group included:

I and II – Definition of "Normal Living." The Normal Individual; the Normal Family; the Normal Community. Methods of establishing Norms of Living.

III – The Thirteen Major Problems of Living. The Major Aspects of Action; the Problems they create for the Individual; Ideas and Ideologies for dealing with them.

IV and V – The Psycho-Physiological Problem and Ideologies for dealing with it. The three psycho-physiological functions: Death, Birth, Living. Organization: Regimen and Therapy.

VI and VII – Occupational Problems and Ideologies. The functional aspect: spending time. The organization of time: Production; Recreation; Recuperation; (Work, Play, Rest).

VIII and IX – Possessional Problems and Ideologies. The functions of property: Poverty, Security, Liberty. The organization of ownership and trusteeship.

X – Associational Problems and Ideologies. The functions and organization of individual-to-individual relationships.

XI – Group Problems and Ideologies. Functions and organizations of individual-to-group and group-to-group relationships.

XIII – Ethical Problems and Ideologies. The problem of the consequences of action; the organization of law and manners.

VIV – Esthetic Problems and Ideologies. The function of the feeling for beauty and ugliness; the organization of skill and good taste.

XV and XVI – Educational Problems and Ideologies. Functions and organization of right education. Instinct vs. education; adult vs. juvenile education; the four fields and methods of education.

XVII – Operational Problems and Ideologies. The planning of living; the eight elements in the organization of projects and enterprises essential to normal living.

XVIII – Ontological Problems and Ideologies. The functions and organization of man's freedom and his power over nature.

XIX – Epistemological Problems and Ideologies. Truth vs. reality; the validation of action.

XX – Teleological Problems and Ideologies. What is the end or purpose to which life should be devoted?

The second group of seminars focused on application:

I – Definition of Implementation and Normalization

II – Jurisdictional Problems: 1. Personal Action; 2. Group Action (Centralization); 3. De-Institutionalization (Decentralization)

III and IV – Property: Access and Passion:

1. Land – Purchase or Renting; Organizing Homestead Associations; the Normalization of Land Tenure.
2. Buildings, Equipment and Other Forms of Capital – Private, Corporate, Cooperative, Government Ownership.

3. Credit – The Commercial Bank; the Credit Union; the Normalization of Banking and Credit.
4. Money – The three alternatives: Labor, Debt and Commodity Money; the Normalization of Money.
5. Public Services and Utilities – the Normalization of Special Privilege and Monopoly.

VIII to X – Occupation and Production:

1. Domestic Production vs. the Production of Monetary Income
2. The Production of Food, Clothing and other Necessaries of the Good Life
3. Recreation: Participation vs. spectator
4. Provision for Recuperation

XI and XII – Psychological and Physiological Health

1. Regimen and the Maintenance of Health
2. Therapy: Restoration of Health

XIII – Personal Association: Mores and Manners and the Normalization of Individual Rights and Duties.

XIV – Group Association: Organization and Normalization of Group Rivalry.

XV – Civic Association: Legal Coercion and its place in Normal Living.

XVI to XIX – Education.

1. The Normalization of Adult Education; the University and School of Living.
2. The Normalization of Juvenile Education: The Home; the Common School; the High School; Vocational Education; College
3. The Normalization of the Curriculum; the Education of the Perceptions, the Emotions, the Intelligence, the Will
4. The Normalization of Method; Opportunity, Example, Precept, Command

XX – Operating and Planning: The Normalization of Organization and Leadership.

These seminars where later taken across the country. They provided the cornerstone of his system first formally expressed in *Education and Living*.

Education and Living

Education and Living (1948) was published in two volumes. Some of the key ideas of the first volume are the following topics.

Normal Living

The bulk of *Education and Living* is about what Borsodi defined as "normal" living. The objective of the School of Living program is achieving a "normal" life. Normal, it must be stressed, is not the average, the ordinary; it is the optimum, the Good Life. We may interpret it in terms of the healthy, self-actualized personality as defined by Abraham Maslow some years later. There are three levels of normality: the individual, the family and the community. Borsodi described each of these in detail in *Education and Living*.

Normal living is, in fact, the way human beings would live if they had not been conditioned by education, by mis-education. A "normal" plant or animal is optimal, healthy, thriving. An ordinary human being, conditioned by society, is not. Almost everything about our urban-industrial culture is abnormal. The only way to achieve the normal life is through re-education.

Education and Living was, in my opinion, a master work, into which Borsodi poured his many years of experience and research. It came at an important juncture of his career. Over the course of nearly 30 years he had established a homestead, taken leadership in community and economic development, incorporated the School of Living, created a land trust corporation, established two homesteading communities and inspired others to form, developed his original and authoritative problem-centered framework, established a comprehensive curriculum and research library, developed a number of practical homesteading "divisions," prepared a plan for St. John's College to become a self-sufficient community, proposed a peace plan that anticipated the (albeit more decentralized) United Nations, edited *Free America* and served as a leader of the American decentralist movement, collaborated with Aldous Huxley drafting a book about decentralism (which inspired a later book by Huxley), wrote seven books and coauthored an eighth, and produced numerous other small publications.

The thirteen universal problems of living in *Education and Living*, expressed as questions, were:

1. Purpose: What is the purpose, my vision, in life?
2. Validation: How do I know what is true?
3. Nature: What is the nature of nature and of human nature?
4. Association: How do I associate with other human beings?
5. Gregational: How do I associate with groups and how do groups associate with each other?
6. Operational: How do we organize collective enterprises?
7. Political: When and how should legal coercion (law) be used in a good society?
8. Education: How do we organize educational activities to improve human wellbeing?
9. Ethics: What makes an act right or wrong?
10. Esthetics: What makes an object beautiful or ugly?
11. Occupation: How should a person spend the whole of his/her time?
12. Possessions: How should land, money, and goods be owned or possessed in order that each person can achieve optimum living?
13. Health: How can I achieve maximum energy (health), both physically and mental, through a long lifetime?

Of great importance, it should be understood that the problems of living are not separate, isolated issues. They belong to a whole, universal, system. They are like, and were later represented as, the spokes of a wheel joined at the center. We may address each problem in turn, but at the same time we must also ask how they relate to each other.

The central idea of the School was not "instruction in country living and in folk arts and handicrafts; nor the development of a better method of dealing with unemployment; nor the solution of the housing problem," wrote Borsodi. "*It was the scientific validity of decentralization* – of the truth of the conviction slowly burned into my consciousness … that the progress and centralization for which modern industrial man has been taught he should live, was based upon a tragic error – a tragic misunderstanding of the true meaning of science – and that a whole new program of education has to be developed which would

substitute for the prevailing mistaken objective in living, an end or aim which was right, proper and, as I have come to think of it, normal."

The system is not merely a method for solving problems. It is a teaching tool that develops the capacity for living a good life. Underlying this method is not only dealing with issues but also developing that quality mindedness Borsodi wrote about in *This Ugly Civilization*. It is a program for seeking the essence of what it means to live as a human being.

Education and Living is a decentralist manifesto. I should reiterate that at this period of Borsodi's life he was the leader of a movement that opposed the centralization of industry, government, education and other social institutions. Centralization of the US government and the economy had greatly accelerated during the Great Depression and World War II. Borsodi wrote that *Education and Living* "is nothing less than an effort to explain not only modern man's failure to achieve the good life … but also to outline the manner in which he might learn how to live like a normal human being." The book can be considered prescriptive as well as descriptive.

Core Ideas

The major theme of *Education and Living* was the question: "What is the goal of education and what is the role of the teacher?" Borsodi left no doubt as to the answer. He wrote, "education is to guide people in how to live well." To achieve this, he insisted that "the true role of the teacher is to seek and teach the truth – to guide old and young in the art of living intelligently, healthfully and tastefully, and in the art of organizing all social, political and economic institutions so that it is possible for all people to live that way."[34] He added: "Education must help determine and shape culture."

As noted, the roots of Borsodi's educational philosophy are in his own personal sense of independence and his self-education.

One of the key elements of Borsodi's critique was specialization. We should understand that specialization is a rather recent historic trend, a product of the acceleration of the expansion of knowledge. With the twentieth century, specialization proliferated. Education became increasingly centralized, standardized, and regulated. It produced a uniform curriculum.

Before the modern age, education was the foundation for preparing individuals for life in society. Since the Middle Ages learning was founded on the seven liberal arts. Education consisted largely of the "classics," often in the original languages (Greek and Latin, and Hebrew for students of theology), and a familiarity with literature. Those "well-bred people," people of good taste, that is educated people, were expected to be conversant about great ideas. This gave them a common language and a common understanding of the human condition.

Borsodi understood the benefit of specialization. He considered himself a specialist first in economics and then in education. But he knew that the loss of a broad, humanistic, education, a holistic understanding of the human condition, deprived us of our essential humanity. He was by no means alone in this criticism.

[34] I can think of no better mission statement for the School of Living.

By working through the major problems of living, by consulting the accumulated wisdom of humankind, by becoming informed and thoughtful, by seeing the big picture and the long view, we can achieve a capacity to comprehend and take appropriate and effective action.

Education and Living Second Volume

The second volume of *Education and Living* is chiefly devoted to defining "normal" living. Again, by normal he didn't mean average; he meant optimal. That was achieved by a new form of education, Right-Education. Right education has the objective of the "Humanization of Man." Implementation of right education means the achievement of goals and Borsodi went to considerable length to define them. The major topics of this book are as follows.

Right Education

Mis-education, again, is "any process of education which produces human beings who behave in an abnormal, animal-like manner." Mis-education is about ideas "which cannot be rationally validated." Modern man is conditioned to behave abnormally. We are brought up, in the home, school and even colleges, to conform, not to think and choose. As traditions fade, the mass media increasingly shapes what we think we know. We buy into fad and fashion. Industry defines the scope of our behavior.

"Right-education is that education which results in the acquisition by human beings of characteristics which lead them to act individually and as members of groups, like normal [optimal] human beings." It is about personal choice, rational and reflectively chosen and implemented in pursuit of the good life. It includes an understanding that the prevailing forms of education and mass-media indoctrination, are mis-education.

The Ideology of Normal Living

Borsodi provides further, and extensive clarification of his concept of normal living. "Normal" is about standards for how human beings should live. It starts not with society but with the individual. It asks what is a human being? We are born male and female. We pass through a sequence of developmental stages. Family and community require thoughtful definition. The scale of community is important, and small is considered to be better.

As with all animal species we must address the issues of survival and reproduction. Humans possess several other instincts. Perhaps the most important is that the Law of Living for human beings calls for expression: For the normal individual self-expression involves the cultivation and utilization of his entire personality, integrally and harmoniously, to realize his utmost human potentialities[35] from birth to death. And this requires consultation with the accumulated knowledge of the human race.

> *The man or woman who does not learn how to live normally, who does not observe the law of living in all three of its aspects, does not realize the full potentialities and creative possibilities of the human personality. The failure to realize these potentialities not only dooms the individual to dissatisfaction; it involves the substitution of frustration for satisfaction. Only by*

[35] Borsodi was a pioneer, along with his friends Aldous Huxley and Abraham Maslow, and with contemporary Alfred Korzybski, in the use of the term "human potentialities."

learning how to live normally in this full sense can modern man end the frustration to which his present devotion to the ideology of Progress and its implementation through Centralization, condemns him."

The Definition of "Norm" and "Normal"

There are two forms of norms of living: Knowing what to do and doing it. Borsodi wrote: "All the conditions of man, both normal and abnormal, are the consequences of his actions. To this there are probably no exceptions."

Borsodi reiterated that "norm" and "normal" should not be confused with concepts such as "natural, "average," customary," and "uniform." He defined each of these ideas to provide context. He also noted that while we must conform to natural laws, we are not merely animals; we have a higher set of standards of right and wrong, a higher level of understanding of the world in which we live. We must be careful about the artificial conditions we have imposed upon ourselves. While we consult culture – including custom and tradition – normal is not conformity. Normal is not defined by "standards" of uniformity. It is not a statistical average but rather lies outside of the "standard deviation" of the bell curve. It is exceptional, and it begins with questions.

A key distinction between normal and abnormal is that between satisfaction and frustration. Normal living presumes a state of satisfaction. Normal living is also distinguished from mediocrity; indeed, it trends towards acquired genius, to creativity.

Borsodi further described the basic human desires: hunger (self-preservation), sex (self-reproduction) and self-expression. The first two drives, as noted, we share with all animals. Only humans have abstract language. Only humans have the expressic instinct – or as Emerson put it, "an instinct for perfection." We have the capacity for artistry. Finally, only humans are able to express themselves possessively – in clothing, architecture, furnishing of the home. All three instincts are part of our being. Borsodi wrote, "No action is normal which precludes the harmonious satisfaction of all three of man's basic instinctual drives and basic norms." To which he added, "… only those acts and patterns of action which involve no frustration of the basic survival, sexual, and expressic instincts are normal."

Normal living is pragmatic. As such it throws off convention and embraces an alternative lifestyle that works; that is, a life relatively free of frustration. The pragmatic method uses the test of how well our actions work in life. For example, our diet – the food we eat (Borsodi was a health food advocate). Does it promote health and longevity, provide energy, digest properly? Then and now we know that processed foods are a health risk. As a result, digestive remedies occupy a lot of store shelf space. We can choose healthier foods.

The Implementation of Normal Living

There are three parts to normal living, the individual, the family and the community. Normal living includes homesteading, decentralization and education. They represent not separate things but a continuum.

We need to understand ourselves in terms of what nature has produced, not ideologies. In terms of education, we need to provide each individual with the knowledge

and skills they need and want, not some generalized principle of instruction which disregards individual differences.

The Lifecycle of the Individual

As previously described by Borsodi, there are stages in the lives of human beings. These stages are distinct in terms of biological, emotional, and intellectual characteristics. Borsodi defined nine ages of man:

1. Prenatal, the nine months from conception to birth
2. Infancy, three years from birth to age 3
3. Childhood, nine years from 3 to 12
4. Puberty, one year between age 11 and 16, average 13
5. Youth, twelve years from age 14 to 26
6. Majority, 15 years between 25 and 49
7. Maturity, 20 years between 40 and 60
8. Seniority, 20 years between 60 and 80
9. Senescence and Death, after age 80

Each stage of life must be normalized on its own terms. He went into each of these stages in detail.

Function and Organization

Normal living is a program of action, of function and organization. It is about purpose, which may be functional, or non-functional, "in accordance with whether or not the acts performed and the ends which individuals seek to attain are essential to the existence, to the continuance, and to the characteristic form of action or expression of both the specific organs of human beings and of human beings as a whole." For example, eating is essential but eating for pleasure and without regard to health and nutrition is non-functional.

Normal living is balanced living. "Normal Living is impossible unless there is harmonic fulfillment of all the major functions of man." Borsodi emphasized balanced living. It is about a balance of body, mind and emotions. There is a penalty for disregarding any major human function – self-preservation, self-reproduction, and self-expression.

We need not only purposes but also organization and method to fulfill them. "The essence of organization is time; the occupation of time; the planning of the spending of time." The emphasis, again, is on living, and not wasting time. And we need to keep things small; the bigger we get the more effort is required to organize not only time but space and material.

The Normal Family

In Borsodi's view, the isolated individual, living alone, is not a healthy state. The family is the foundation of society. The individual is a fractional and fragile organism who "can only complete himself and express his real potentialities through a hierarchy of relationships with other individuals." The most intimate of these relationships is the spouse, followed by close friends, members of the immediate family, members of a church, union, business/work, club or other association, people in the neighborhood, members of

the community, individuals who constitute society or nation and finally with the larger circle of all races and nationalities.

A normal family group according to Borsodi, "as distinguished from a mere household" consists of:

1. A group living on the same homestead or estate; composed
2. Of a sufficiently large number of persons, of both sexes and all ages from infancy to old age, belonging to not less than three generations
3. Related to one another by kinship (consanguineously and genealogically, by law, agnatically by marriage or legally by adoption), or by vassalage (as servant, lodger, or guest)
4. Equipped with a permanent and heritable estate and homestead (land, buildings, furnishings, tools, machines, animals), consisting of all the room and things necessary to produce the group's most important needs and desires including that of privacy
5. Organized to associate together intimately
6. To work together on the maintenance of the homestead, and
7. To contribute severally to its support from their outside earnings
8. Conscious of the nature of the institution to which they belong, of the rights they enjoy – the right to whatever they may genuinely need, and the family can furnish – to which they are entitled by virtue of membership in the group, and of their obligations to it in consideration of which they make such contributions to its life and for its support as they are capable of making.

It is clear that the chief characteristic of the family is the homestead. Borsodi saw little promise of family in the city, in an environment dominated by industry, and living in rented dwellings. The deplorable state of the family in urban environments supported his claim (not that it is appreciably better in rural environments today).

The Functions of the Family

Borsodi prefaced this discussion with a note about the organization of the family, that in order to organize itself for normal living, reorganization – normalization – is needed:

1. It must be composed of a proper number and kind of persons
2. It must be properly managed
3. It must be properly equipped.

The family came into existence not as an arbitrary organization but because of what it proved capable of doing for its members. In short, it evolved naturally. Borsodi wrote that it satisfies eleven functions:

1. "Their needs for survival. Providing for the survival of its members constitutes what I think of as the family's maintenance function.
2. Their need of protection against the vicissitudes of life. Providing this protection constitutes what I shall call the family's security function.
3. Their need of tangible equipment for a start in life. Providing this constitutes what I think of as the endowment function of the family.

4. Their need of controlling their fellow members. Providing this constitutes what I consider the family's disciplinary function.
5. Their need of work. Providing this constitutes what I think of as the family's vocational function.
6. Their need of play and revival of their spirit. Providing this constitutes what I think the family's recreational function.
7. Their need of rest and recovery from exertion. Providing this constitutes what I think of as the family's recuperational function.
8. Their need of education. Providing this constitutes what I think of as the family's character-building function.
9. Their sexual and genetic needs. Providing this constitutes what I think can be most appropriately called the family's eugenic function.
10. Their need of love. Providing this constitutes what I think of as the family's erotic function.
11. Their need of association. Providing this constitutes what I think can best be called the family's harmonic function."

Borsodi provided a more extended description of each of these functions. I should point out that he covered much of the ground that Abraham Maslow would some years later define as the "hierarchy of needs." Personally, I think Borsodi had a much better practical understanding of the "lower" band, what Maslow called "deficiency" needs. Borsodi saw these in a much more positive light.

The family has been a highly efficient means of achieving security throughout history, but this potential has steadily eroded since industrialism. The family today, Borsodi reiterated, is a product of mis-education. Its deterioration is also a product of the state of our urban-industrial culture. It is caused by the state assuming the family's roles such as childbirth in hospitals, social security, and old-age homes (we could add child-care and public schooling). The family as a functional institution could only be restored by re-education, by right education and that was a role for the School of Living.

The family is a working unit, producing much of its own needs. There are a considerable range of vocational skills involved in homesteading and a domestic economy. At an appropriate age, children join in the family work, learn skills, participate and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Where money is needed, it can be gained through crafts and trades and outside employment. In earlier days, farmers in their 80s continued to work productively as members of the extended family, contributing to, and producing and enjoying the benefits of, the family.

The family carries the primary responsibility for the character of its members. In the extended family, character is an ongoing dynamic; it is life-long continued education, done consciously. In industrial society, the responsibility of developing character has shifted from the family to the state. This has proven to be far from the best interest of not only the individual and the family, but the state and society, as well. Discipline is not a public responsibility. Reliance on public discipline marks the decline of both family and society. Also, corporal punishment is not a good solution. There are a variety of means to encourage conformity to family values, etiquette and morality. Exemplary modeling is high on the list.

The family is an integral unit that shares a collective personality. It is about basic values – and Borsodi considered no other institution but the family can adequately convey values. It is more able to embrace the emotional nature of individuals than intellectual education. It instills and cultivates character – a quality that defines a civilized human being.

The family inculcates the attitude of loving kindness. There are a variety of forms of love in a family. They include, to varying degrees, the emotional relationship between husband and wife, members of the extended family, friends, neighbors, community, and the human race at large. In the absence of such bonds, as often found in urban life, we frequently find depression, anti-social behavior, suicide, and other self-negating conduct. The family is the institution in which these bonds are established and nurtured.

The goal of the family is harmony. Abnormal society gives us a variety of antipathies and antagonisms including hostility towards strangers, domination, sibling antagonism, incest, mother-fixation and sexual adventure. We live in a society of jealousy, prejudices and petty grievances. To deal with them we have sessions at the psychiatrist's office. They can also lead to criminal behavior. A normal family works to overcome these adversities – to nip them in the bud. It is a process of confronting issues and problem solving, of ongoing education and re-education within the family group.

For Borsodi, the benefits of the normal family or group can only be achieved by each member discharging their obligations to that collective, and he suggested something on the order of a bill of rights to help understand how we achieve them.

The Normal Community

A normal family cannot thrive in an abnormal community. Either the home community must be normalized, or the family relocate. Since a community cannot be entirely insular, the job of normalization includes the larger world, indeed, all of it.

What is the ideal density of a community? "The evidence," wrote Borsodi, "suggests that the norm would be that density which results in: (I) the most efficient use, cultivation and conservation of is natural resources, including all forms of land – agricultural land, forest, mineral land, site land and the waters of the area; in (II) maximizing the health of the population; in (III) the development of the highest plane of living the existing state of science makes possible; in (IV) permitting men and women to express their personalities most fully amid the widest diffusion and the greatest employment of art and craft."

For Borsodi, "people and land are Siamese twins … they are actually inseparable." Human relationships are thus founded on dirt, the Earth. In the city, in society, relationships lack a solid foundation. Instead of production, society operates on money, an abstraction. In society we are dependent, and that dependency produces insecurity.

Land must be made available in order to create an agrarian culture. Referring to Henry George, Borsodi argued that there is plenty of land around the world but that it has been preempted by speculators. One study he cited concluded that one-third of the farmland in the US could support over 200 million people, an average of 16 acres per family, depending on region and soil fertility. The Japanese and Chinese could support a family on

two to three acres. Borsodi proposed three acres per family homestead, with a roughly equal size of shared commons per family.

Borsodi described the community as a corporate entity:

> *Whenever and wherever you find a population unit which has (I) a name; which has both (II) members and (III) an area of land; which has (IV) both a center and its commuting region; which has (V) a common body of laws and conventions or ways in which people are supposed both to behave and not to behave; which has (VI) leaders; which has (VII) institutions which implement common and group purposes, and which has (VIII) definite function which it tries to fulfil, you have what I call a community."*

A normal community will consist of family homesteads and families will be an integral part of the community entity. Members of the community know each other. The land will be held in commonwealth, not privately. Homes and moveable goods will be privately held. The common rules are observed voluntarily. There is no centralized authority. Leadership is functional, not authoritarian. The purpose of the community is to enable all its members "to live like genuinely civilized human beings." This is far different that the typical abnormal community.

The Functions of the Community

Borsodi stated that there are seven functions that cannot be fulfilled by the individual alone. These are the functions of community. The norm is to rely on personal action to the extent possible, yet each community must fulfill seven gregational functions:

1. The police – defensive or martial – function
2. The inspirational function
3. The economic function
4. The social function
5. The recreational and recuperational function
6. The public health function
7. The affiliation function

In relation to these functions, Borsodi offered three additional prime considerations.:

First, "No function should be socially or governmentally implemented if it can be fulfilled equally well by private action. Social institutions do not take over the functions of the family but provide services the person cannot." Schools are thus not for teaching the basics of character development – it is a family function.

Even in the best community, there is some antisocial or criminal behavior. The police function is local or, where appropriate, regional.

Second, "No gregational function should be implemented by compulsion – by recourse to government – if any voluntary institution can be established by which it might be fulfilled."

Borsodi highlighted the inspirational function, which includes vision and stimulus for action. Inspiration is not the function of institutions and organizations but comes from the members meeting together. It requires courage. This function includes art, music,

literature, festival, oration and community dialog in pursuit of the true, the good and the beautiful. Participation is voluntary.

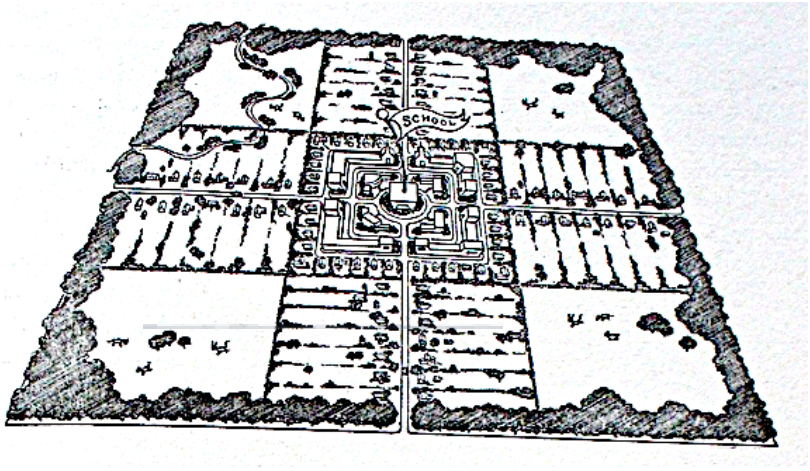
Third, "No function is properly assigned to a larger population unit if it can possibly be fulfilled by a smaller one."

There are functions within a community that must be dealt with by the community as a whole. The first of these is that the land must be held in commonwealth with each family securing rights to use the land. Second are those arrangements that facilitate trade such as a monetary system, a pricing system and a market, labor and wage system, utilities and transportation. It is a third economy, neither capitalism nor communism. Again, these are all localized functions managed by the community.

The School of Living Community

Borsodi added considerable detail about the organization of a community, its size and composition, leadership and management, institutions (a long list). He asked artist Shirley Miles[36] to draw a diagram of a community equipped with all of the essential institutions. This and other figures are found in *Education and Living*.

Miles provided a bird's-eye view of a community as envisioned by Borsodi. Since we no longer have the institutions around which a successful community can be formed, the School of Living is the center of the homesteading community. Not a courthouse, not a church, but a school. This is not a school in any way like those then or today (and we've gone a long way downhill since). The School of Living is an institute, a locally managed learning program that seeks to bring out the best of our humanity, to promote strong families and communities. Borsodi was, of course, not alone in this hope. It has always been the foundation of what we call the American way of life, a free, democratic society of self-reliant people who govern their own affairs at a local level. A large literature on this issue was published during his lifetime (lamentably, relatively little of late).



The School would give organizational structure to a community of homesteaders. The School as depicted, is at the very center of the community. Miles listed a number of other features of the homesteading community drawn from her own small-town experience, mostly located in the community square surrounding the School:

[36] Shirley Miles was a member of Liberty Homestead at Dayton and founder of Melbourne Village. She was, as the caption indicates, then homesteading in Ohio

Library and Museum
Common and High School
Vocational School
Auditorium
Churches
Hotel
Bank
Marketplace
Shops and Factories
Post Office, Bus Terminal
Town hall
Men's Club
Women's Club
Young Men's Club
Young Women's Club
Subsistence Homesteads
Family Farmsteads
Common Pasture
Town Forest

Re-Education

Re-education is about the normalization of humankind, "of first determining the proper ends and purposes to which human beings should devote their lives; secondly of instilling in them the desire to devote their lives to this newly defined objective; thirdly of supplying them with knowledge of how it is possible to achieve it, and finally of leading them to act in accordance with it." Individuals and families can be taught to solve their own problems and exercise initiative. It is adult education about adult problems. It draws on the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of humankind. It is integral (and not specialized). It is about right-education. Since we have been mis-educated, it is about re-education.

Adult education is not delayed education. "True adult education must consist of a comprehensive program which aims to furnishing the responsible adult an adequate basis for (I) choosing among alternative ideologies those which are valid postulates of action; for (II) choosing the specific social, political and economic institutions which need to be established, reformed or abolished in order to implement ideas calling for group and public action; for (III) choosing means of implementing ideas which call for personal action; and for (IV) choosing leaders who are educators rather than power-seekers."

Above all, adult education is about personality and character-building. It motivates as well as informs. It is about "cultivation of the Holy Earth, to the organization of normal families and the creation of normal communities."

The Organization of Re-Education

The School of Living is a new type of community university intended to establish in every community a graduate school for adults, which would be "the central and most influential institution in each of the communities of the nation." It educates parents to bring up their own children to normal living and produces an educated minority—teachers who serve to guide the community.

A School of Living is a fellowship united by a great idea about life here and now, which is "simply the teaching of normal living; the method of realizing it." This takes commitment, a vision of a better world, a decision to prepare, to learn from the accumulated wisdom of humankind, to solve the problems of living. The method is organized informal education. It doesn't happen in a classroom; it is for active people. It's not about fear, sex, vanity and greed but "truth well-told." It is not zeal or bigotry but human and proportion. Borsodi proposed that the program should hold community member's interest. It would create a desire to live like normal human beings by moving

people to action. It should involve celebration, a longing to know about, and how to achieve, an optimum life.

Borsodi Economics

In his book *Prosperity and Security*, Borsodi introduced a new approach to economics. He observed that scientific economics was a pseudo-science at best. It also ignores the largest industry in the country, and the one that offers the greatest long-term security: home and small-scaled production. It includes a critique of the highly centralized and regulated US economic system, a technical, industrial and urban society that is, in a word, inhumane. His approach is not conventional capitalism although it advocates a free and open market. It is a decentralized market free of the strictures of government and big business. It has no use for the collectivist ideologies of Russia, Germany and Italy, or for that matter the New Deal.

This is but one of four ways of obtaining the things we need and desire. There was one that Borsodi preferred. It is the oldest: "to plant and harvest things, to spin and weave them; to make them with saw, hammer, and chisel; to fashion them by your own art and craft, and then to enjoy them with your own family." This is what Borsodi called domestic production in *Flight from the City*. He wrote:

> *Producing and creating for your own use can furnish greater emotional security and more opportunities for creative self-expression than taking what you desire from people who are too stupid or too weak to keep what they possess. Family production is a program for folk who aim at virtue and happiness, and for whom the good life is represented by home and hearth, by friends and by children, by lawns and flowers. But for you this means nothing."*

Borsodi's *This Ugly Civilization*, in 1929, was an indictment of a massive and predatory industrial economy. He wrote about the psychological impact of industrial-commercial society and about the "quantity" and herd mentalities it produced. He proposed an alternative model, the quality mind. That was both philosophical and practical. But the keystone of that book is his family homesteading experiment – the productive family unit. In *Prosperity and Security*, he focused on the family unit as the ideal economic element of a just and sustainable society. He illustrated the qualitative difference between the life of the family on the land and other small-scale, "mom and pop," economics versus the predator and the parasite.

Prosperity and Security is, I believe, an original contribution to economic theory built on the foundation of family production more fully described in *Flight From the City*, a homesteader's handbook developed to help achieve economic security and quality-mindedness.

In *Prosperity and Security*, Borsodi reported that: "Experiments with approximately two-thirds of the products which the average American family consumes, which have been made on the Borsodi homestead for the past decade, have raised serious doubts in my mind about the economy of mass production of goods which do not fall into the category of industrial machinery and similar 'durable' goods." He again made an example of home-produced flour. Powered equipment, he noted, makes home production far more efficient. Borsodi was the originator of appropriate technology.

While factories may be efficient in mass production, distribution increases the costs of the products. Distribution requires an elaborate marketing and transportation system. Between 1870 and 1932, the cost of production was reduced less than one-quarter while the cost of distribution, advertising, and management increased by 57%. Transportation represented another 11%. Now more than half of the population work in non-productive commercial activities.

Nearly half of urban monetary income is channeled off in the form of rent, interest and profits. Borsodi called these "tolls." Interest absorbed nearly 10%; profits another 20%. These monies go to people who do not contribute to production.

Money postpones the satisfaction of immediate desires. The majority of money is token, not real, and a form of debt. It is a promissory note, not tangible property or real wealth. In direct barter, both participants to a transaction immediately satisfy their desires. That does not happen with a monetary exchange. While money is necessary, we need it to reflect a more realistic medium of exchange.

Classical economics is based purely on quantity. This applies to both capitalist and communistic economics. Both are industrial systems, both centralized. Classical economics is about the production of wealth – a monstrous proposition, thought Borsodi. It involves not merely a suicidal exploitation of the physical resources of the earth, but it also involves a debasement of the spiritual resources of mankind.

In *Agriculture and Modern Life*, coauthored by Borsodi and published in 1939, Borsodi gives further explanation of his economics in "A Plan for Rural Life."

There is something wrong with both modern agriculture and modern life, he wrote. What is wrong with agriculture today is caused by over a century of modernizing it by commercializing it, by industrializing it, and by urbanizing it. How, he asked, can modern life be adjusted to what is inherent and inescapable in the art and science of cultivating the land?

High on the list of problems of modern agriculture are land speculation, mechanization of farming, misuse of specialized farming, the idea that soil should be treated as mineral or chemical capital to be converted into wealth, and our devotion to farming for the market with its accompanying high cost of distribution.

To achieve our form of democracy requires families living in the country and owning their own homesteads. The system of land tenure in such a society must be one which furnishes every family the opportunity to acquire land and to establish a homestead.

A hundred years ago 80% of farmers were owners of land that had been made available free or at moderate cost. Now less than half the farmers own their land. Under speculation the value of farmland rose dramatically. During the Depression it fell again. The modern economy is boom and bust, which is hard on farmers and society.

Farming, instead of being scientifically developed as a way of living, is being made more and more into a money-making business. Land should not be considered capital. It is a gift of nature. There are hidden costs to commercial agriculture. All products shipped from the farm take with them some of its fertility. Soil is exhausted, requiring chemical supplements. It is depleted of organic matter. It is eroded by grading, plowing and runoff.

Year by year, the country has increased its investment in industry at the expense of agriculture. Government has given corporations privileges that family farmers do not have. Yet agriculture supported more people than the six largest manufacturing industries combined.

We seek to ameliorate the horrors of industrial civilization by building schools, hospitals and other public buildings in our cities. By seeking to socialize more and more of the incomes of industrial workers in order to introduce some measure of security into the essential instability of industrial employment.

So long as we insist upon being modern in this way, no permanently good way of life for agriculturists is possible. The solution can be found in Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. It is only by renouncing both land-speculation and land-mining, and by ceasing to be modern as the term "modern" is customarily defined, that we can lay the foundations for a permanently secure and prosperous life for the agriculturist. Agricultural land is a trust inherited by those who possess it today, to be used while they live, and to be bequeathed in at least the same, if not better, condition to those who follow them. Land is not a means of just making money.

Borsodi was not advocating legislation or a return to primitive farming.

> *Primarily I am advocating education. The farmer must be taught that his economic salvation depends upon abandoning his present preference for producing for the market, the engineer must be taught that his real task in agriculture is to help the farmer to produce efficiently on a small scale; the politicians, that his real duty is not to subsidize the uneconomic commercial farmer, but to free the family-sized farmer from the handicaps which have been place upon him in the interests of commercialized agriculture, of the industrial system, and of the metropolitan cities of the nation."*

Returning to family production would result in people moving from the city to the land. What would happen if we doubled the rural population? Critics complained that farmers cannot now secure a good living; so how would doubling it achieve the aim? Borsodi was convinced that such a reversal could not only be made to produce a higher standard of living, but that it is entirely within our power to produce such a reversal. In an interval no longer than the span of one or two generations, a counter-transformation could be achieved by educating farmers to the truth about the futility of the industrialization of agriculture. The task calls first for a new country life education, and later for the specific political action which would follow from such education, and by the ending of all subsidies by way of tariffs, freight rates, and expenditure of public money.

Prices would not rise. Farms would become smaller. There would be a greater demand for small machines both in the farm home and for use on the farm. More land would go into woodlots and grass. There would be more of the home crafts and more domestic production.

To end poverty in the country we need a program for agriculture and for modern life which places the satisfaction of the needs of the farm family ahead of the development of the implementation of industry, the fertilizer industry, the packing industry, the milling industry and all the other industries and businesses which enjoy a parasitic prosperity. We need a new program which places the current interests of human beings ahead of the development of the perfect future industrialized state, and which does not assume that the

expansion of industry should have priority over the happiness of the people who have to live today. Only with such a program will we be using modern knowledge for the purpose of lifting the curse of Cain off of the back of the farmer:

> *Cursed is the ground for thy sake. With sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles, shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of they face shalt thou eat bread. " Genesis 3:17*

Borsodi continued to argue for a new economy to the end of his life. During his last years he produced a large manuscript, his proposed volume on the economic problem, titled *Wealth and Illth*[37]. Since then, a number of new economists have appeared, including Hazel Henderson who was a supporter of Borsodi's system and friend of Mildred Loomis.

Borsodi's basic thesis is still highly relevant: a return to an agrarian-oriented local economy. It is a model today for community resiliency.

[37] The manuscript was lost but the typescript was preserved in his archives at the University of New Hampshire.

Part Three: The Green Revolution

The years immediately following World War II were transitional for the School of Living. A new phase in the history of the School of Living occurred in 1945 when Borsodi sold the School of Living headquarters building at Suffern and transferred its operations to Mildred Loomis in Ohio.

Mildred is indispensable to the history of the School of Living. In a very real sense, she could be considered its cofounder. From about the time she met Borsodi in 1932, until her death more than 50 years later, she was the keystone of the School of Living organization. Indeed, from about 1945, I believe we could say she was the *de facto* leader of the School of Living operations. She had an incredible presence over the years.

Mildred Loomis (January 5, 1900 – September 18, 1986) was born on a family farm near Blair, Nebraska (just north of Omaha). Mildred remarked that she was born the first week of the first month of the first year of the new century. She remembered that families then living in the country raised their own food. While she was still young her family moved to town. She was an "A" student, edited the school newspaper and was valedictorian.

Mildred was the first in her extended family to go to college, studying business at the University of Nebraska (B.Sc. in Economics in 1924). She was one of only a handful of women in the program, the only one in her business law class of 240 students. After graduation, she turned down a department store advertising job and accepted an invitation to work for a church in Sioux City, Iowa, essentially as a secretary. She moved to Dayton in 1928 and started a career in religious education and social work.

Mildred was teaching in Dayton when the Great Depression hit. The school ran out of money and, drawing on savings, she decided to continue her education at Columbia University in New York City. She believed that by becoming better educated, she would improve her capacity to help others. She completed her M.A in Education and Religion at Colombia University and Union Seminary in 1932. While there, a teacher had recommended Borsodi's *This Ugly Civilization* which greatly affected her. She and friends subsequently visited Borsodi at Suffern and said later that it was a turning point in her life.

After Mildred went back to Dayton, Borsodi was soon invited to advise on the subsistence homesteading program there. We know Mildred worked with him then, and there are only bits and pieces of her involvement with the School of Living at Suffern between its founding in 1934 and 1945. We know she spent a year there working as Borsodi's assistant (1939 – 1940), joined him in the decentralist cause, and was a trustee during the war years.

Lane's End

Mildred and John Loomis married in 1940. John bought 38 acres of land near Brookville, Ohio, just a short distance west of Dayton. Located a half-mile off the main road, they called their homestead Lane's End. She and John built a model homestead along Borsodi's guidelines. They refurbished a cottage, dug a well, repaired farm buildings, raised their own food, milled their grain, sold surplus, and rented fields for a small cash income. They achieved an amazing 95% self-sufficiency for nearly forty years until John's death.

Mildred and John retained strong ties to the Dayton homesteaders and had many visitors. People began asking the Loomises if they could send their children to spend a week or a month on the farm, and the Dayton mental health department sent some of their children. The Loomises built a bunkhouse at Lane's End housing six children at a time and introduced them to life on the homestead.

By 1946 they paid off their mortgage and were debt free, invited friends to celebrate with them, and dedicated Lane's End to Normal Living:

- To good health and creative work
- To family ownership of productive property
- To justice and equal opportunity to land for all
- To neighborliness and community
- To beauty in simple things
- To seeking and sharing truths
- To participate in the mysterious process of Nature.

This in a very real sense was her manifesto for the Good Life.

Decentralist Publications

Mildred called Borsodi the "Prophet of Decentralism" with justification. As noted, he was a major organizer and leader of the movement from at least the time of the formation of the School of Living and perhaps even more so during and after World War II. If Borsodi was the "prophet," I think we could call Mildred its apostle. Mildred gave decentralism practical application over the course of her life and always included the word in the banner of publications she edited. In 1980, towards the end of her life, she published her own book on the topic: *Decentralism: Where It Came From, Where Is It Going*. The book was revised and published as *Alternative Americas* in 1982.

A brief summary of Borsodi's major works in decentralism I believe will help set the stage for Mildred's work beginning during the years following World War II to which this section is devoted. During the 1920s he published two consumer advocacy books that were critical of the increasing economic centralization. His *This Ugly Civilization* (1929) was a powerful critique of industrial culture. In his *Flight From the City* (1933), Borsodi made a clear case for home production as a viable alternative to the centralized factory and economic distribution system. Homesteading provides a high degree of economic and personal independence. A family could grow and produce basic commodities at less cost than factory products, of far better quality, and with less time than needed to earn the money to buy factory goods[38]. He believed the majority of the centralized factory and distribution system could be shut down and that homesteading communities could govern their own affairs and replace massive government bureaucracies.

In his *Prosperity and Security* (1938), Borsodi presented a formal economic theory of decentralism based on home production. The seminars he gave at Suffern in 1944 and 1945, focused on the problems of living, were the foundation of decentralist education. His *Education and Living* volumes (1948) became a handbook on decentralist practices.

[38] Today the farmer receives only about six cents of each food dollar we spend. The rest is spent mostly for marketing and distribution.

As noted above, in 1937, Borsodi, with Herbert Agar, Chauncey Stillman and others, had started and edited *Free America*, the leading voice of the decentralist movement. It promoted a strong decentralist agenda advocating rebirth of a local agrarian democracy, splitting up large corporations, promoting homesteading, consumers and workers co-ops, and competitive pricing of goods and services. It drew a large following and ran for ten years.[39]

In a real sense, the decentralist movement was a dissenting voice opposed to the centralization of government and commerce that had been underway since at least World War I. Roosevelt's New Deal response to the Great Depression represented a massive centralization of government power. The decentralists were essentially anti-New Deal. World War II brought an even more massive concentration of government and the economy.

To prevent a return to Great Depression economics, before the end of the war Roosevelt and Churchill launched a program for post-war economic recovery. A key figure in this program was economist John Maynard Keynes who advocated a strong role for governments in economic development. Following the war, there was an alarming spike in inflation and a deep but relatively brief recession, and then the US economy, building on its war industry, soared. More than ever, the US evolved into a centralized consumer culture.

One of the outcomes of post-war industrialism was the proliferation of massive multinational corporations. They became a separate reality in their own right, transcending political boarders, domineering national economies and, to the extent they could, politics, in the interest of profit. As noted above, in 2016, of the 100 largest economies on the planet, 31 were countries and 69 were corporations. Corporations are highly centralized organizations, indeed, at least as centralized as a communist society. They developed a highly structured and tightly integrated global market system.

An American Ideal

Decentralism had its roots in the distributist movement founded primarily in the UK. The *Free America* contributors were by and large advocating the American ideal. Decentralism is uniquely rooted in the American agrarian experience. In the British American colonies, an ocean away from the ancient authority of Church and monarchy, a culture of independent, self-reliant and self-governing agrarian communities was first established. The vast majority of people were farmers. These ideals were at the root of the founding of the new Republic and became embodied in the Declaration of Independence and other founding documents.

The early American agrarian culture included several major features. The first was the self-reliant farmer, an ideal Borsodi, Loomis and other homesteaders such as the Scott and Helen Nearing exemplified. The second was a local, self-sufficient community; an objective they pursued throughout their lives. The third was education. A true democracy can only be achieved in a well-educated, well-informed, society.

The same year that the Declaration of Independence was signed (1776) could also be used as the date for the beginning of the industrial revolution and our capitalist economy. With the founding of the American Republic, as Jefferson and others pursued the

[39] Allan Carlson's *Land and Liberty: The Best of Free America*, is a well-illustrated summary of key *Free America* articles.

agrarian ideal, Alexander Hamilton, the country's first Secretary of Treasury, began to build the foundation of the American industrial order. Hamilton wanted a strong central government to cultivate industry but not regulate it. Industries became huge and so too did the financial institutions that capitalized them. Over the course of the twentieth century, government agencies also became larger and they became regulatory.

The threshold between the older agrarian order and the modern industrial order occurred mostly during Borsodi's life. By the time Borsodi was born (1888), America had become a major world industrial power and that was just the start. It was not unopposed. An agrarian revolt, the Populists, emerged. Henry George was a leader in this movement. As previously reported, Borsodi's father was an ardent Georgist and Borsodi himself became a Georgist champion, once editing the Georgist *Single Taxer* newsletter and, in 1919, elected chair of the New York Single Tax organization.

In 1920 Borsodi established his own model homestead and in 1934 the School of Living. By the end of World War II, the new agrarian movement was largely forgotten. Borsodi closed down operations at Suffern in 1945 and with that Mildred's story begins.

I should also note that decentralism/distributism is still a living philosophy. There is indeed a resurgence of the movement as people again seek solutions to our increasingly complex and disorderly society. There is a growing interest in the work of Borsodi and Loomis and what is today called localization and resiliency. This book is intended to address that interest. I believe what follows will provide a better understanding of the relevance of decentralism and the School of Living under the direction of Borsodi and Loomis.

The Interpreter

As noted above, the journal of the School of Living during the closing years of World War II was *The Decentralist*. I quoted the note in the Winter 1943 issue that described a decentralist bibliography prepared by Mildred. In the Spring & Summer 1944 issue we find an announcement that Mildred and Borsodi would be editing a new journal, *The Interpreter* beginning January 1945. *The Interpreter* became the official voice of the School of Living for thirteen years. Mildred did the bulk of editing and distributing it twice a month.

The Interpreter provides us our first running view of the activities of the School of Living and, over the years, it reflected the evolution of its principles and give us some fascinating insights into the emerging partnership and collaboration between Mildred and Borsodi. My summary of that is much more comprehensive and insightful than her own report in her biography of Borsodi.

As noted above, in January 1945, coinciding with the launch of *The Interpreter*, Borsodi chartered the School of Living Institute "to promote this new type of education" — "the scientific study of normal living in various communities." Mildred was its Dean and headquarters were located at her homestead. Also, as noted, the School of Living headquarters and its records and library were moved to Lane's End that year. Mildred's signature title became "Director of Education" of the School of Living. In addition to editing *The Interpreter* and programs at Lane's End, she organized local study groups in Ohio and at Columbus, Coshocton, Cincinnati and Cleveland, and in Bethlehem, Pa.

It should be understood that while Borsodi was always active in School of Living affairs he had distractions that I believe encouraged a shift of responsibility to Mildred. In addition to his wife becoming increasingly ill with cancer, Borsodi was a writer and spent long periods in deep concentration probing into vast masses of facts and statistics. Mildred cheerfully enabled him to pursue this work.

As a result, f\From 1945 onward, Mildred carried much of the weight of the School of Living, likely the entire weight for extended periods. I don't think that was just by default, as I believe she had the natural capacity to take leadership and developed her own strong supporting organization. She did so with a high degree of alignment with the work Borsodi was pursuing and lost no opportunity to popularize his unfolding system of education. Nonetheless, the interpretation, the energy, and the creativity, were Mildred's. Mildred was always intensely loyal to Borsodi and the chief supporter of his work. I believe she had much to do with the development of his problem-centered framework, although in my opinion she did not tell the full story in her biography of Borsodi.

From the beginning, in 1945, *The Interpreter* was organized around the major problems of living framework. Mildred first used nine major problem topics and organized articles according to the problem they addressed: Possessional, Civic, Ethical, Occupational, Ontological, Psycho-physical, Epistemological, Operational and Educational. There were, finally, thirteen when *Education and Living* was published 1948.

The Interpreter not only replaced *The Decentralist*, but also took over from *Free America*. Mildred called *Free America* a "champion decentralist" journal. It had an office and staff in New York City and a mailing list of about 3,000 names, an audience far larger than the School of Living. It ran for ten years until mid-1947 but by then it could no longer pay its way and closed. The end of *Free America* shifted the burden of leadership of the American decentralist movement to *The Interpreter*, that is to Mildred. Mildred wrote that *The Interpreter, Free America's* "little sister," received its mailing list and, in essence, replaced it as a voice for decentralism.

The Interpreter employed, in issue after issue, a decentralist critique of "abnormal" thought leaders, be it the works of important economists, the stranglehold of government regulation on all aspects of life and liberty, and perhaps particularly, the educational system. There were also many items about homesteading. Mildred encouraged readers to contact other decentralists and homesteaders across the country (listing addresses) who appeared in *The Interpreter*.

The Interpreter was always short of funding, and the time demand on Mildred was considerable. Mildred wrote a short item about the history of *The Interpreter* and the work she put into it. She said that it had started with 200 subscribers and an income of $400 (twice monthly issues for $2 per year), that it grew to 700 subscribers by the end of the first year, and that she struggled to pay the printer's bill. Mildred carried the load of editing, folding, sorting, mailing, bookkeeping and correspondence; along with trying to make a living on her homestead. Each mailing took up four days, twice a month[40].

Mildred wrote that the School of Living had gone through several phases. In the 1930s, with the Great Depression, there was much emphasis on homesteading. In 1940,

[40] Apparently, there is a complete set of *The Interpreter* in the archives of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

with the war coming and increasing social and economic centralization, the focus had shifted to decentralism. With *Education and Living* in 1948 the focus had become normal living. There had also been a series of conferences on decentralism starting in 1951, featuring a dozen distinguished speakers, that would draw a hundred or more participants. Following a national conference, in 1952 Mildred focused on the organization of re-educators. A special, four-page, insert was included in *The Interpreter* in the Spring of 1952: a "Discussion Guide" and the topic of "Farming and Freedom." In June 1952, a special edition of *The Interpreter* was issued as "A Commentary on Education and Living." In it we find a further clarification of the role of the School of Living:

> *The Interpreter is published by the School of Living of America – a non-partisan, non-profit, non-sectarian institution for Higher Education in the Arts and Sciences of Living.*
>
> *The School of Living believes that the existence of poverty, insecurity, disease, neurosis, crime, war and other social evils, is due fundamentally to mis-education.*

Decision Time

In 1954, Mildred and friends felt they had to make a decision about the future, indeed the continued existence, of the School of Living. Leading up to this, Borsodi had incorporated the School of Living of America in Florida in 1952. Mildred continued operations at Lane's End and was a Trustee and Dean of the School of Living and Director of Education. With Borsodi's departure to Asia that year, Mildred was feeling the weight of taking on full responsibility for the School of Living. She was struggling to pay the bills. After Borsodi returned from travels he began writing his book about what he had learned about industrial progress in Asia. He also began organizing the University of Melbourne, a project that would occupy him for three years.

In January 1954 Mildred reported that 1953 had been a good year for the School of Living during which there was a higher level of worthwhile activity. The annual conference "brought a face-to-face meeting with more than a hundred folks serious about normal living; and in touch with a score of outstanding leaders working for the institutional changes and social reforms necessary if normal living is to be achieved by any considerable number." *The Interpreter* drew more original items from readers and contributors than in any previous year and there was a considerable positive reader response (of which many were printed in each issue).

Financial problems, however, continued to slow progress. Mildred wrote that the entire income of the School of Living came from subscriptions to *The Interpreter* and the sale of a few books. The finance committee made a special appeal for funds with a statement about taking the challenge of decentralism seriously: "We have a program of re-education for freedom, sanity, health, family and community life. We, whose program goes to the roots of almost every area of living, why shouldn't we increase our financial support to commensurate level?" One pressing need, she noted, was a consultant to help develop new Schools of Living across the country. There were then about 25 local School of Living groups. The April 1954 issue listed contact persons for eight School of Living homesteading communities and 19 area Schools of Living.

After nine years at Lane's End, the School of Living was at a turning point. The next month, following a meeting of the School of Living Board of Regents, *The Interpreter*

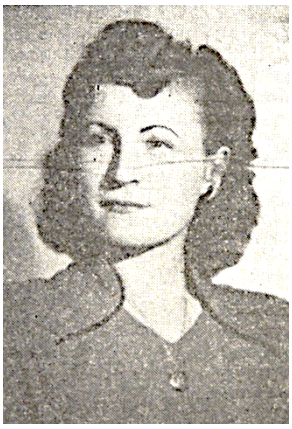
reported: "Their conclusion was that a crisis exists. Thus 1954 is a year of decision. The fate of the School of Living and *The Interpreter* – whether they should continue or liquidate – will be decided in this year." Before the end of 1954, Mildred would reach her decision.

Turning Point: A New School of Living

This was neither the first nor the last crisis for the School of Living, but it would define the charter of the School to the present day (more or less). This is the first time this story has been told in well over a half century, and I think it is highly instructive. It tells us something about a dream that once was and could be again.

The irony is that the School of Living was doing reasonably well. It had a dozen or more regular contributors. There were numerous satellite groups stretched across the country. The vision and purpose were clear. The problem was, I believe, the results were simply not good enough. The "better mousetrap" was just not drawing the support it was believed to warrant. And Mildred was wearing down from the workload.

Organizational Shift



The School of Living had a long list of ardent supporters. Ruth Weise was one of them. She had impressive credentials. She grew up on a farm. She was a natural leader in school, college and community. She was an editor, did public relations, radio and public speaking. She was a student of general semantics and group dynamics. She said, after attending one of Borsodi's seminars on the Major Problems of Living, that "The School of Living offers an excellent opportunity to channel the best materials and methods into any group interested in educating and developing themselves."

Ruth rallied to support Mildred. She mobilized regional groups for face-to-face discussions in Connecticut, Brooklyn, New York City, Pennsylvania, in the Chicago area, Detroit, Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, South Carolina, Portland, Florida, northern and southern Ohio (including Dayton and Cleveland), and lower and upper California. The April 1954 issue *The Interpreter* listed contacts for each of the groups. The regional groups were scheduled to report during the annual conference scheduled near Dayton, Ohio, in July. The key questions on the agenda were: What makes the School of Living's educational programs distinct? How should it be organized? Should there be a new charter?

The group meeting at Lane's End in April 1954 was attended by 18 people. The program included listening to and discussing an audio tape of Borsodi speaking about the major problems of living (there were a dozen of these tapes then) followed by an afternoon session which included a background of the history of the School of Living since its formation in 1934, its charter, ups and downs, and a discussion of goals, methods to be employed and organization. It appears that all the group meetings followed this format. Mildred wrote that the discussion about organization was spirited.

The June 1954 issue of *The Interpreter* was eight pages. It had a focus on and reiteration of the Schools educational mission. It suggested that in an increasingly complex world we need something more than narrow specialization, we need people with a broad

understanding, a general education. Mildred noted that the School of Living provided that type of education through the major problem framework which seeks "the progressive unfoldment of human capacity."

The Interpreter was the heart and soul of the School of Living program. It was in publication for its tenth year in 1954, and subscriptions were holding steady at 700. At this time printing was done at Melbourne, Florida where Borsodi had set up his composing machine and printing press. Several days were still spent preparing each mailing at Lane's End.

As editor, Mildred continued to do the bulk of the work. She wrote this note about preparing for one issue: "For days I've been sorting and editing an overwhelming stack of material for *The Interpreter* on Community. Magazines, pamphlets and books on the subject are piled high. One booklist has over a hundred titles on fairly recent books on community! Magazine articles, correspondence, newsletters and releases from several types of communities confirm the swell in this direction." This is a good example of Mildred's comprehensiveness.

In the September 1954 issue, Mildred announced that the "Chief source of delight and encouragement is the fact that a dozen persons, skilled and devoted volunteers already well known to *Interpreter* readers, have become regular editorial assistants, … to help us all 'learn and practice increasingly satisfying ways of living.'" Each advisor took responsibility for a major problem of living. Mildred provided a short introduction for each of them. She was listed as the Education problem lead, "[a]pplying the world's accumulated wisdom to enable people to live normally." Borsodi was listed as the Organization problem leader: "Choosing the proper method of implementing our various purposes." The editorial assistants' addressees were listed, and readers were encouraged to write them. She added: "Besides constituting an advisory council to suggest policy, publications, research and projects to the School of Living members, these friends will present and interpret each month, material designed to help us all learn and practice increasingly satisfying ways of living."

The following month's issue continued the School of Living "self-evaluation." Mildred reviewed the ten-year history of *The Interpreter*. She gave a (different) start date of October 1944 (rather than January 1945). She wrote that the subscription list reached 3,000 in 1948[41] (when *Free America*, as previously reported, folded) and eventually settled back at 700 per issue. Of greater importance, a reflection of the July general conference on reorganization, there was a summary of "our general goals and direction."

As Mildred was launching the second decade of her leadership, the School of Living was clearly moving into a more highly organized and productive period unequaled except for the program at Suffern during the mid-1930s.

Looking back over the topics published in *The Interpreter*, most, Mildred reported, seem directed to institutional problems. This was consistent with the decentralist theme of *Free America*. However, while we can't ignore them, she said, this direction rarely produces real results. More work, she added, was needed on developing the inner person; change began with individuals. Mildred added: "In this field we have found help in the new

[41] By 1948, Borsodi's *Inflation is Coming* had sold between 400,000 and 500,000 copies.

disciplines of General Semantics, psychiatry, group dynamics and the whole field of human relations.[42]"

On balance, she reflected, the School of Living was still a small group. Achieving change was hard, society was disintegrating, and the School of Living program was hard to sell to people who lived with fear and suspicion.

In 1954, there was an announcement that Borsodi would be conducting a seminar on the problems of living at Melbourne Village, Florida. He had given seven of these seminars on the major problems of living across the country between 1940 and 1948 (when *Education and Living* was published), and this was to be the eighth of these sessions, intended to draw support for the University of Melbourne.

Another shift that came in 1954 was a new interpretation of Borsodi's framework. Mildred was moving from the term "normal" to "balanced" living. The January 1954 issue of *The Interpreter* carried an article by Borsodi with a catchy title, "The Good Life[43]." Mildred wrote an introductory piece, in which she referred to another piece she had written the previous January, "What is our purpose in living?"

In the earlier article, Mildred had written that there are two ways to approach life. The first is instinctive: "A life of the senses, concerned with material, physical things." The second is of the mind, concerned with "higher" values: "The intangibles of thought, ideals, beauty." Why, she asked, do we have to choose between them? This, I believe, was an interpretation of Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin's work. Sorokin had published a popular edition of this work as *The Crisis of Our Age* in 1941. Borsodi, who considered Sorokin a friend, often cited *The Crisis*.

To develop his theory of history, Sorokin conducted a detailed analysis of the values expressed by different cultures throughout history comprising four large volumes of research materials. He found two dominant themes. The first was ideational, based on high ideals, such as the great religions. The other, sensate, was material and sensory, and morally relativistic. The ideational form is the higher culture at its peak, while sensate represents a declining society. There is also an idealistic phase in which the best principles of each form appear. Sorokin advocated establishing this middle way, the idealistic, as a permanent form. That was very consistent with Borsodi's mission.

Mildred asked the questions: Does not life embrace both the material and the intangible? Normal living, she emphasized, is a core principle of the School of Living and it is about a balanced life. She noted that some people were uncomfortable with the term "normal;" they were not clear what it meant. It implies average. The School of Living interpreted the term as optimal: "A norm is a standard of excellence. Normal is the highest level consistent with the nature of the organism." The basic problem is that people do not know how to live. That comes out of a balanced and harmonious life, and this gives us a good life. The purpose of the School of Living is to develop that potential. "Balanced Living," as we shall see, became the banner of the School in the coming years.

[42] The School of Living, and Mildred and Borsodi in particular, were pioneers in and anticipated by a decade or more the emergence of the Human Potential Movement.
[43] The "good life" is a term later popularized by the Nearings in their 1970 book by that title.

The essential element of a good, or normal, life is liberty. We seek liberty in principle, but few achieve it[44]. As Mildred suggested, the good life is based on norms, on principles that define the optimum; on values, if you prefer. Borsodi listed seven of these:

1. "First, a good life is FAMILY LIFE." The family represents the continuity of the human race from the beginning. It is a fundamental institution that provides the balance between the ego and the larger society.
2. COUNTRY LIFE is obvious: "Man cannot possibly live well when he separates himself too far from the life of nature."
3. COMMUNITY and world life: "Nothing ought to be clearer on the basis of history than that man is properly a citizen of the local community on the one hand and of the whole world on the other."
4. A good life is both COMPETITIVE and COOPERATIVE. "But the competition for which it calls is fraternal, not predatory, and the cooperation voluntary and not compulsory."
5. CREATIVE LIFE: "The life of vision, of design and beauty, of production and conservation." By contrast the bad life is mechanized, repetitive and robot-like.
6. "A good life is a COMPASSIONATE life – the ethical life, the considerate, understanding, tolerant life; the concerned and courageous life."
7. A CULTURED LIFE: "[T]he life in which the perceptions are trained and made sensitive to the wonders of the universe in which we find ourselves; the life in which our emotions are controlled and maturized; the life in which our intellects are first of all devoted to learning how to live; in which our actions are harmonized and humanized; the life which is cultivated from the cradle to the grave. If life must be studied in order to be most enjoyed – then the ignorant, the thoughtless, the fashionable and the superstitious life are all abnormal life."

In his article on the good life, to start this process, Borsodi wrote that we must reeducate ourselves. Then we can begin to reorganize our institutions "to equip us with the means and with the skills necessary" to live the good life. But, he insisted, it is not about reform, it is not a movement; it is about right-education of the individual. "The good life," he continued, "is a life devoted to learning how to organize the means, and learning how to use them after they have been acquired, so that gradually all of mankind, individual by individual, family by family, community by community, begins to live like normal human beings."

Borsodi was thinking holistically. His School of Living was a pioneer in a more holistic view of life. It should be noted that general systems theory had not yet gone public, but it is likely there was a significant influence from Korzybski who, through his theories on General Semantics, was a pioneer in systems thinking.

Incorporation

Perhaps the most important accomplishment of 1954 was the incorporation of the School of Living in Ohio. Borsodi had first incorporated his School of Living in New York twenty years before but apparently allowed it to lapse. He incorporated the School of Living Institute in 1945, about the time he closed the Suffern headquarters and moved

[44] Liberty starts with economic independence, and that is achieved through homesteading. But the homestead is a means, not an end.

operations to Mildred's Lane's End. He incorporated the School of Living of America in Florida in 1952 but in 1954 amended the name as University of Melbourne. In short, I believe a new incorporation was thus mandated.

While the Ohio incorporation represented a continuation of the School of living, the new charter and its bylaws contained an important clarification of the School's philosophy and subsequent history. It represented the consensus Mildred's Board of Regents had set out to develop early in the year – a clear statement of the core principles of the School – and came out of a year of dialogue with School of Living members. It represented a reaffirmation of the founding principles of the School of Living 20 years before, but I believe it also embodied Mildred's core values. And, as we see, her values were, for the most part, aligned with Borsodi's but she made it clear that she had some ideas of her own. Mildred filed the articles of incorporation in Ohio in 1954 and then for IRS non-profit status in 1956. There were further amendments in 1958[45].

Following is an outline of the educational principles established in the Articles.

Purposes of the School of Living

- *The School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind.*
- *Defining major problems of living common to all people; to draw upon science, art, philosophy, natural history, law, and all branches of knowledge for study of alternative ways of dealing with these problems of living.*
- *The full development of each human being is of supreme value,*

Activities of the School of Living

All activities of the School of Living shall be exclusively educational

Including publishing and dissemination of a journal or journals, books, pamphlets and bulletins; organizing and conducting conferences, seminars, institutes, lectures, and local study correspondence courses; and in general, to do and perform all things necessary or convenient for the objects of the corporation.

Such activities are to be carried on for the advancement of human knowledge and betterment

Education in the School of Living Sense

Education … a means to a better life …. to enable men and women to adopt a sound plan of living. It shall include the whole problem of living – both theory and practice; and the application of all the arts and sciences to helping families finance, manage, produce, and create what is necessary to live securely and beautifully.

All instruction shall be based on the individual needs of the student as discussed with the Director on registering.

The Practices and Principles of Living

The education of the School of Living shall be mainly in two groups: practices of living, and principles of living.

The practices of living shall be primarily studio, shop, and field work. Instruction in practical courses shall include the point of view of values, what constitutes good and bad quality in food, clothing, building and equipment; the point of view of economics; the cost in

[45] The School of Living articles and bylaws, with some latter amendments, can be found at: https://www.schoolofliving.org/articles-of-incorporation-and-school-of-living-by-laws.

money and time of homestead production compared with earning money with which to buy products; and the actual techniques of production, how to garden, raise livestock, bake bread, weave cloth, etc.

- *Principles of living shall include the social, historical, and philosophical implications of the homestead movement.*
- *History shall be studied as an instrument for integration of life around the home, and for determining what is the best way of life.*
- *Develop the possibilities of the home and the homestead as a productive, creative institution, and how it might be used to make life more meaningful.*
- *To study the relationship of homesteading and domestic production to the past, present, and future; and to learn and practice the skills requisite to such living.*

The School of Living is primarily devoted to education, a process which implies a definition of the basic problems of humankind and study and experience designed to understand and address these problems in a context in which learners, members, and staff are continually engaged in mutual and self-education, without regard to credentials or other extrinsic rewards.

Education Committee: classes in the philosophy and practice of decentralized living … overall educational policy.

Publications Committee: publish and disseminate in print and other media any and all publications of the School.

These articles were carefully crafted by a steadfast group including the Board and advisors who supported this core mission. A great deal of effort had been given to soliciting the views of members and developing a consensus that would, at the least, preserve that base. In a very real sense, this document became Mildred's manifesto, her creed, if you will.

I think the most significant departure from Borsodi's philosophy is that these new articles embraced egalitarianism, a consensus-driven process of governance. It is clear, however, that this was at odds with Borsodi's philosophy. From at least the time of the Dayton project, Borsodi thought that good leadership is required for transformational change. It is clearly implied in *This Ugly Civilization* – the quality-minded personality. And it has roots in one of Borsodi's favorite philosophers, Confucius. Borsodi was, in 1954, beginning to develop his program at Melbourne, and later in India, to raise up a group of leaders - teachers – plainly something of an "elite" cadre. They represent a "determining minority." He later expressed that very clearly in his *Decentralist Manifesto* written in India in 1958 and elaborated on it in *The Education of the Whole Man*. While such a leadership works through education and genteel persuasion, it is nonetheless a distinctive class based on capacity and a moral motivation.

Borsodi did not believe in egalitarianism; he believed that all people were uniquely endowed, that each has his or her own gifts. Borsodi was first and foremost an individualist. Under "normal" circumstances, each person has the opportunity to be all he or she can be. That is achieved through the form of the productive family unit and by extension a collaborative community and it requires re-education; the School and the teacher are at the center of community. It is not a dominant–submissive relationship. It is built upon respect for capacity. The Teachers are not appointed, perhaps not even certified. They serve by example. They choose to serve and develop the discipline and capacity to do so through their own effort. Transformation, in Borsodi's view, always begins with the individual.

Mildred, on the other hand, did favor egalitarianism. How this model played out, we will see below. Group association would remain problematic in the coming years and prove decisive in the evolution of what the School of Living would become. Group association was listed as a major problem of living and its address is very clearly laid out in Borsodi's seminars, his publications and in much of the work Mildred did. At root, however, it is up to each individual to work through this issue, make choices, and do what seems indicated to achieve the objective of a better way of life, not only personally, but universally. Organizing a group of even like-minded individuals is tricky.

Mildred's Evolving Leadership

Mildred's evolving leadership of the School of Living, as noted, began in 1945. From that time, at least, there was a certain division between their work, always complimentary but also distinct. I believe a brief restatement of the story would help clarify Mildred's unfolding work.

We start, of course, with the School of Living being moved to Lane's End. Mildred's primary focus seems to have been homesteading. Half of the School of Living members at the time were homesteaders. Borsodi's focus was increasingly education. He was then conducting comprehensive seminars on the universal problems and he was writing *Education and Living*.

Borsodi's wife, Myrtle Mae, was seriously ill with cancer for several years. They apparently spent some time in Mexico seeking treatment. I believe that her death in 1949 was a major break in Borsodi's life. She was not only a wife and mother but also a close and able collaborator.

After Myrtle Mae died, Borsodi told Mildred that he could no longer live at Dogwoods and wanted to sell it. He might well have moved to, or near, Lane's End but fate took a different turn. His friends at Melbourne Village, Florida invited him to open a School of Living and he began his seminars there. They introduced him to a Melbourne Village member, Clare Kittredge, recently widowed. Within a year, she and Borsodi were married, Borsodi sold Dogwoods, and they moved to Melbourne. He gained a following there. With the incorporation of School of Living of America in Florida there were essentially two Schools of Living.

In 1952 Borsodi and Clare took an extended cruise around the world with extended visits in Asia. During that time, when a telegram was the only way, and a costly one, to send a same-day message around the world, I believe it is safe to say that Mildred was the *de facto* head of the School of Living. She had likely been effectively so for a number of years.

The University of Melbourne was incorporated in Florida in 1954 just as Mildred and friends were re-engineering the School of Living at Lane's End, Ohio. Borsodi and supporters became intensely busy organizing the University program over the next few year. Borsodi invited Mildred to join him, but she declined.

Mildred's decision not to join Borsodi in Melbourne is significant. As dedicated to him as she was, she was fully committed to her reorganized School of Living. She was building a national movement much as Borsodi had proposed two decades earlier, as she and friends worked to strengthen the federation of allied groups across the country. She

continued working to expand memberships and subscriptions for *The Interpreter*. Her pitch: *The Interpreter* is a journal of discussion; readers' responses solicited. Get your friends involved, she urged. She asked them: "Where will the School of Living be in another ten years? Will you help make this next one a Decade of Decentralization?"

In February 1955, Mildred announced the formation of an Honorary Council of Advisors. She listed 23 distinguished persons including nutritionist Adele Davis, Harvard's eminent Pitirim Sorkin, J. I. Rodale and others. Borsodi was on the list. He was, it was noted, intensely involved in developing the University of Melbourne, and in June 1955 Mildred reported that he had begun publishing the new *Journal of Praxiology*. Praxiology gives emphasis to the practical nature of learning for living. In the first issue of the *Journal of Praxiology*, she reported, 21 distinguished leaders responded to the idea. Borsodi answered the concerns each raised about this discipline and in doing so gave further clarity to this non-specialized, problem-centered, general education program being further developed at Melbourne devoted to practices related to living a good life.

In late March 1957 Mildred listed accomplishments of the School of Living during 1956. Fifty people attended the annual meeting at Lane's End. A writers' group of 20 people was formed to send letters to newspapers on decentralist themes. They began their first group work since 1954 (reorganization year) in five locales. She held a seminar on Major Problems of Living at Lane's End, a six weeks public discussion course on the Major Problems in Dayton, and produced a 35-page, mimeographed, leaders' outline on the Major Problems distributed to 20 group organizers. Finances were still weak; the budget was $7,500 but income for the year totaled $3,337 and there were $350 in unpaid bills. *The Interpreter* subscriptions continued at 700.

Proposed goals for 1957 included: (1) Two Leader Training seminars to be held at Lane's End. (2) Develop ten community discussion courses on the Major Problems. (3) Organize a School of Living speakers' bureau. (4) Double membership to 1,500 and raise income. There was a growing sense of a need for a business and advertising manager. Mildred announced that she planned a book on "The Green Revolution," to be published by the University of Melbourne, as part of the 25th celebration of the beginning of modern homesteading at Dayton (the program that Borsodi had been invited to support) in 1933. I believe Mildred was also anticipating and promoting a renewed interest in back to the land for the emerging Counterculture era.

Mildred listed eight topics which she asked the membership to support:

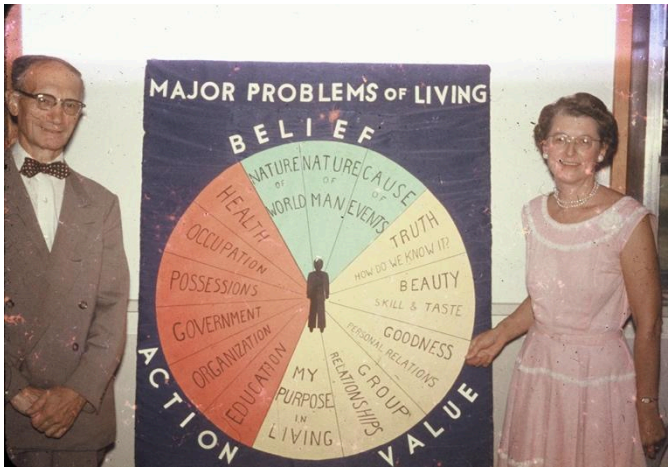
1. Productive homes and better communities
2. Improving child-parent and other human relationships
3. Improved health, nutrition and emotional balance
4. Building up soil and conserving natural resources
5. Securing our individual independence and whittling down the size and extent of government
6. Justice in regard to land and money systems
7. Insights into the nature of man and his universe
8. Adult education toward more normal living.

Balanced Living

Balanced Living replaced *The Interpreter* in January 1958 as the official School of Living publication. Readers had asked for a change in style, so *Balanced Living* continued the volume numbering of *The Interpreter*, starting as Volume 13.

Balanced Living served the School of Living for five years. Unlike *The Interpreter* and later *Green Revolution*, there was relatively little news about the School of Living. We have only a limited number of the issues. Consequently, our understanding of School of Living organization and activity are much less clear during this period.

The term "balanced living," as noted, was a response to a growing sense of vagueness about the term "normal living." It seemed more appropriate as a description of the goal of the School of Living. The idea of an integral, or balanced approach to learning for living was generally understood.



There was a conference on Balanced Living in August 1957. It was then that Borsodi and Mildred dis-played a model of (then 14) major problems of living as the spokes of a wheel. The wheel could be spun and when this was done the problems all blurred into a single image. This symbol suggested the integration of knowledge coming out of a common hub. This is the theme Borsodi would work on in India starting the following year.

It is important to understand that there is nothing linear or hierarchical about Borsodi's system. Both he and Mildred were critical of specialization. As noted, they were early pioneers in what came to be called holistic, systems or ecosystems thinking. I believe a symbolic representation of this was an important evolution of the major problems vision.

Inside the front cover of *Balanced Living*, was a statement, a reaffirmation, of the purpose of the School of Living: It is first of all nonprofit, nonsectarian and nonpolitical. And:

The goal of education is the good life.

Real problems of living are the curriculum of a good education.

The School of Living is adult education for normal living. It is a continuing-education program for all adults who want to deal with the whole of life. It helps people define and practice ways of dealing with all major problems of living. (Listed on back cover.)

Normal living is that which permits and fosters the fullest possible development for each individual, of all his attributes and potentialities. Normal is not average or customary. Hence, living normally is not conforming to present accepted mores. But because normal is often mistakenly equated with the common pattern, we are using the term, balanced living.

Balanced Living discusses ways of dealing with problems in line with norms of living. Conditions and principles which foster continual creative self-expression, as well as the basic

needs of survival and reproduction, are considered norms. All those which frustrate these three human needs are considered abnormal.

Members of the School of Living attempt to learn and practice increasingly satisfying, or normal, ways of living. They continually work at clarifying their purpose and philosophy of living; at improving their method of validating actions; at their human relations in every situation; and improving their families and communities; their soil and health, their government and freedom; and economic conditions to eliminate exploitation and advance world peace.

The Problems of Living on the back cover of Balanced Living included these definitions:

I. Problems of Postulation
   1. What is the form and essence of the universe: cosmos or chaos? *The Ontologic Problem.*
   2. What is the nature of human nature: hereditary and acquired? *The Anthropic Problem.*
   3. What causes natural, human and super-natural events? *The Etiologic Problem.*

II. Problems of Value
   4. What should be the ultimate goal of my living? *The Teleologic Problem*.
   5. What should be the basis for my convictions about truth and action? *The Epistemological Problem.*
   6. What should be my standards for beauty and ugliness? *The Esthetic Problem*.
   7. What should be my standards for right and wrong? *The Ethical Problem*.

III. Problems of Action
   8. How shall I maintain physical-mental well-being and recover it when lost? *The Psycho-physiological Problem*.
   9. How should men and women occupy themselves during each period of their life cycle? *The Occupational Problem*.
   10. How should we organize to deal with violence? *The Political Problem*.
   11. How should we acquire and hold land, money, capital and other goods? *The Possessional Problem*.
   12. How should enterprises of all kinds be established and operated? *The Organizational Problem*.
   13. How to persuade people to use the accumulated wisdom of mankind? *The Educational Problem*.
   14. What social institutions should be maintained, established and abolished, and how should this be done? *The Institutional Problem*.

A short report on the 1957 Balanced Living conference appeared in the June 1958 issue of *Balanced Living*. There were sessions on health, on the problems of government and possessions, on cooperatives, the no-government system of the Hopis, credit and money and small business, owner-built homes, and the nature of man. Borsodi presented about a "patient effort to integrate the whole;" a call for balance and perspective and a comprehensive, whole life, program of adult education.

Another Balanced Living conference was held in Indiana in August 1958 (photo right). Mildred and Borsodi are standing at the center of the photo. This was taken just before Borsodi left for his extended stay in India. The focus of the conference continued on the topic of over-specialization: Our society is dominated by experts who have little understanding of or ability to deal with the whole.



Borsodi, in a comment on his talk on the good life, said: "The only adequate method by which we can shift from life as it is, to life as it should be, is **education**. The cure for mis-education is not law, not religion, not revolution. The cure is right-education – the re-education of adults. Living is an adult problem. To adequately deal with that problem, the total person must be re-educated."

The April 1961 issue included a mimeographed insert with a pitch for subscribing to *Balanced Living*. It summarized the basic principles as follows:

- While we protest many modern trends, we give most of our space to constructive answers.
- We are not a one-idea magazine, we cover the whole range of living – little repetition, no monotony.
- We are not doctrinaire, though we have a bias for libertarianism.
- We probe significant ideas, but we report and discuss much real action.
- We have not just appeared; we are in our seventeenth year!
- We are not highbrow, but we are serious and thought-provoking.
- We are not a one-man product; many contributors and readers express themselves in our pages.

Mildred announced an exploratory meeting at Lane's End for April 1962 to cover:

1. Establishment of a headquarters community
2. A Balanced Living University
3. The most effective methods of disseminating rational thought by personal contact
4. How to improve *Balance Living* and expand its circulation.

A Way Out

Balanced Living was succeeded in the Summer of 1962 by *A Way Out*, edited by Robert Anton Wilson, from Lane's End, where Wilson was then living. The format remained the same, 5 ½ by 8 ½ inch professionally printed small magazine of 32 pages. The volume and issue number sequence were continued giving 18 years of continuous publication of the School of Living journal since the beginning of *The Interpreter*, now under its third name. The banner carried the statement "Life and Growth as Seen by The School of Living."

There is clearly a more political, anarchist, tone in *A Way Out*. Wilson became known for his anarchist views, and reader reaction, Mildred reported in the second issue, tended to be negative. From the beginning, something more was needed. That would come with the *Green Revolution*. The two publications would run currently for several years. *A Way Out* was opinion, more a publication by the School of Living than about it, and consequently of little relevance to the story that was to unfold over the next few years. *Green Revolution* was to become the heart and soul of the School of Living at least during Mildred's remaining tenure at Lane's End.

Green Revolution

In late 1962 Mildred sent out an announcement for a new newsletter: "Coming! Early in 1963." This announcement was a single sheet of 8 ½ by 11 newsprint paper, mimeograph, printed both sides in green ink. Her pitch was:

> *A green revolution is going on. Many people are moving to the land, developing homesteads, leaving the rat race. Many of them are readers of School of Living's Way Out. But they want more details, more instruction and practical material than we have room for in Way Out. There we want to probe deep and range far in all areas of living.*
>
> *The Green Revolution will fill this need – for stories, news, first-hand reader experiences. It will be your paper; it will belong to all who help it grow. This sheet suggests its direction; it is your invitation to help a Green Revolution newspaper off to a successful start. Send in you sub. or gift with the coupon on the reverse side. MJL.*

The idea of the Green Revolution, Mildred wrote, dated to a meeting of the School of Living at Suffern, New York, probably in 1940. This was while Mildred was working there. Catholic agrarian leader Peter Maurin attended a School of Living meeting then. Maurin was cofounder with Dorothy Day of the Catholic Workers. As they sat discussing the role and function of the School of Living one afternoon, Maurin said, Mildred wrote: "There are people in every country who love life and the land. The only hope I see for the world is in the spirit and works we have discussed here. In France we call it the 'Green Revolution.'"[46] According to Mildred, another participant, Morgan Harris, raised his glass of carrot juice and toasted: "Long life to the Green Revolution!"

"Green Revolution," I should note, was already Peter's tagline and he popularized the idea with the Catholic Workers[47]. The School of Living adopted it as a motif for many years. As mentioned above, in 1957, Mildred had made a brief note in *Balanced Living* that she wanted to write a book about the Green Revolution, a book about homesteading. I suspect she intended it to catalog her experiences since the Dayton Liberty Homestead experiment that she had participated in and her 25 years of association with Borsodi and the School of Living. The book was never written[48] but the theme appeared in the *Green Revolution*; it was designed for homesteaders, and something like half of School of Living members at the time were homesteading.

The *Green Revolution* first appeared in January 1963. It was professionally printed, 11 by 17 inches, a single sheet of newsprint folded to produce four pages. It was published

[46] There is a different, and more accurate, story about the origin of the term Green Revolution. Suffice it to say that term does come out of the Catholic Agrarian movement but that it was apparently first used in the US Midwest, not France, in 1937.
[47] Borsodi was in fact surrounded by Catholic agrarians over much of his career, and it has become clear that he and perhaps Mildred, were in close accord with its principles. That movement continues to this day and is a worthwhile study.
[48] Mildred did publish *Alternative Americas* in 1982, and I think this book captures the essence of what she had intended in 1957.

monthly with a month or two off each year. Mildred was lead editor and continued the routine of mailings. Curiously, the series started with a number Volume 1, Number 1 (but would change back to the sequence started with *The Interpreter* later). It carried, as promised, news, articles of use to homesteaders, announcements, and letters from readers.

In the first week of 1963, Mildred celebrated her 63rd birthday. She had been de-facto leader of the School of Living for eighteen years and had gone through two strenuous phases of organizing and reorganizing it. She had announced in 1962 that she was closing operations of the School of Living at Lane's End and looking for a new headquarters. She was thinking of retiring. That didn't happen. Phase 3 of Mildred's service to the School of Living had begun and ran for yet another six highly productive years.

The year 1963 was also something of a renewal of a close working partnership between Mildred and Borsodi. He had recovered his health, and that year he published his *The Education of the Whole Man*. It was the basic textbook on the educational problem system. It was also the year that Mildred and a young student from India edited the research files Borsodi had brought home from India. Mildred and her assistant produced a 700-page summary of an extended, seventeen problem format which provided Borsodi with a narrative outline for writing *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*.

I should note that the partnership between Mildred and Borsodi came about largely, I believe, because they shared a fundamental belief in human destiny. Despite the numerous challenges and setbacks, neither ever seem to have lost that conviction. They shared a belief that human destiny could be achieved through education and that personal and economic independence is the foundation of self-reliance. They believed in the idea of a collaborative community that could rise above the chaotic turmoil of the devolving industrial order. *The Education of the Whole Man* and seventeen problems framework brought Borsodi's work on education to a peak.

A New Headquarters?

Along with several developments to come, I believe Mildred was working to secure the legacy of the School for future generations. Nine years had passed since she reorganized and re-incorporated the School of Living. During that time, Borsodi was otherwise occupied, first with the University of Melbourne and then an extended stay in India, following which he returned home exhausted and in ill health. Mildred carried an incredible load of work to keep the School going.

Mildred's idea of a new School of Living center quickly gained traction. Just after the middle of 1963 she wrote: "Now there is a move to set up a new School of Living Headquarters Community." Lane's End homestead, which had served as headquarters since 1945, no longer seemed adequate to the needs and opportunities of the School of Living, she said. Her objective was an intentional community site for up to 100 families, a place for administrative offices, printing plant, gardening, workshops and large meetings. Mildred and friends had recently traveled through the lower Appalachians and the Ozarks scouting for land, and several sites were under investigation.

Mildred was making a bold move with this new project. Her friends and associates, as we will see, took her seriously. This was the first time, since the founding of the School of Living nearly 30 years earlier, that a major land trust project had been proposed. Although Borsodi and friends tried to shape Melbourne Village into a School of Living community in the 1950s, it was founded as, and remained, an independent corporation, essentially a retirement development. While Mildred and other homesteaders often had visitors and even individuals or families living with them for a time, they typically remained private homesteads.

A Way Out Stumbles Along

A Way Out was also published in 1963 but with an inauspicious note: There were more negative reader responses. It didn't appeal to the "average" or "more open" reader. Some of the content is also redundant with the *Green Revolution*. Nonetheless, it would continue. Mildred was by then the lead editor of *A Way Out* (as well as GR) but she did have a supportive editorial board.

The inside cover of the issues carried a statement of purpose of the School of Living:

> *The School of Living is an organization of individuals who protest the fragmentation, the social pathology, the injustice and ugliness of modern life. Its members are trying to work out, both for themselves and for experimental communities, a life which shall be intellectually, emotionally, esthetically and socially satisfying.*
>
> *Most members see that this type of life calls for increasing individual liberty and social decentralization. They welcome writers, teachers, and intelligent laymen of every calling. All that is asked of these is integrity, cooperativeness and freedom from doctrinaire convictions.*
>
> *Besides publishing Way Out and The Green Revolution, The School of Living publishes and circulates pamphlets and special studies, maintains a member-loan library, assists local study groups, holds periodic workshops, initiated and now co-sponsors a Congress (of allied groups) on Balanced Living.*

Under Mildred's editorship, the content included more about the School of Living programs, Borsodi's work and homestead related topics.

The bulk of the October 1963 issue of *A Way Out* was the complete text of Borsodi's *Pan-Humanist Manifesto* (originally published in India in 1958). The subtitle of the issue was: "A Program for Action and a Call for Leadership in a Free World." The *Manifesto* was available as a pamphlet for 35 cents. The title was soon changed to *A Decentralist Manifesto*.

The Temper of the Times

At the same time, there were other developments. For example, in 1964 Mildred was attracted to Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, which, she noted, was causing "a great stir among both men and women." She invited subscribers to read it thoroughly and send their reactions and evaluations. Mildred had invited Friedan to speak when she was in the area, but she declined.

Mildred and other women engaged in the School of Living had an alternative to women taking their place in the world of work. Children and child raising, Mildred continued, are a major purpose of marriage, and both father and mother, not just the mother, are responsible for raising them, for helping them become fully human. She made

two additional points along this line. First, our well-being is largely defined by our ability to understand and create order out of our immediate environment. A homestead provides this environment for a child. Second, it provides work for the hands: A child learns, indeed his/her brain develops largely through the hands. One close associate of Mildred's wrote that she considered the homestead to be the best occupation for women and men., not the factory or office or store.

In the Fall, Mildred called for more School of Living face-to-face meetings and planned ten across the country in Maryland, New York, Florida, Goddard College, Ohio, Oregon, San Francisco, and Los Banos in California, again in Maryland, and finally in Michigan. She proposed study and discussion groups addressing a separate problem of living each month, Borsodi's *Decentralist Manifesto, Education and Living, The Education of the Whole Man* and *Challenge of Asia*. And her own recent *Go Ahead and Live* (see below). She announced a 75-page presentation of "The Possessional Problem" (Land and Money) which was available for $1.

The year 1965 was one of great stress in American society. To provide a sense of urgency, Borsodi published an article about the riots in American cities. What is the response of the School of Living? The time has come, he concluded, for the readers of the *Green Revolution* to do something about it. He proposed a "revolution," a mass movement--not political, definitely not violent: "Instead we propose a radically new kind of education which deals with all the basic problems which individuals and families face, and which society as a whole face. We propose an education which provides significantly new and humane solutions for those problems. We propose nationwide discussions and consideration of these problems and the solutions. We have set a time for a beginning to train leaders for this revolutionary kind of education – October 24–29 – in New Hampshire. If enough intelligent, dedicated persons respond, it is just possible that in the end millions will wake up and see that this is a good way out."

A front-page article announced a Fall Festival, October 30-31 at Pembroke Center, N.H.: "Action for a New Frontier Begins." It proposed "[a] New Frontier is opening up. It is starting in New Hampshire [where Borsodi then lived] and hopefully may quickly spread far and wide. New Frontiersmen have been called to their first gathering, a Fall Festival of music, art, discussion, and fellowship."

> *It is a new frontier not in terms of geography but in terms of new social institutions and new ways of living. It doesn't use government nor turn to politics and political parties. It uses a new, local and regional adult education! It isn't purely intellectual; it appeals to feelings and emotions; uses art, music and dancing! It looks to a life of health, culture and fulfillment on Shangri-Las[49] (family homesteads) and in small towns and communities.*

Ralph Borsodi, readers were told, "was at the center of the movement for a New Frontier."

Go Ahead and Live

In 1965, Mildred edited and published her first book, *Go Ahead and Live*. In the introduction, titled "The Green Revolution," Mildred noted, first, that with the mid-'60s, she

[49] The idea of Shangri La, a mythical utopian community located deep in the Himalayas, came from the 1937 movie, *Lost Horizons*.

was seeing the beginning of a new, alternative culture movement, which she considered very promising. (I'm not sure the "counterculture" had been named by then.)

She went on to write of the founding of the School of Living, her life at Lane's End but most importantly about the "real, live people" who contributed to the book who shared their experience of homesteading. They exemplified the values Borsodi and Mildred held and defended. It is about "normal" living in the sense of optimal, simple living on the land, close to the earth, caring and sharing. These people are the Green Revolutionaries. There are 23 of these stories, 23 chapters. Mildred wrote the introduction and two of the chapters; the remainder were contributed by other writers.

She ended the book with an "Epilogue" in which she asked the question: "How would a School of Living work?" She wrote about how a Community School of Living could be started and listed how the Community School of Living could help its members deal with the problems of living. She suggested some specialist roles for leaders in the problems of living, something she had already done with *The Interpreter* panel – all generalists in the problems of living but each focusing on a particular problem.

So, what is an education-centered community and what are the challenges? It is what Borsodi founded at Suffern in the 1930s at the Bayard Lane community. But it broke up, and its failure to form a community, let alone a School, Mildred said, was instructive. Such efforts, and there have been many of them, fail for the following reasons, she wrote:

1. The failure in human relationships, and the meager skills and resources to deal with communication and emotional problems.
2. The lack of understanding of their land agreement, too often rooted in selfish ambition, jealousy, insecurity, etc.; a lack of emotional maturity.
3. The lack of a commitment to an educational process. Life is changing, and learning is our means of adapting.

Mildred emphasized that living in community is hard work. She was clearly seeing the challenge of developing her new community. But there was hope. The issue contained a list of "Thirteen functional US intentional communities" and a list of persons to contact about actively forming School of Living groups.

Mildred's Program

The six Green Revolution years (1963–1968) at Land's End were extremely busy and productive for Mildred. I find a definite pattern in Mildred's work during those years. We see an accelerated evolution of her mission. She maintained the homesteading network. She worked to translate Borsodi's educational ideas into practical programs. There was a network of stalwart supporters, particularly around Mildred, that provided synergy. We find this note: "Mildred Loomis keeps the interest alive via a voluminous correspondence and issuing the monthly *Green Revolution* and bimonthly, *A Way Out*. " Much as she had done in 1954, she was trying to develop a more stable and enduring program for the School of Living that would succeed her.

Mildred liked narrative. She often repeated the story of the history of the School of Living. In summary, the School of Living was originally founded in 1934 by Ralph Borsodi; first located at Suffern, New York. Leading up to its founding, he had worked for 14 years,

written four books, undertaken a major experiment in homesteading community, and was beginning to develop his core educational program. In 1936 a dedicated headquarters was constructed in the Bayard Lane community. Mildred worked there for a year and became a trustee of the School. In 1945 the School of Living was moved to Lane's End, Mildred and John Loomis' homestead in Ohio, and she became the School's Director of Education, a title she would carry to the end of her life. They constructed a new building to house the School's operations there.

Mildred produced a steady stream of publications. She wrote about how the practices and principles of the School of Living were developed in a course of numerous seminars, lectures, articles and in correspondence. Devoted to education in her early life, she emphasized that this form of learning was more of an education than anything she had acquired in college.

Mildred described her returned to Ohio to start her own homesteading experience following her year working at the Suffern School of Living (1939–1940). At Lane's End, she reported, "After the mid-forties, School of Living concepts, activities and publications became the informal, avocational output from Lane's End Homestead, Brookville, Ohio." *The Interpreter*, she said, became her hobby. In essence she was saying she received no pay for the extensive work she did supporting the School of Living. The Loomis homestead, Lane's End, became the "nerve center" of the School of Living at the end of World War II. Over 15 years, Lane's End was home to seven young couples and a dozen children.

In another article, Mildred provided more detail on the early days (1936–1945) of the School of Living at Bayard Lane. The staff consisted of a secretary, a librarian-research worker, and directors. The directors were, in succession, Ralph and Myrtle Mae Borsodi, Ralph and Lila Templin, Robert and Agnes Toms and Elizabeth Nutting. They conducted five types of activities that she summarized as:

1. Building homestead communities, particular Bayard Lane and Van Houten Fields. "Imbedded in the activates of these communities were some patterns regarding land-holding, credit, exchange and ownership that could help in unraveling larger economic-political problems if widely implement."
2. Research regarding the economics of home-production vs. factory production.
3. Publication: These included twelve *How to Economize Bulletins*, a monthly *School of Living News*, *Free America*, and the quarterly *Decentralist*. There were also books by Borsodi.
4. Demonstrations of practices of living including resident students and visitors.
5. Principles of living: Weekend seminars and forums, outstanding leaders and students examined the nature and effect of current social, economic, political, educational, and institutional problems of all kinds.

These early years, she added, inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of families to take up homesteading.

There are some very remarkable things about the Borsodi-Loomis partnership. The first of these is that they sought practical expression of their ideas, not just philosophy and theory. The second is that they sought to create an alternative culture – to give us a choice about our future. While "new" in terms of how modern society had emerged over the last

century or two, this culture was founded on perennial principles – the way of nature and of society close to nature; of people who worked the land and lived their lives productively, creatively and when their end came, knew that future generations would prosper in their place. Their objective was not utopian; it was down-to-earth. The third is that they created an incredibly systematic program that covered the full spectrum of human experience. The fourth is that they took the idea of learning, of education, to a new level. They represented a long line of teachers going back to ancient times, through classical times (Rome and Greece and China and India) who sought to elevate the human experience of the life we are given. Borsodi synthesized that legacy and Mildred added significantly to it.

Between them, Borsodi and Mildred had accomplished an incredible list of things. We have two incredibly resilient personalities who established an extraordinary partnership. There are stories within stories over the course of their careers; I've just touched on them, and I think there is much fertile ground for future researchers. There is material here not just about the story of the School of Living, about Borsodi and Loomis, but something to be learned from the dynamics of their joint careers within the context of their time.

Borsodi was again active as a speaker, leading seminars and organizational work, particularly in New Hampshire. He published *The Education of the Whole Man* (1963) as this period began and *Seventeen Problems* (1968) at the end, as he reached his 80th year, nearly a half century since establishing his homestead. Mildred also worked with Borsodi to develop a local currency and would later work with him to refine his land trust model.

In 1966, as Director of Education, Mildred wrote that she had extended her duties over the years including:

a. Amended the charter for tax exempt status. This took several trips to Washington, D.C.
b. Regular monthly meetings at Lane's End
c. Developed a loan-and-sale book service to members
d. Arranged the 2,000-book library under major problems of life
e. Provided book lists on problems of living to members and inquirers
f. Assisted formation of local study groups
g. Assisted Ralph Borsodi in 1954-1956 problems-of-living seminars
h. Conducted a class in Antioch College Adult School on Problems of Living
i. Prepared a discussion outline on ten problems of living
j. Changed *The Interpreter* into *Balanced Living* and from a newsletter to a journal format, and edited material to cover major problems of living for content
k. There had been three annual conferences on Balanced Living to this point. The first, in 1957, "moved in the direction of integration of effort for a new culture." These had been organized by Mildred; and none held since 1960.
l. She said a score of independent decentralist groups were working together to promote "rural life, small business, small community, conservation, cooperatives, land-value taxation, money reform, non-governmentalism, family life, childcare, self-regulative education, personal responsibility for health," etc.
m. There were also homestead festivals between 1960 and 1966, each hosted at a different School of Living homestead.

n. Readers had been asking for more about homesteading in the monthly publication and the *Green Revolution* resulted in 1963.
o. With the publication of the *Green Revolution*, there were two journals with a mailing list of nearly 1,000. However, the able assistants who had stayed at Lane's End moved on, and Mildred found herself supporting both publications for 18 months, along with all the administrative detail and correspondence.

She was by then a leading advocate of decentralism. Why is decentralism important? Decentralization, she emphasized, is about economic and personal independence. The massive business-industrial system has reduced us to wage slavery. But of greater importance is that it grinds down the human spirit.

There were two articles about Mildred's history with the School of Living which give some context to her devotion to its cause. It was largely about agrarian roots. Both Mildred and John had been born on farms. John continued to farm; to him homesteading was natural. Mildred said her education "eradicated" her rural values. She spent 15 years searching but it was not until the '30s that she began to question the centralist direction of culture. By 1936 her thinking had been influenced by Lewis Mumford, Aldous Huxley, Alexis Carrel and (soon) Erich Fromm. And then, of course, Borsodi. Borsodi's *This Ugly Civilization*, she wrote, had been "like a stick of dynamite." She added a qualifying statement about her relationship to Borsodi:

> *This is not to say that in all these years Borsodi and I saw everything alike; that we did not find serious lacks in each other; that we do not have our differences and difficulties. Nor does it mean that I thought then or think now that the School of Living is perfect or totally adequate.*

She stated four questions that were much on her mind:

- Can the city, as we know it, be considered a gross mistake instead of a glorious achievement?
- Each individual is a unique event in space and time – how [do we] find out what qualities and activities are suited to his[/her] nature?
- What environment does [s]he need?
- Of all the myriad "reforms" and "isms," which should one support, shun or discard?

One concern Mildred expressed was that the School of Living had made "only small ripples" in the mainstream of America's mechanized, centralized society, yet the future may vindicate Borsodi in the end: "Borsodi's concern is for the humanization of humanity – for the development of complete, balanced persons. Many believe his economics of self-sufficiency are sound, and that the aesthetics of modern homesteading are more pleasing than the tinsel world of Madison Avenue or the 'authority' of the White House." Given the technological trends of modern society, small rural communities represent the future of civilization.

While Mildred was at this time diligently working to clarify the mission of the School of Living, I think that included clarification of her own underlying values. This was a critical juncture in the School's history because, as noted, she was hoping to turn over the reins.

1966

Mildred started the New Year of 1966 with a presentation to the Melbourne Homesteading Association in Florida on the seventeen problems. She showed the new homesteading film. Elizabeth Nutting, former associate of Borsodi's and a founder of Melbourne Village, also presented on the "History, Structure and Goals of Melbourne Village."

In August, The University of Illinois at Chicago requested School of Living archive material. An extensive collection of early publications can be found there today.

In September, there was a report on two meetings in California: 16-17 people at San Francisco and a smaller number in L.A. Borsodi's grandson Robert attended the L.A. meeting. The San Francisco group heard a presentation about B.F. Skinner's *Walden II*.

There was a showing of the film (a 200-foot reel) about School of Living Communities and a note from Borsodi discussing the relevance of the Major Problems of Living.

In December 1966 Mildred said she was available for a series of lectures including:

1. Adult Education for Living: What is a good life? What are major, universal problems of living? Why 17 of them? Do they lead to personal action and social change?
2. The Nature of Man.
3. Clarifying Economic Cause of War. One student reported: "Mrs. Loomis has one of the most basic and radical understandings of the ills of our economy of anyone. An excellent speaker, she can put economics in terms a 10-year-old can understand.... She has a degree in economics."
4. Your Health! Who is Responsible?
5. The Case for The Modern Homestead (with film)
6. Joy in Living or Normal Neurosis? "Mrs. Loomis has a background in the psychological, inter-personal field. She has had intensive training in group dynamics, some in general semantics and other types of communication. In general, Mrs. Loomis follows the thesis and practice that energy, joy and creativity result from shared feelings, good feedback and continued effort at an accurate and acceptable self-image."
7. A Call for Everyman's Right. "She deplores that modern culture is organized around coercion, i.e., the political state. She observes the world extensionally [Korzybski's general semantics, which means objectively] and sees that choice and freedom decrease from mistaken legalization of certain goods such as private property. She distinguishes between property and trusterty."

Closing *A Way Out*

In the May–June 1966 issue of *A Way Out*, Mildred expressed a state of exhaustion and that she had been the mainstay of the School of Living for over 20 years. She and John had supported themselves by homesteading for over a quarter of a century. Borsodi once wrote that homesteaders could gain the time for learning and other productive work. Mildred had found the time and energy to run a dynamic nonprofit organization, without a

computer, cell phone or internet. Sometimes she received a compensation of $50 per month for School of Living work, but usually nothing. Mildred was an avid networker, always with a strong base of support, a pool of unsung heroes in the annals of the School of Living. Their support speaks of the love and respect they had for her, and I think this might be the biggest thing that kept her going.

Her editorial assistant for *A Way Out* had left and she was again both editing and publishing it and *Green Revolution*. Not once, as far as I know, in over twenty years, had Mildred missed producing an edition of a School of Living publication; during the early *The Interpreter* days it was two a month. Now she was generating 18 issues a year.

In the July-August 1966 A *Way Out*, Mildred reported that two final issues were planned, one as an insert in *Green Revolution* (September and October) and the second a mimeographed issue. She wrote that material was ample, but funding was not. She announced her resignation from production and financial responsibility for *A Way Out* effective December 31, 1966.

She also pointed out that the School of Living had been a pioneering enterprise and listed a number of Borsodi's firsts:

- Healthy, normal living. The Borsodis raised good and healthy food in the open countryside. Hundreds of people came to visit including J.I. Rodale who went on to publish *Organic Gardening* and *Prevention* magazines "that spread the idea to millions."
- He guided people away from the urban-industrial "ugly civilization," to productive and self-fulfilling occupations on the land.
- Community: He raised the funding to establish homesteading communities which inspired many others.
- Economic Freedom: The human economy, and personal freedom, are rooted in nature, not material acquisition. Borsodi placed the development of the individual above all else. But no one can be free unless they are economically free, and that means access to land – the land trust. He spread this message around the world.
- He observed the coercive power of big government and advocated decentralized living. He developed a format for the study of the Civic Problem.
- World Peace: He developed a peace plan during World War II that anticipated the United Nations. Yet rather than a world government, he advocated collaborative grassroots communities that could, in an environment of peace and prosperity, develop on their own.
- Psychological and Biological Aspects: Borsodi developed a model of normal; that is, optimal and healthy living, and the educational program to serve each stage of life that was a pioneering effort in the promotion of human potentiality.
- Religion: Too often based on fear and superstition rather than the reality of life and rarely providing a comprehensive program for living well on this Earth.
- Education: Education is life-long; it is comprehensive in scope, not specialized; its goal is to live the good life to the fullest.
- How should a human being live? Society today does not conform to optimum human life. "Is it not then incumbent upon [educators] to rigorously examine

that culture, to help plan its humanization, to take steps in that direction, that their students and they can be equipped with insight and tools to continue humanizing that culture?"

- Adult Education: "The School of Living has been a forerunner in reexamining people's physical, cosmic and social environment and their place in it. Long ago it warned of the dangers of over-technologized processes and in centralization of power, population, and industry. For thirty years it has been developing a curriculum and an action program that would counter these trends. It does not claim it has all the answers, but it does submit that asking the right questions is an assist to finding the right answers. Many find the School's statement of man's universal problems of living a guide to life-long adult education. Our hopes and plans are that in many communities, concerned persons would organize to examine and act on these major problems of living."

Mildred concluded this article with this statement:

The School of Living purchased in 1966 land and buildings near Freeland, Maryland from which to operate as Heathcote Community and School of Living Center. Like any pioneering group its greatest need is for understanding and dedicated persons, and adequate funds with which to operate.

Toward the end of this issue, we find that two people from each of twelve local Schools of Living across the country had been asked to help develop School of Living educational programs including seminars on problems of living, films, festivals and community actions. These 24 people were listed with an address to contact them.

There was, in fact, one more year of *A Way Out*.

New School of Living Heathcote

In January 1967 the New School of Living headquarters was dedicated. A great deal of work had gone into that new center which I will attempt to summarize.

Mildred had a large vision for a new center for the School of Living. She said she wanted to establish an intentional community for up to 100 families. She already had about 30 interested families. She had polled members and discussed the project at the August 1963 Homesteading Festival and the 1964 annual meeting. A follow-up questionnaire was sent out. There were 52 responses which suggested locations all over the country and one advocated Mexico. Of the proposed locations, some were already School of Living affiliates and Mildred, perhaps suggestively, wrote about several of them.

Mildred wrote of her vision for the New School of Living headquarters developing there:

A beautiful homestead with flourishing gardens, orchards, woods, fertile soil, streams, lakes, healthy plants, animals and people. An oasis, a Shangri La where people crowded in East Coast cities may come to enjoy and work with nature – not to be mere leisure-time enjoyers or spectators of nature, but true functioning cooperators in a productive way.

In short, I think of the Heathcote School of Living Center as a Green Revolution nerve center … to help the movement build momentum.

How would this appear in detail, if spelled out? Again, remember, those who implement it would help decide it. Ideally, the Mill building would be occupied and directed by a staff who

love the land, who understand man's balanced ecology and all its natural physical, social, and psychological implications. Every nook and cranny of the building and surroundings would reflect this love and understanding. Each inch of ground would be flowering and productive, esthetic, and functional.

The people at the Center would reflect this philosophy and this practice in their health, their zest, their balance.

Ideally the Center would be surrounded by a number of small homesteads in community. Each in its own way would achieve a standard and impact similar to the central homestead. One or two members in most homesteads would, hopefully, also be available at stated times to assist in the actual work of the S of L – records, mailing, publishing, teaching, demonstrating, etc.

The homesteaders, I hope, would agree that land, on which they live and work, is a Gift to them, and to those who come after them, in which they would never want to profit. I hope they will implement a common group "holding" of the land, with each family having title by occupancy and agree on use of it, and not submit it to buying, selling and speculation.

Ideally, the whole community would be a school – a learning situation, each recognizing that he is engaged in a continual educational experiment. The gardens, woods, streams, shops and homes would be "curriculum" for their children. Parents would cooperate to pay for or supply tools and social subjects in a classroom at the Mill. Adults would engage in continual exploration of their major problems of living, sometimes in formal seminars, most often in informal discussion.

Eventually, among the homesteaders would develop at least one person more wise and skilled in each problem of living so that they would be looked to as 'guide' or faculty member in that respect, for resident as well as non-resident students.

Hopefully, homesteaders would continually reflect on What is the purpose of all this? What is my purpose in living? Periodically they would gather to delve into this in shared and group exploration. To the end that all might find deeper, more meaningful satisfaction in their living.

The Center, in short, she hoped, would become an adult educational center, as had long been proposed by the School of Living, to "help the movement build momentum."

In 1964 Mildred wrote a short item in *Green Revolution*: "Do We Want A New Community?" in which she further outlined her vision of an ideal community. Later that year she shared additional views about a new School of Living Community Center. Financial and legal questions were numerous and baffling. Who, for example, should own the property? It was proposed that members could buy stock in the community trust (suggested $350 per share, 100 shares, each for 2-1/3 to 2-½ acres). The land should be owned by the community itself, not the School. It should have a model farm. Mildred wanted the discussion to continue in *Green Revolution* about what lines to organize the community around. It's clear that strong organization was unpopular.

In late 1964, Mildred reported on a proposal from School of living members, the Anacher family, about a 150-year-old, three-story stone mill on their property, near Freeland, Maryland, as a possible site for the headquarters of an Eastern branch of the School of Living. The Anachers described their 73-acre farm which could support six to ten families. It had two streams, and the mill might serve as a community house or headquarters for the School of Living: "It could be developed into a money-maker, as a showcase for homesteading, the display of craft ware for sale, sale of health foods, etc. The second and third floors would make ideal guest rooms for students and visitors."

Reconstruction of the mill was lead, it appears, largely by Grace and Tim Lefever who were homesteading a short distance north near York, Pennsylvania. Headquarters Community News, in the *Green Revolution*, reported 30 people at a "workbee" at the Old Mill. This was the first of a number of gatherings and work sessions. It was a long job and a lot of hard labor, freely given, went into the project. The site was given the name Heathcote.



Anacher Old Mill

The July 1965 annual meeting, which drew 85 people, was held at the Mill. The program for the meeting included work projects on the Mill, discussion about the new School of Living center and Heathcote community (Bill Anacher and Loomis respectively), taxes, zoning and land allotment at Heathcote, health, human relations, parent-child relations. Paul Goodman, who wrote *Communitas* and other social reform books, was invited to speak. A Youth Rally was planned.

"A Decentralist Code" was printed to summarize the core principles of the new community:

- I will content myself with a minimum of things conducive to a clean, comfortable and efficient abode. Counter advertising.
- I will live on the land, to develop a healthful, human way of living. Counter urbanism.
- I will grow my own, use it up, build it myself, make it do, wear it out. Counter commercialism.
- I will hold only as much land as I can use, and as is necessary to secure possession of the improvements which I and my family put upon it. Counter speculation.
- We will produce first to supply all or most of our own needs; then a small surplus of some staple article of good quality to supply others at cost through a Merchandising Cooperative. Counter over-speculation.
- I will read and help produce our own publications; help conduct and patronize our own rental and book-purchasing service. Counter propaganda.
- I will help educate our children in their own home, community and school. Counter mis-education.
- I will refuse cooperation with all invasive acts; I will join with others to provide ourselves voluntarily the common services which we need and want. Counter government.
- I will embrace a religion or philosophy only after trial; hold fast to such teachings as day-by-day living demonstrates is good. I will join our own burial association for dignified and inexpensive rites for the deceased. Counter superstition.

Dedication of Heathcote

The Heathcote center was dedicated in January 1967. Mildred called it the New School of Living (the fourth). School of Living President Leo Koch and Mildred officiated at the opening ceremony. Koch was a noted radical in his own right advocating free sexuality, a civil rights demonstrator and member of CORE, an antiwar activist – a World War II naval officer he became leader of Veterans for Peace. He was dismissed from the University of Illinois, where he was a professor of biology, due to an open letter supporting student sexual freedom in 1960. He joined the School of Living in 1958 and was first elected President of the Board of Trustees in 1965. He retired to a sizable homestead in northwestern Arkansas in 1970 and died in 1982.



Leo Koch

Koch's statement emphasized the School of Living mission to make a better world:

Ever since the dawn of recorded history, we have been told that human beings have faced unprecedented problems. But as the human population on earth has increase, so has the enormity of the problems. Today, war, famine and pestilence reach unequalled dimensions of intensity and quantity. Sometimes even the most optimistic of us come close to despairing of the resolution!

Perhaps insignificant, but true, the School of Living has its origin as a response to the predicament in which Americans found themselves during the Great Depression of the twenties and thirties. It seems fitting, therefore, that we should be initiating a project in the name of the School of Living today, here at Heathcote, Freeland, Md., when Americans once again face a social crisis of unprecedented severity.

Hopefully, the War in Vietnam will end; hopefully racial minorities will achieve the social equality quarantined them in our constitution; hopefully a green revolution will reverse the trends towards regimentation and conformity which now lead us in the direction of hell on earth.

Unhappily, we may never know to what extent, if any, our efforts here will influence the outcome of this process of social evolution by means of which we exist. But this uncertainty shall not deter us. We therefore dedicate this property, which we have named "Heathcote, A School of Living Center," to a vision of humanity in which its positive potentialities for teaching and learning shall emerge victorious.

Towards this end, we shall persist in a vision in which each of us shall – in his or her unique fashion – share in this victory, by sharing in the work as well as the rewards for which we strive.

We dedicate this center of School of Living activities to the pursuit of our central purpose – that of awakening in ourselves and in all who shall attend here in the future, the unlimited possibilities of the future. We dream of and work for these possibilities, and hope that our children and their children will realize some of them.

In the final analysis, we dedicate this School of Living Center to ourselves and to the entire human enterprise; to our future, to the future of humanity and the oncoming generations who will struggle with the problems which we have created in our attempts to do the same.

Change of Life

The August 1968 edition of GR carried this notice: "Strengthen or Abandon Lane's End Homestead? Help and Ideas Needed." Admittedly "feeling [their] years," Mildred and John Loomis expressed the need to make a decision about the future of their homestead and School of Living activities there. A young couple coming to live there to help with the homestead would be ideal. They should have "an educational outlook, love of the country and human association." They would have: "use of a challenging library and opportunity for study and discussion with the Loomis's."

Then, just two months later, the October 1968 edition reported that John Loomis had died, August 29, 1968, one month short of his 81st birthday. The obituary noted that John had joined the Llano Cooperative in the 1920s but in 1928 moved to Dayton to put his sons in the private and experimental Moraine Park School. He had been employed by the Post Office. He joined the First Liberty Homestead initiative supervised by Borsodi and about this time his first wife died. He purchased and named Lane's End Homestead in 1936, and he and Mildred were married in 1940. It was noted that, while he wasn't an avid reader, he had a strong interest in decentralism, and that he and Mildred studied Henry George in 1938. He adopted an ideal of nonconformity from Emerson. A memorial service was held at Lane's End September 1st. His ashes were buried near a tall, double-trunked tree in Lane's End woods.

With John gone, Mildred, as had Borsodi after his wife died, wanted to move away. She wrote that H.R. (Tim) and Grace Lefever of Sonnewald Homestead, Spring Grove, Pennsylvania and for years School of Living trustees, had invited her to move east. She left Lane's End on September 22nd and, accompanied by a friend who drove a truckload of her belongings, moved to Heathcote, making several visits along the way. She celebrated her 69th birthday there in January 1969.



Mildred Loomis at Heathcote

Heathcote Programming

The last issue of *Green Revolution* in 1968 was from Lane's End, the first of 1969 was from Heathcote. Extensive programming was planned at Heathcote where Mildred offered a series of seven workshops. A "Regeneration, A Total Approach" conference was held in April. The theme for the May Heathcote Conference was "Homesteading, A Life Style for Today." In June came a "Seminar on Human Relations and Communication." A seminar on homesteading was held at Heathcote in July 1968, led by Tim and Grace Lefever, which drew about 35 people, where basic homesteading skills like bread making were offered. The SoL homesteading film was shown followed by discussion. Mildred presented "Philosophize on 'Why Homestead?" There was a workshop about co-ops. Borsodi's classical book on homesteading, *Flight From the City*, was serialized in the *Green Revolution*. The September 1968 School of Living Members' annual meeting at Heathcote drew 30 people.

In 1969, the range of *Green Revolution* topics became more diverse signaling a shift in philosophy. Editorials were requested, and each was qualified with "The opinion expressed in the editorial is that of the writer and does not represent a school of living [it was in lower case] policy or even a generally held view amongst the various editors of the paper."

Programs outlined for 1969 at Heathcote included:

- A weekend on good health in April.
- A weekend in May for the first homestead dwelling planned for Heathcote and a large garden project.
- Communication and Human Relating in June
- Heathcote picnic in July
- Heathcote community meeting in July.
- Major Problems of Living with Ralph Borsodi in August
- Harvest Festival in September

There was an information exchange with the following topics:

- Community
- Homesteading:
    - Planning a homestead
    - Building and construction
    - Maintenance and Repair
    - Soil
    - Gardening
    - Animals
    - Food Storage and Processing
- Health
    - Food and Nutrition
    - Exercise, work, posture
    - Sex
- Human Relations
- Land Trust and Tenure
- Money, Exchange and Script

In March, Mildred reported that she spent January 12 to February 7 at a beautiful natural hygiene center in Florida.

In May 1969, Borsodi was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of New Hampshire. He was heralded as an "[a]ctivist at 80, non-conformist scholar, creative philosopher" and credited with a long list of educational accomplishments. The previous year he had published *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*. In August 1969 he delivered a four-day seminar on the Seventeen Problems at Heathcote at the Annual meeting for a dozen people, meeting three times a day. (Registration $2.00. Bed and board $3.00.)

Six major areas of experience were covered:

- Education: What are its goals and best methods?
- Human Nature: What is our essential nature and prime differences from other organisms?

- Human Behavior: How do we distinguish between good and evil?
- Verification and Validation: How do we know what is true?
- The Political State: When, if ever, should we sanction legal coercion?
- Possessions: Who should own or possess the goods and objects needed for our survival and freedom.

Mildred described the style of discussing the topics:

> *For each one, we worked at clearly defining the problem to see what factors made it a problem – (a problem is a life situation to which one has several alternatives for dealing with it). We tried to define the terms we use clearly. Then we examined three major ways – roughly the supernal, the mechanistic and humanistic solution – in which people tend to handle this area of their experience. In most cases, we found that "modern" society rejects solutions befitting the nature of man (i.e., his need for freedom to express his inner-initiated action) and instead practices materialistic, authoritarian or unethical methods. Many of us saw how "different" the solutions are, which are humanistic or suited to human nature.*

Mildred produced a mimeographed document, "Seventeen Explorations into the central problem of How Shall I Live," that provided a handy outline of the system.

By August the tone of the Green *Revolution* was shifting from rural life back to social issues – an ongoing see-saw. There was an article with plans for five-acre homesteads for middle class and ghetto minorities. It was more focused on "Why?" than "How?"

The August 1969 issue of *Green Revolution* featured a full-page article on "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought." The thesis was:

> *In the final analysis, it is impossible to achieve harmonization of man and nature without creating a human community that lives in lasting balance with its natural environment. Ecology shows how nature's economy works. The ideal: A balanced community, a face-to-face democracy, a humanistic technology and a decentralized society – these rich libertarian concepts are not only desirable but they are also necessary.*

The banner for the Green *Revolution* changed in October 1969; it read: "A World-Wide Effort for Decentralization and Rural Revival."

In that October issue the lead article welcomed Mildred home and noted her absence from *Green Revolution* for several months. She spent a considerable amount of time at her sister's homestead in Iowa. Mildred, it was reported, "is no longer in a position to edit the paper more or less single handedly. and a number of us at Heathcote are anxious to work on the paper. So, we've decided to produce it here."

Also in October, we find the following, an example of the shift in School of Living philosophy and operations (and I should note it was now being called the "GR"):

> *Beyond the circumstances, many of us here feel that GR should shifts its horizons to meet the needs of the many readers – and potential readers – whose thinking has begun to outrun the approach GR has used to date.*
>
> *The basic problem – at least this is how some of us see it – has been one of overemphasizing theory at the expense of practice. Both in GR and in our seminar series we've tended to the abstract. We do need to develop theory for social change, including a constructive and coherent critique of the mainstream society. But our concern with turning people on to the necessity for alternative ways of life has too often been allowed to overshadow the task of spelling out alternatives in detail.*

There was already a noticeable drift from Borsodi's core principles. He believed that continuing education was required to pursue the good life. Few of the younger members were interested in study; they wanted experience, the more sensory the better. Borsodi's work was abstract, at least if you didn't apply it as he had advised. Mildred worked to remedy that, but she needed more help than, with few exceptions, she was being given by the younger settlers. Ironically, it should be noted, the drift of the articles in GR submitted by younger members were often loaded with abstractions, often trending towards social justice and utopian ideals, more opinion than fact. It trended towards a more "New Age" and more self-centered orientation over the years.

The October 1969 issue also published a long article on a spinoff of the International Independence Institute (III), a land trust organization founded by Borsodi, led by III Field Director Bob Swann, called New Communities, Inc. New Communities was organized by and for Southern African American sharecroppers in Georgia who acquired 5,000 acres of land.

In November, Mildred wrote about a "Thanksgiving Reunion." Borsodi and wife Clare visited Heathcote for the annual meeting.



There were then 20 people living at Heathcote, none over 28 years old. One of them said: "We want land and we want community. But mostly we want to live naturally – to be ourselves. We don't like organization and structure, and we don't like being told what to do." I think this statement serves to highlight the change in basic values at Heathcote, a retreat from social ideals.

In the April 1971 issue of Green Revolution, we find a new "Statement of Philosophy:"

1. A philosophy centered in the organic and creative, rather than mechanical aspects of life
2. Lifestyles consistent with this philosophy – primarily the modern homestead, intentional communities, and decentralization
3. Social, economic, and political changes to allow ready access to land and natural resources
4. Psychological insight into and understanding of oneself
5. An education based in major universal problems of living and their human solutions.

Mildred offered a summer series of discussions on School of Living and decentralist concerns, ecology action, retirement homesteads, economic and political pressures of modern culture, and an organic revolution for a new world view.

In August 1971, Mildred revived the decentralist conferences. Two hundred "decentralists" chaired a conference on a human future. There were 20 speakers and

discussion leaders. Borsodi spoke and challenged the group to provide a program of action. Bob Swann attended, described his partnership with Borsodi and credited him with the founding of the International Institute of Independence, which "gets to the root of our land and money troubles."

The following January 1972, Mildred moved away from Heathcote.

The Legacy of Mildred Loomis

Mildred's tenure at Heathcote was a brief three years. She was often an absentee tenant. Leaving Heathcote was another turning point in her career and in the history of the School of Living as founded by Borsodi and directed by her. We do not have all her reasons for departing from Heathcote, but we do have numerous hints mostly from the *Green Revolution*. She apparently no longer considered Heathcote the Shangri-La she had dreamed of.


Mildred Loomis

Mildred arrived at Heathcote, as noted, in late September 1968. Most of 1969, until late August, she was away apparently dealing with health issues. In addition to a resort she stayed at shortly after arriving at Heathcote, she also spent months at a time with her sister over the next years, at times as an institutional resident under the care of a local physician her sister worked for.

She was wrong about quietly retiring. The closing of Lane's End and the formal shift of School of Living operations to Heathcote in Maryland, represent something that, in retrospect, can only be called a discontinuity. Of necessity, she put a lot of effort into keeping the School of Living on course. She had hoped a new generation would take over her roles with the same fervor and passion. She wanted to become a gentle godmother for the movement. Unfortunately, successors with leadership qualities and commitment, of vision and energy, were not forthcoming.

A new generation did come to Heathcote, but they were largely a troubled and often troublesome bunch. As Dylan sang, "the times they were a changin'." The Aquarian age was one of turmoil. The old culture was failing, community, as a social institution, was disintegrating, and youth were seemingly adrift. Borsodi's "ugly civilization" had gotten a whole lot uglier.

There was a generational gap, if not chasm. Mildred's supporters from the Lane's End period were mostly of the Greatest Generation, cohorts who had struggled through the Great Depression, World War II and the post-war cultural transformation. Many of the young people in the late '60s were the age of their grandchildren. For over a half century, the culture of the School of Living had been defined by Borsodi, Mildred and the numerous

close supporters, most of whose names we have forgotten. The had roots in tradition. The under-30 "Boomers" who formed the Counterculture, were a very different sort. They had very different values. These "Hippies" flocked to places like Heathcote where they could escape the restraints of the larger, conservative, American culture. Unfortunately, lacking a vision or commitment, they rarely stayed long.

The new generation were feeling more of a sense of alienation than mission. Their interest was sensual. It was the age of "drugs, sex and rock and roll." They became more focused on body work and individual psychotherapy: "I'm OK," "feeling groovy," and "doing my own thing." How that trend evolved can be found as the Sixties turned into the Seventies. The Seventies, wild and crazy as they were, the disco decade, was also labeled the "decade of despair."

Pilgrimage

After Mildred first moved away from Heathcote early in 1972, she stayed with the Borsodis in Exeter, NH for several months. Then she moved to the Lefevers' Sonnewald homestead near York, Pennsylvania where she resided until 1975.

Mildred help Borsodi work on his, *Wealth and Illth* about the economic problem. It was one of a series of volumes, a separate book about each of the seventeen problems, which Borsodi had begun to write.[50]

That visit with Borsodi coincided with an incredible burst of activity for both of them, actually starting in late 1971. In early 1972, *Green Revolution* reported about the Conference on "Adequate Action For a Human Future" held for four days in September 1971 at Camp Elder, Fairfield, Pennsylvania (near Gettysburg) which drew 200 participants. Mildred was the general chair. It produced 150-pages of proceedings entitled *Toward A Human Future: Some Imaginary Alternatives*, in March 1972.

A second "Adequate Action for a Human Future" conference was held in June 1972 in Conway, New Hampshire, sponsored by the School of Living. The opening evening included a panel with Ralph Borsodi, Paul Goodman, and trustee and west coast School of Living leader Don Newey discussing decentralization. The format for this conference was panels morning and afternoon with fewer presentations. There were panels on "Technology in the Future," "Homestand Now and in the Future" (with Scott and Helen Nearing), alternative power sources for homesteading, agriculture and industry, and community and the future. Mildred made two presentations, one each on the functions of the family and of the community. Other presentations included a series on land and land trusts.

The Spring 1972 issue of *Green Revolution* carried Borsodi's introduction to the 1972 paperback reprint of his *Flight From the City* (first published 1933). It was titled "Launching a Social and Cultural Renaissance." He wrote that there had been a lot of changes in nearly 40 years since the first edition of the book during the Great Depression. There were continued challenges to the good life, and it was now time for a new generation to take up the challenges. Paul Goodman wrote the "Preface" for a new, paperback, edition.

[50] A manuscript was submitted but apparently lost by the publisher. One would expect a carbon copy, but I have not found evidence of it. I did, however, review the early typescript and research notes during my visit to the Borsodi archives at the University of New Hampshire and was impressed with it. The archived manuscript is massive, I estimate, about 1,000 pages.

Towards the end of the year Borsodi wrote about "The Green Revolution versus The Counterculture." That he did so expressed his, and Mildred's, response to the impact of the Counterculture youth on the School of Living. He observed that there were a lot of forms of counterculture, some heavy into drugs, some violent revolutionists. The Green Revolution stood out because "… it begins not with political agitation but with persuading people to themselves live in accordance with a culture fundamentally different from that which is now prevalent." The School of Living program of right-education and self-sufficient living, of land trusts and local currency, he argued, is a sound model for forming a new culture.

In the October 1972 *Green Revolution,* there was a report about a program to create five regional Schools of Living, a project that was apparently started in mid-1972. In addition to Heathcote, regional Schools were proposed in New England, the Southeast, Midwest-Central and California. Committees were formed, with a total of some three dozen individuals involved.

There was a lot of turnover of residents at Heathcote, which was generally true of communes across the country. The hard-core, back-to-the-land Hippies, like the Beats before them, were a tiny minority. For most of them, communes were places of "high" life and recreation. The majority of the Hippies were just kids attracted to the fad and fashion of the Counterculture (one could get bell-bottoms and tie-dyed shirts at Sears). They would travel around to visit communes for short stays. The Nearings complained of a steady stream of visitors who disrupted their daily routine, just looked around, chatted a lot, hoped for a free meal, and left. Those who hung around a few days rarely did much work. Festivals and concerts drew them. Ditto protests. Then came Disco. Then, like most others of their age, they moved on to jobs, marriage. children, and mortgages.

In April 1973, 80 people gathered in Haddonfield, New Jersey for a conference on land trusts. Bob Swann spoke of his "longtime association with Ralph Borsodi, who founded the School and Living and its land-trust communities in 1936." He talked about their founding of the International Independence Institute (III) in 1967. Contact information was given for the III to encourage people to get involved, along with information on Borsodi's new edition of *Flight From the City, Seventeen Problems*, and anticipated *Wealth and Illth*; Mildred's "Clarifying Economics of Peace"; and School of Living trustee Don Newey's "What Price Miracle". All of these publications were available by mail.

The July–August 1973 issue of *Green Revolution* carried a long interview with Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis. An event was organized by *The Record*, the Bergen County, New Jersey newspaper. They hosted Borsodi and Mildred for visits to Dogwoods, Bayard Lane and Van Houten Fields – Borsodi's homestead and the two original homestead community experiments he established – with photographs. This article marked the 50th anniversary of the building of Dogwoods and made an excellent publicity event for the School of Living.

Borsodi had expressed his reticence with starting a new community from scratch; he believed that was very hard to do. It's best, he concluded, to start with an existing small community[51]. He described a good community as "an economic, political and social system.

[51] There are hundreds of prospects today – economically distressed communities around the country.

All of them must be fair, honest, human." He reiterated that it requires land and a good local money system. He was experiencing that sense of community at Exeter.

He said he wrote what he had learned about community formation in *Education and Living* in 1948 and noted that building a community, like building a house, requires a plan, at least in general outline. It takes education, both rational and emotional. Borsodi cited Gruntvig of Denmark who knew this well.

Borsodi concluded: "Motivation is certainly necessary. *Self*-motivation for learning is basic. But isn't any young person interested in living well? … Should it be so hard to motivate him/her or engage his/her interest in that?" However, Mildred again noted tellingly, that many young people seemed to dislike rational things.

The SOL Press[52] printed the proceedings of the conference as *Moving Into the Front Ranks of Social Change* – 88 pages covering the six conference topics: History, Crisis, Land, Money, Action and Truth. George's basic ideas and the progress of his system were presented and discussed, and there was a session on the Arden Enclave set up on Georgist principles in 1900. Mildred presented on "Ralph Borsodi & School of Living" and discussed her work with the School of Living over the years. She also presented "Exploitation via Money: An Alternative Constant Currency." There was a lot of discussion included in these proceedings and it was clear that there was an intent to move forward. The document concluded with statements by Borsodi and from Henry George's classic *Progress and Poverty*:

> *Borsodi: "The holiest study is not science, not art, not philosophy, not religion, but the study of the truth about how to live, how to treat our fellow men and how to use what has been entrusted to us like decent and honest, sensitive and concerned, cultivated and considerate human beings."*
>
> *George: "The Truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. If that could be, it would have been accepted long ago. If that could be, it would never have been obscured. But it will find friends – those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth."*

1974

Green Revolution Volume 12 started with the Sept-Oct 1973 issue. Richard Fairfield of Los Angeles, representing the School of Living West, was editor. Fairfield brought a lot of energy to the School of Living and the *Green Revolution*. He produced an extraordinary series of five issues through 1974 in collaboration with Mildred and Borsodi. Each issue, averaging 56 pages, presented a summary of *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*. Three issues were on "Perspective on Major Problems of Living," and two on "Perspectives on Living." It was clearly a well-focused campaign to enlist people to the School of Living cause.

We find this statement of purpose in the banner of *Green Revolution*:

> *The School of Living is a unique and progressive non-profit organization founded in 1936 [1934] by Ralph Borsodi, and carried on to the present by its Director of Education, Mildred Loomis. For the past 37 years the School of Living has encouraged and assisted people in realizing the following purposes:*

[52] The SOL Press was started by R. Bruce Allison, a young visitor to Sonnewald who repaired an old press Mildred had moved from Ohio. He acquired it to start his own printing business with the agreement to produce School of Living publications.

1. *A philosophy centered on the organic and creative, rather than the culturally habituated aspects of life;*
2. *An education based in major universal problems or challenges of living, and their human solutions;*
3. *Psychological insights into the understanding of one's self;*
4. *Social, economic and political changes to allow ready access to land and other natural resources;*
5. *Lifestyles consistent with the School of Living philosophy.*

The inside back cover listed the advantages of School of Living membership, under the heading, "What's in it for YOU?" The answer: "Membership in the School of Living is open to anyone seriously exploring alternatives to the status quo and interested in improving the quality of his or her lifestyle in improving conditions in the world as a whole." Membership was $10 per year for individuals. Here is what you got:

- 300 pages of reading (which appears to be Fairfield's five issue series) plus a choice of a free book, including Borsodi's new edition of *Flight From the City* and Mildred's *Go Ahead and Live*.
- Analytical and Integrated Alternative: "Only the *Green Revolution: Perspectives of Living* breaks down into manageable parts all aspects of living to help you analyze and understand each one from a new and valid perspective. And then, put them back together again in one unified, integrated whole, so that actions can be consistent and healthful."
- Membership in an Alternative Movement, a movement without rigid or dogmatic assertions.

Members also received:

- Timely summaries of School of Living Conferences and Seminars soon after they take place.
- Participation in seminars at the Maryland and California centers as well as throughout the country.
- Participation in study-action groups in your local community.
- Condensations of important documents related to the alternative culture.
- Participation, firsthand, in the growth and development of an innovative society.
- An annual report summarizing the activities and progress of the School of Living and projecting the goals and ideals and plans for the future.
- Identifying yourself with a constructive alternative. You get a membership card.



In the third number of this series Mildred reported a seminar on the Seventeen Problems conducted by Borsodi at Heathcote in November 1973. It was seventeen days long, one day devoted to each of the problems. It was a demanding undertaking. Some, especially the young, dropped out. Almost verbatim notes were taken of discussion, nearly a hundred pages of which were published and available for a small cost (no copies found).

Mildred summarized this experience with what one member wrote:

Each of us needs a place and a method to sort out our feelings and beliefs that underlie our decisions on what to do about the real issues in our lives. For many of us, a seminar on major problems of living is such a place and such a method. The 17 days in October and November 1973, when we met with Dr., Borsodi in such a probing, helped me become more aware of and responsive to my feelings and beliefs."

Ralph Borsodi
Photo by Grace Lefever

There were two more 17-day seminars at Heathcote in June and September which included daily work sessions. There was also a home study program.

These seminars at Heathcote were apparently not a pleasing experience for Borsodi. He was troubled by much of what he saw in communal youth. Both he and Mildred expressed concerns about this.

There was a "Recap Seminar on Major Problems of Living" that was held in December at Exeter, NH. Another was conducted in Los Angeles in March 1974, and a "Recap Seminar" scheduled in Exeter for December 1974. The Recap Seminars were four-day question-and-answer, discussion and planning sessions with Borsodi limited to 20 attendees.

A four-day conference was announced in California for "discussing and planning, clarification and new directions to enhance the quality of our life."

This issue also carried "A World Peace Plan," Borsodi on decentralization, a "New Declaration of Independence," and articles by others including an interview with Beat poet Allen Ginsberg.

For more than two years, Mildred had been working in high gear; remarkable for her age and especially since she had gone through a period of mental and physical exhaustion. There would be no letup in 1974.

Mildred started writing her biography about Borsodi probably in 1973. By 1974, she had finished 15 chapters, covering his life up to 1950 when Borsodi moved to Melbourne, Florida.

Mildred was clearly continuing to work to make the mission and vision of the School of Living clear. She wrote a short article in which she again told the story of the "Green Revolution" origin in 1940 at Suffern yet with some variations. There was then, she said, a sense of a new movement about family independence, cooperative communities, freedom from government, and the need for land. The movement needed a name, and as previously noted, Catholic Worker Peter Maurin suggested the Green Revolution name. "Green," he apparently said, suggests living, growing things. Green is the color of life. Revolution means change. Should there be a revolution to support life and living? Mildred reported that Peter submitted many essays about the Green Revolution for publication. Peter was a prominent back-to-the-land leader in his own right.

It was not until twenty-two years after that story, in 1962, that Mildred proposed "*Green Revolution*" as the title for the School's monthly publication. At that time, as we have seen, Mildred was working diligently to formalize the School of Living philosophy and I believe she wanted a new metaphor, something to express the urgency of the times.

Mildred wanted to dramatically expand the movement and prepare a new leadership. That expansion to numerous centers across the country was what she wanted to leave as her legacy.

The *Green Revolution* was literally a down-to-earth publication. With it, Mildred sought to reflect life-supporting practices such as "the modern homestead, organic gardening and agriculture, whole foods, good health, cooperative communities, anti-governmentalism, land and money reform, psychological insight, group discussion, do-it-yourself on all levels of life."

The Green Revolution wasn't just flight to the land, it had an underlying objective: Decentralism. It was about remaking modern culture. It was about bringing an end to the mechanistic philosophy of industrialism. It was about establishing an alternative, agrarian, culture.

To be a movement the Green Revolution needed people committed to these ideals. However, In a note about decentralism around this time, School stalwart supporter Walter P. Chase wrote that "Only 2 to 5 % of people want to actually take practical steps to make themselves more self-sufficient, rather than merely talking about it." Talking, theorizing, debating, distribution literature, protest and advocacy don't make one self-sufficient. One has to work at it, and too few are willing to do the hard work of raising their own food and fuel and other things.

There was also a note of protest from Mildred that there was a second "green revolution" emerging, devised by Norman Borlaug but named by Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz. Its humanitarian objective was to feed starving people in poor countries. It was, however, really about a massive, centralized, industrialized, mechanization of agriculture. It was high-energy agriculture -- petroleum, chemicals and monocultures – and it was actually more the color of oil, not "green." It was energy intensive, taking seven to ten calories of energy to put one calorie of food on the plate. It has driven people off self-sufficient farms into urban slums. Perhaps people get fed but at what cost to their humanity?

There was also more about the educational foundation of the School of Living. In the School of Living Reports of 1974, Mildred told another story about its beginnings, which came from the official record of the School of Living, boxes of leather volumes filled with the papers and minutes of meetings. These documents are now missing. While they were in her possession Mildred remarked how much she enjoyed turning through the pages. She reported the original charter of the first School of Living (Suffern, NY), duly approved by the regents of the State of New York:

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is of supreme value, The School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind.*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, School of Living has its purpose to assist adults in becoming aware of, and defining, major problems of living common to all people. For the study of alternative ways of dealing with these problems of living, the School will assist adults in drawing upon science, art, philosophy, natural history, and all branches of knowledge.*

What role had Borsodi played? She wrote that her year at the School of Living (1939–1940) gave her a new vision of how life could be led: "Why at the School of Living?"

> *Because Ralph Borsodi had both vision and skill. Land was available because he worked out a cooperative land-use plan; money and credit because he managed cooperative financing; designing and carpentry were learned and practiced because of his cooperative Guild labor plan.*

He founded, she noted, two communities and inspired a number of others. Great people with a common vision surrounded and befriended him.

In 1974, Mildred was getting press coverage and invitations to speak. In March she spoke at Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas, about her history in the School of Living, the problem-centered approach to education, back-to-the land, and the philosophy of the Green Revolution. She was also interviewed by the Baltimore Sun in March. In April it was announced that her "writing spree" had resulted in fifteen articles available for publication and that she had provided one-third of the material for the *GR*.

Borsodi, it was reported in the Constant in Exeter, had developed an inflation-proof local currency with the support of bankers, economists, lawyers, businessmen and local volunteers.

There was a long list of workshops around the country in special "School of Living Reports" that came out several times that year. These reiterated the objectives of the School of Living and gave details about upcoming events. We learn, for example, that at the Los Angeles Recap, for four days in Culver City, California, in March, the topics covered included: "The Modern Crisis," "The Nature of Nature and Human Nature," "Goals for Human Living," and "Moving Toward Transformation." The July Recap covered: "Social Man – Voluntary and Involuntary Cooperation," "Individual Man – What Man is – What Man Could be," "Man's Values – the Choice of Right and Wrong," "Man's Ultimate Cooperation – the Spread of Knowledge," and "Tomorrow and Tomorrow." There is also a list of the daily topics of the three-week problems of living seminars, led by Willis Hunting and Mildred, in July and August. Admission to these events included submitting a personal life-history and life-plan, "including philosophic, economic and political beliefs. Some of the books, persons, mentors and teachers that have exerted the greatest influence upon her/him may be listed."

1975

In 1975 the *Green Revolution* was, briefly, back at Heathcote. In March, Mildred wrote a short history of the School of Living publications beginning with *The Interpreter* started in 1945 and *Balanced Living*, both of which she had edited, *A Way Out* edited by Robert Anton Wilson from 1962 thru 1964, and *Green Revolution*, started in 1963, which was again edited by Mildred, and then at Heathcote by Roger Wilkes, Larry Lack and other young people, and recently by Richard Fairfield.

Perhaps significantly, the volume number of *Green Revolution* at this time returned to the sequence started with *The Interpreter* beginning in 1945.

With the coming American Bicentennial celebration, the School of Living leaders, chiefly Mildred, began to look at "completing that revolution." It was asserted that the American Revolution hadn't realized its objectives, and those objectives, it was argued,

could now be realized with the Green Revolution: decentralization and education for personal independence. Several activities were planned around this theme. There was a six-day seminar at Heathcote entitled "Completing the American Revolution," chaired by Mildred. Topics included: "Is there an American Dream?" "What has land to do with freedom?," "What has money to do with freedom?," "How much government?," "Goals and Directions," and "What Education?" There were many articles that year about land trust and local currency – two School of Living pillars that Borsodi and friends were currently working on in New Hampshire. The oil crisis was on everyone's mind, and there were other programs of interests around the country.

Mildred contributed a few articles early in the year, but she and Borsodi were both conspicuously absent from the list of contributors as the year wore on. The December 1976 issue did carry an article by her on "The School of Living: The First 40 Years." The tone of that article suggested that she was clearly shifting gears again.

Deep Run Farm: A Newer School of Living


Deep Run Farm

It is clear that the School of Living old guard, Mildred's long-term associates, were still more or less hanging on. They produced a steady stream activities and publications. There was some dynamic young blood, as well, who supported the core program. Heathcote residents embraced the aquarian values. In 1975 Mildred relocated to Deep Run Farm, near York, Pennsylvania and took the School of Living with her. The School of Living mailing address had shifted from Heathcote to Sonnewald and now to Deep Run Farm following her. She spent much of the remainder of her years there.

The widening gap between free-living Hippies and the homesteaders, and the tension generated by the difference of values between the principles of the School of Living found in the Borsodi/Loomis legacy and what got called "communal escapism," was reported by James Wyker from Deep Run. He wrote in a School of Living Center/Deep Run Farm pamphlet, "Is The Trouble With Intentional Communities That They Withdraw from the World?" in which he listed eighteen withdrawal symptoms and responded from the Borsodi/Loomis legacy.

In 1976 there was also an addition to the by-laws of the School of Living, a PREAMBLE, "as amended at a general meeting of the members on October 9, 1976." The stated purpose was to "affirm that the fundamental values of the School of Living, as defined in its Charter, shall be primarily a guide to interpretation of the specific provisions of the By-Laws, and that in daily operation the School of Living shall conduct its affairs in constant accord with the following basic principles." The lead principle was:

> *EDUCATION The School of Living is primarily devoted to education, a process which implies a definition of the basic problems of humankind and study and experience designed to understand and address these problems in a context in which learners, members and staff are*

continually engaged in mutual and self-education, without regard to credentials or other extrinsic rewards.

The four other highlighted topics included: Egalitarianism, Consensus, Humane Process, and Stewardship.

There was a four-page insert in the *Green Revolution* by then School of Living president Jubal. He opened as follows:

Last June your Board of Trustees set a process in motion which has resulted in some new and, we think exiting [sic[53]] changes for the School of Living. These changes have resulted in a new set of By-Laws for the School, decentralization of many of the functions of the School and a move of the administrative offices away from Heathcote Center. The developments of recent months may be the most important steps that the School has taken since it first moved to Heathcote in 1965 and we sincerely hope that you will feel that these changes are a positive move towards making the School a more effective agent for social change.

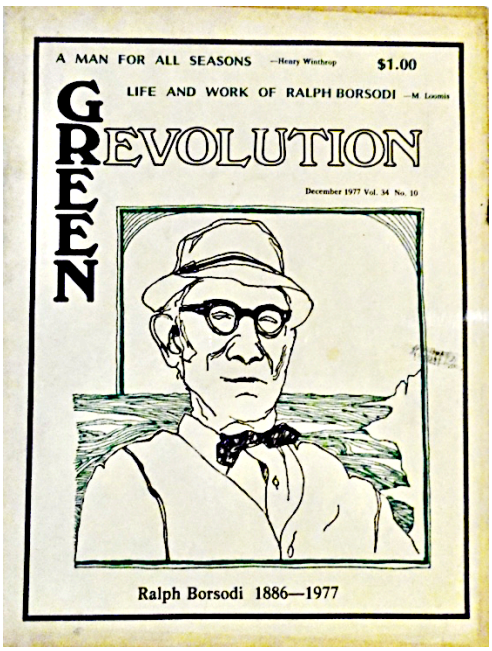
He went on to acknowledge that Heathcote had been identified with the School of Living but in fact the mission of the School was broader than just one of its properties. He added: "With the decision to incorporate more pieces of land in the School of Living came the realization that we should make an effort to give the School a separate identity from Heathcote. Please note the change of address for the School."

The December issue had articles about proposed new campuses.

NEW SCHOOLS OF LIVING: Another project that we have in mind is to establish schools of living in many locations around the country. To do this we need good people like you who will find a location and who will have the time and energy to put into getting such a project off the ground.

We would also like to co-sponsor seminars, workshops and conferences with other groups. And we do have conference facilities available at Heathcote, Deep Run and Downhill Farm ... at very reasonable rates."

The shift towards land trust management continued. Jubal, as president of the SoL, picked up the theme of land trusts in a number of issues that year. The third issue carried a "Community Directory" with detailed information on a hundred or more of them. In June 1977 he again wrote that the new set of bylaws that had been adopted the previous year for the School of Living had been prepared to support a land trust organization. In the October issue he discussed the spirit of the land trust lease.



The December 1977 issue was a tribute to Ralph Borsodi who had recently died. The following year several of Borsodi's articles were printed posthumously.

In the meantime, Mildred continued to contribute articles to the *Green Revolution*. She strongly promoted the back-to-the-land theme.

[53] Jubal actually used the word "exiting." *Did he mean "exciting"? Freudian slip?*

Deep Run Farm was then the site of the School of Homesteading and the Green Revolution/Four Arrows homestead. Four Arrows was a group from Guatemala and Mexico in residence at Deep Run Farm. They demonstrated self-sufficient agriculture, weaving, arts and examples of their culture. Deep Run was trying to build community as the operational center of the School of Living and hoping to attract members with skills such as "typesetting, layout, office skills, gardening, carpentry, weaving, sewing, adult educators, etc."

The Deep Run School of Homesteading and Organic Agriculture was a one-year program for young people who had finished high school about growing food, for achieving self-sufficiency, and living collaboratively. Cost for the year in residence was $200.

A small pamphlet from Deep Run Farm described it as a 36-acres site, that held weekend and longer conferences for study and action, offered a 9-months-long School of Homesteading program, sponsored decentralist groups, and published *The Green Revolution*, "the voice for decentralization," since 1943 [*sic*], among other books and pamphlets.

Ann Shumway put the Deep Run Farm land into School of Living trust. Mildred was serving as President of the School of Living and had some three acres of her own and a 20x22-foot frame building with a loft. She defined the mission as "a heritage from Ralph Borsodi and fore-runners that give us unique opportunities and responsibilities. We have members of intelligence and devotion. How can we put them all together to adequately function at Deep Run?"

There was a short checklist for membership: "If you agree with any of the following":

- You want more space, land and nature around you
- You want to raise more of your own food
- You want to be active in a good neighborhood or community
- You want to help distribute the wealth of the world more fairly
- You want to be an active part of your "media" and government.

It asked the reader to send their response and offered a list of School of Living publications.

Stewardship

With the passing of Ralph Borsodi, the School of Living legacy passed fully to Mildred who, in January 1978, turned age 78. Mildred took her stewardship seriously, remaining the champion of the seventeen problems framework and of decentralism.

Following Borsodi's death, a committee had been formed to oversee the publication of as yet unpublished books and writings and re-publish his out-of-print books. The committee consisted of Mildred, Dr. Gordon Lameyer, Dr. Richard Dewey and Lydia Ratcliff. It was also announced that the University of New Hampshire would archive Borsodi's papers. Plans were underway to produce a *Borsodi Reader*. His *Quest for Wisdom* would consist of 18 pamphlets, an introduction and one on each of his 17 problems[54].

[54] Something like this had been done in India and copies of pamphlets printed there are in the UNH archives.

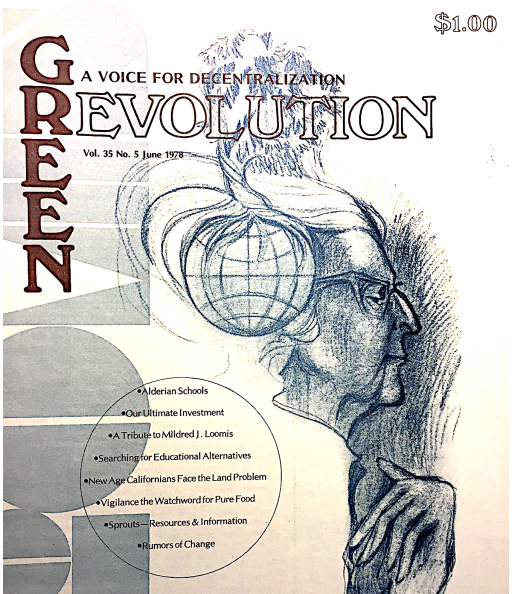
In 1977, the *Green Revolution* press run was 4,000; up from a low of 1,100. In 1975 it had changed from a newsletter format to a 20-page magazine. The covers were printed in color, first one, then to three colors, the size was up to 40 pages per issue, the number of subscriptions had doubled in a year.

Jubal, editor and president, wrote an article entitled "School of Living and Deep Run Farm: A glimpse at the 'grandmother' and 'godfather' of the alternative movement." While intentional communities had been around for some time, Jubal credited Borsodi with "advocating and establishing the forerunners of the modern commune," and particularly "the modern small-machine equipped homestead." He had also, it was reported, advocated and established homestead communities – cooperative communities - and ethical land tenure and was a pioneer of organic gardening and healthy foods.

For two days in July 1978, the Deep Run Farm School of Living Center held the annual Decentralist Reunion. Grace Lefever opened with a sharing circle. There was a slideshow presentation of 30 years of homesteading at Lane's End and Sonnewald and scenes from Borsodi's life. There were workshops on the seventeen problems. Promotions were made for Borsodi's books. We find: "Where and How Shall School of Living Operate?" The School of Living would provide the training needed to establish new communities. The communities were intended to be family oriented and multi-generational – something going back to Borsodi's work in the 1920s and '30s.

Decentralism was the philosophy of Borsodi's movement, it noted, and the family homestead its foundation. The movement, Jubal wrote, inspired the formation of many communities and he listed a number of them. Jubal quoted Chuck Fager who wrote in 1977: "Ralph Borsodi was the intellectual godfather of the modern decentralist surge in our society, a cluster of related movements including homesteading, communalism, intermediate technology, cottage industry, natural foods and holistic medicine." Deep Run Farm was credited with following this ideal. Jubal described the life of the Deep Run community. It served, he said, as a school to promote the movement.

Jubal also said that he believed Deep Run Farm and Heathcote are the only two "community owned" intentional community land trusts in the School of Living network; others were owned by nonprofit organizations. The distinction is that no one owns the land, it is held in common trust. The four campuses were listed: Deep Run Farm (headquarters), Downhill Farm, Heathcote Center and Sonnewald Homestead. He went on to note that Heathcote Center and Downhill Farm have different lifestyles than Deep Run Farm. There is no homogenous organization, no dogma laid down from above, but rather "voluntary cooperation and dignified simple living."



For those involved, he concluded, this is an awesome responsibility. The legacy of the Grandmother (Mildred) and godfather (Borsodi), he wrote, "[p]laces on us the responsibility to remain in the forefront of social change. … We hope to continue the tradition of being modern pioneers in terms of both thought and action toward a more

human future. We believe that our learning centers are indeed demonstrating better ways of doing things and we are constantly striving to make the **Green Revolution** a more effective voice for decentralization." The *Green Revolution* cover, I should note, for some time had headlined that it was "A Voice of Decentralism."

Mildred also wrote an article about Borsodi's alternative currency for that issue, and there were several other articles on money.

'The May 1978 issue carried a long article Borsodi had written on the health problem. Mildred did short reviews on nine books "of timely interest."

The June 1978 issue, Jubal included a special tribute to Mildred, and she contributed four articles. The image of the world and the tree, seemingly growing out of her mind, is suggestive. It was Jubal's last issue as editor. Following him there was again a series of editors.

The highlight of the year was the Annual Decentralist Reunion held at Deep Run Farm School of Living Center in July. The first day was mostly gathering, sharing, hiking and swimming, volleyball and a shared supper. The second day included a slide show of 30 years of homesteading at Lane's End, Sycamore Hollow, Ohio and Sonnewald Homestead. There were highlights from Borsodi's life including his start with natural food; Dayton and the risks of government control; decisions from 1939 at the Suffern School of Living; his visit to Vidyanagar University in India starting 1958; and he and Bob Swann forming the community land trust. Sunday included six-minute presentations, including by some notable decentralist leaders such as Hazel Henderson and seven workshop breakouts. Over 100 people attended. Feedback indicated the slide show was popular. More conferences were requested around the country, with an emphasis on action. Area Planning Committees were designated, with leaders in 14 regions. The School of Living board meeting came at the end.

There was, oddly, something of a prayer or benediction at the end of the conference report:

> *To Ralph Borsodi:*
> *Friend won't you look down on us now*
> *Endow us with your brilliant know-how*
> *You worked and struggled all your life long*
> *Trying to show where we'd gone wrong.*
> *Thank you Ralph for all that you've done*
> *We'll try to continue the work you've begun!*

The drive for membership and new School of Living centers continued. The *Green Revolution* described itself as the "voice for reporting on the activities of a worldwide movement of the same name, which works for decentralized government, industry, population. It promotes community, community land trusts, balanced living, sufficient and healthy foods, appropriate technology, right education, homesteading, right livelihood, harmonious living on the earth, cooperative self-sufficiency, economic reform, spiritual growth. The School's basic function is adult education for normal living."

The *Green Revolution* was pitched as:

1. *A guide to maintaining or achieving a human lifestyle and an increasingly humanized society."*
2. *Dealing with both personal and public problems*
3. *Defining and working at universal problems of living*
4. *One of the longest continually published journals … from a decentralist point of view*
5. *Providing action-oriented information, a highly professional attitude and craftsmanship.*
6. *A bibliography related to each of the seventeen problems.*

The February 1979 issue carried an opening editorial that went on to say:

The School of Living encourages people to go ahead and live with a rich association with nature – with land, trees, waters, wind, sun and welcoming the feel of the earth beneath feet and hands.

The School of Living believes that the full development of each human being is of supreme value, and thus has as its purpose to assist people in studying the major problems of living. …. The School's activities are exclusively education, including publishing, organizing conferences, seminars, institutes, lectures and local study groups; conducting consultation services and correspondence courses.

The School of Living helped to start many of the movements which are now at the forefront of social change: Natural Foods (1918); Community Land Trust (1932); Decentralist Organizations (1934); Appropriate Technology (1928); Alternative Education (1934); Money Reform (1934); Modern Homesteading (1920). ***The Whole Earth Catalogue*** *called Green Revolution 'the grandmother of the alternative press movement.'"*

The School of Living's centers each has its own special flavor. Heathcote is a collection of individual homesteads practicing low-technology energy use and self-sufficient living. Downhill Farm has an inimitable anarchistic style. Sonnewald Homestead is an inspiration of organic wholistic living with emphasis on organic gardening; apprentices learn about old-fashioned hard work living. Deep Run Farm is the site of the School of Homesteading, the School of Living's Education Department, and the School's publishing house for ***Green Revolution*** *and other materials.*

In the early Autumn 1980 issue there is a one-page ad for Mildred's new book, *Decentralism: Where it Came From, Where it is Going?* The book, it said, includes a history of the decentralist movement. It also had chapters describing leading School of Living related homesteads, land trusts and local currency. There was another article by English agrarian John Seymour[55], "Decentralism: Keeping the Message Simple."

In 1982, Mildred published a somewhat revised second edition of *Decentralism* retitled *Alternative Americas: An informal history by the grandmother of the counter-culture*." The book contained 24 chapters, mostly earlier articles, and a synapsis of the history and principles of the School of Living.

Also in 1982, Mildred held the formal dedication of the Ralph Borsodi Memorial Library at Deep Run School of Living Center. There were 2,500 books in the collection. Former associates and students gave tributes to Borsodi.

The announcement carried a mimeographed page that defined the School of Living in these terms: First, it is not a school in the conventional sense. It doesn't even have to be a building or place. Second it advocated homesteading as a means to achieve independence and self-sufficiency and creative responsibility for one's own work. "How can you learn to be an independent homesteader? Attend a Homesteading School such as that offered by

[55] Mildred had written an introduction to one of his homesteading books.

Deep Run. Apprentice to a real, organic homestead for a summer. " Several books were recommended.

The Autumn 1984 edition covered the groundbreaking for the New Hope Community near Berea, Kentucky scheduled for February 1985. There appears to have been some connection with Berea College, founded in 1855, as coeducational and racially integrated and which charged no tuition. The community was founded by an active School of Living member and set up on lines proposed by Borsodi. It consisted of 114 acres which were eventually intended for 300 residents. It was reported that Mildred, True Marks and Tom Greco had visited in September, and there had been some interest in moving the School of Living there. Mildred contributed an article about Borsodi's *Education and Living* and published a timeline of his life and work. She included a comment from renowned Dr. R.M. Hutchins who had written: "It's a scandal and a puzzle why Ralph Borsodi is not better known. He's been part of the dialogue for three generations." The celebration program was published.

About the first of October, Mildred suffered a severe stroke. By coincidence, a commemorative issue on the eve of her 85th birthday had been written just before this and published in two parts just afterward. She had by this time completed her biography of Borsodi: *Ralph Borsodi: Reshaping Modern Culture*. Subscriptions ($12.50) were being sought to get the book in print. It was eventually published, 300 paperbound copies, in 1988.

Mildred had begun the Borsodi biography before he died in 1977. Following his death, she put a lot of energy into completing it. She had intended it to preserve Borsodi's legacy. She obviously based the work on their long association, a review of her publications, records of the School of Living since its founding, correspondence, and other documents – now, as noted, mostly lost.

The continuation of the School of Living was attributed to Mildred in these terms: "[B]ut for the tireless devotion of Mildred Loomis with the help of a few friends and passers-by, it might have stopped completely." Work was still being done to reorganize and to define the role of the School of Living then and for its future.

In September 1985, trustee Tom Greco wrote, on behalf of the board of trustees, that the School of Living is (1) A core group of people dedicated to carrying on the work of Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis and acting as coalition builders, (2) A unique library consisting of decentralist, anarchist, libertarian and alternative economic literature, (3) A nexus, with a known identity, in the network of social transformation which connects decentralists, anarchists, libertarians, egalitarians, humanitarians, ecologists and all lovers of life, (4) A collecting point for diverse periodicals and literature, (5) Custodian and archivist for the writings of Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis, past issues of the *Green Revolution* and other pamphlets and publications. (Unfortunately, these things never happened.)

The School of Living, he wrote, had been and could again be the vibrant center of a Decentralist Center. That might be the new community at New Hope. Mildred's *Ralph Borsodi, Reshaping Modern Culture*, was being edited at that time by George Yamada, and needed support.

Mildred died September 18, 1986. After her stroke, it is said, she had tried to keep working, tried to learn to type again, but she had another stroke and age and declining health finally caught up with her. She could no longer speak but wrote messages. Mildred, it was reported, had stopped eating 18 days before but drank herbal tea. Her friend and caretaker, True Marks, was with her at her death. True said that at 9 am, as she sat holding Mildred's hand, talking to her, Mildred closed her eyes and took a last breath. Her body was cremated, and her ashes spread at Heathcote and apparently several other places she loved. The second *Green Revolution* issue for 1986 was a memorial to her. With her death, and with that issue, the address of the School of Living moved back to the Sonnewald Homestead in Spring Grove, Pa.

With her death "a chapter of history has come to a close," wrote Tom Greco. Tom and Alanna Hartzok wrote parting letters to Mildred. Both had known her for about five years. Tom wrote: "Though small in stature and frail in appearance, she spoke with authority; her strength of character and faithfulness to principles were immense." Tom went on to say that as Borsodi was the Father, then Mildred was the Mother of Decentralism. "She was Borsodi's most faithful disciple. She constantly put forth the immense legacy of this great scholar in words more easily understood. …. Her whole life was a demonstration of how to take charge of one's life – how to be responsible and free, how to be healthy, how to be happy and fulfilled. Her life gave meaning to the ideas of self-reliance and right livelihood."

Alanna recalled their first meeting as she was leading a workshop about Henry George at a conference in California. After some 20 minutes, Alanna wrote that Mildred said: "We know all of this, Now the question is, what do we do about it?" Alanna added: "Your life has been full of so much that I admire. The profound thinker part of you, the communicator and the clear writer in you all so wonderfully blended with high purpose and down to earth practically."

With Mildred's death there was a shift. During her last year, the School of Living center at Deep Run Farm was closed. Her treasured Borsodi Memorial Library was shut down and all of the books, sets of *Green Revolution* and other materials were boxed up and dispersed. Deep Run Farm was taken out of trust and sold back into private hands.

Epilog

Mildred had carried the legacy of Borsodi and his School of Living for four decades. Now it was fading like the shadow of a tree, its iconic symbol, as the sun set. What difference, you may ask, does it make? Perhaps it is like Mildred suggested to Alanna that "the proof is in the pudding." It is what you do. Mildred was unconditionally dedicated to Borsodi's educational mission. They both knew that learning was the foundation of life, that life is problems and that to solve them we need to define them and to draw on our unique capacity as human beings to consult the accumulated experience of our ancestors. From that we form our personalities, our character, our moral capacity.

Moral competence was high on the list for Loomis and Borsodi. Their work was never about themselves but the well-being and the destiny of the human race. They followed a long line of teachers from ancient times and all cultures, in holding that we not

only need education, but we need to elevate the capacity of those who have it to a position of leadership -- not coercive leadership but stewardship; that is, leading by example.

The School of Living, from the time Borsodi founded his homestead in 1920 to Mildred's death, was a tour de force. They were two highly gifted people who formed a rare and powerful partnership. There were many intrepid associates along the path. It was always a work in progress. As Mildred said, the School of Living was far from perfect, far from finished. They were very human -- they made mistakes -- and they just kept going. When Borsodi died, Mildred, aged and frail, kept the standard flying until her own health failed. There is something heroic in her last crusade.

What happened to the SoL (as it was increasingly referred to) after Mildred's death cannot be defined as another turning point. It was a discontinuity. There were stalwart supporters who tried to maintain what remained of the legacy after Deep Run closed but they wore down, and most went their own way. The legacy she sought to preserve, in essence, came to a rather abrupt end. It went the way of a morning mist.

The closing of the Borsodi Memorial Library she created, and the loss of the voluminous and meticulous records, is indeed egregious, but that loss itself points to a problem of movements in general as well as the particular fate of the SoL. I think it is tragic that we have lost much of the institutional memory of the School of Living, but if we do not have ready access to the facts, we do have the questions. We have bits and pieces, and they are suggestive.

Part Four: Learning and Living

Three things stand out for me regarding Borsodi and learning. The first is his own self-education. The second is the content of his reading and the philosophy it represents. Third is his passion for helping people achieve their best potential.

Borsodi's model for education and living, I believe, is rooted in his own unique educational experience. We know that he attended a private school until perhaps age 15. At that age he had an apartment of his own in New York City and was working for his father's printing and advertising business. He apparently did not finish high school and as far as I can determine, never spent a day in college. Mildred Loomis said that he haunted the New York Public Library, filled his apartment with books, and was a voracious reader. He had a retentive mind. He continued deep reading to the end of his long and productive life. It short, he was a self-educated man.

From at least age 15, Borsodi was also active in the Henry George Movement in New York. George had become a world-renowned alternative economist. He ran for mayor of New York – and would likely have won had he not died. He left a strong organization there which is still headquartered in the city. We know that Borsodi edited the organization's newsletter, taught classes and spoke on street corners in Greenwich Village. He became chairperson of that organization in 1919.

Borsodi worked as a consulting economist in New York City. He was a popular speaker and there were always large audiences. He provided training for businesses. His first book was a practical work about accounting.

Borsodi also enjoyed teaching. After he moved out of the city during the 1920s, he invited people to his Dogwoods homestead for training in homesteading and most likely in Georgist principles and related subjects. We also know that he wanted to set up an educational program for the Dayton homesteaders (1933–1934) and enlisted the assistance of several University of Ohio faculty in developing a program. We can find something of what Borsodi was seeking in these lines from reports he made about the Dayton project:

> *The advantages of this plan for homestead colonization recently summarized by a writer in The Architectural Forum present the views of a competent and disinterested observer:*
>
> 1. *The advantage of greater individual freedom which can be enjoyed by the households on the various homesteads together with the possibility of as much collective activity as the group freely chooses to carry on.*
> 2. *The emphasis on family life where a family as a unit will produce its basic necessities and therefore where the influence will be in the direction of binding the family together rather than driving the members apart in the case of the present situation.*
> 3. *A sense of permanence and economic security which will grow out of the homes actually owned by the homesteaders to which they will be attached because the homes will be largely the work of their own hands and the result of their own planning.*
> 4. *The combination of small electrical machinery with subsistence farming will give families ample food and clothing with much of the drudgery eliminated.*

Borsodi asserted that the homesteading project was not only an economic or agricultural problem, "*but primarily an educational problem*."

The really difficult problem is that of inspiring and training families – for this is a family undertaking – to change their notions of the good life, and their ways of securing the necessities and satisfactions of life. In some way they will have to be taught to think in terms of years instead of weekly pay-envelopes; to look upon the earning of cash as something to which they ought to devote only part of their time, and to secure their satisfactions out of creative and self-expressive activities instead of out of conspicuous consumption and vicarious play. Homesteading is, then, in the last analysis, a problem in adult education and as such must secure the right kind of educational leadership.

Borsodi concluded this article with "Three things are needed in order to realize the possibilities of the movement:"

First, definition. Among those working at one phase or another of the back-to-the-land movement there is the widest disagreement as to what constitutes a subsistence homestead. … A National Conference on Subsistence Homesteading is meeting in Dayton[56] as this issue of Survey Graphic is in press and may furnish a definition.

Second, an organizing and educational institution covering the whole country. To provide the continuous education needs for a period of years.

Finally, there is the necessity for securing ample capital finance for the homesteaders and the communities they establish.

The objective of this movement would have realized Borsodi's dream of a post-industrial economy, one that would be free of economic instability.

In final analysis, it was largely a lack of understanding of issues, management and consequences of the choices made that brought the Dayton program to an unsuccessful ending.

Influences

We know that Borsodi had a great respect for the accumulated wisdom of the world – all peoples, all times. He had an extensive personal library, among which were works by a number of authors who particularly influenced him.

We could start with Thomas Paine whom Borsodi read closely. Paine, a very common man and an influential writer, justified the sacrifices needed for the American Revolution for freedom and independence. His books defined the spirit of that struggle for independence – for liberation from a remote, aristocratic and arbitrary tyranny. Paine's *Common Sense* was a best seller during the American Revolution. He wrote the book not for the educated elite but for the ordinary people of the colonies. His own formal education was elementary school level. He was self-educated, well-read, and had a gift for writing. He addressed his work to people like himself which speaks to the democratic ideal of an informed citizenry. The French author de Tocqueville, following a visit to the US in the 1830s, described American literacy in some detail. It did indeed define American democracy, and that was important to Borsodi.

Borsodi was fond of early American history in general. His copy of *The Federalist Papers*, Mildred said, showed much reading. Jefferson, who fought against the Federalist plan (that would lead to industrialization) appealed to Borsodi. Jefferson understood the importance of education in a democracy. To be free implies education and enlightenment.

[56] The Subsistence Homesteading Conference met March 24, 1933 at the Miami Hotel in Dayton. It was organized by the Dayton Unit Committee. Borsodi spoke about subsistence homesteading.

Jefferson also considered farm ownership the best qualification and exercise of citizenship. Ranking just below the farmer Jefferson placed professionals and craftsmen who owned their own businesses. At the bottom of the list were traders, bankers and manufacturers "whose goal was neither integrity nor craftsmanship, but money." As can be seen in his statement at Dayton, this vision was a cornerstone of Borsodi's philosophy and indeed defined his career.

Borsodi adopted British philosopher John Locke's themes of reason and freedom, and particularly the freedom of thought and expression. Borsodi was a rationalist, giving priority to thoughtful reasoning, facts and scientific validation. Locke influenced both Jefferson and Henry George regarding economic independence and ownership of land. (I recommend the Wikipedia article on "Classical Liberalism.")

From Rousseau Borsodi took the motto: "Man is born free! But everywhere he is in chains." We are by nature, said Rousseau, free and equal, and freedom from tyranny is a natural right. Rousseau was an Enlightenment leader. That movement gave expression to the capacities of the person, to the individual who guided his or her life through thoughtful learning and expression.

Borsodi wrote about two "vigorous Germans," Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. These two philosophers, he acknowledged, represented the darker side of human nature but they were also highly realistic and down to earth. They wrote about the effects of the European encounter with industrialism. Borsodi often quoted Nietzsche, particularly in *This Ugly Civilization*.

Nietzsche is a difficult subject. Many of his views are anti-liberal and anti-democratic, or so it would seem at first glance. His darker views are in fact an expression of a deep malaise in Europe during his life, a sense of an end of an age and a profound despair that went with it. I believe that Nietzsche's writings were a response to his sense of the failure of both religion – "God is dead" - and the failure of reason. There is a deep sense of anguish in his work.

Nietzsche was inspired by Emerson. They both sought self-reliance, and both turned to nature for an understanding of the human essence. They shrugged off the shackles of tradition, of conventional wisdom, and sought to define a new reality for a free, self-determining, individual. For Emerson God existed but was expressed in nature. Emerson witnessed and lamented the birth of industrialism. He came face-to-face with its effect during a visit to England in the 1830s. Nietzsche, a generation later, saw industrial commerce becoming a dominant force in Europe.

Borsodi had fundamental disagreements with Locke, Rousseau and the two Germans. For example, he rejected their low opinion of the common man. But he did embrace their emphasis on the importance of disciplined will, sharp intellect and maintaining healthy, vigorous bodies. Mildred quoted Borsodi saying "Human beings develop through conscious effort for a balance of body, mind and will" – another hallmark of his philosophy and lifework. And it is here that Borsodi is a pioneer. He is an unrecognized innovator in the field of integral or systems thinking, of a holistic view of life. This system came to fruition later in Borsodi's seminal *The Education of the Whole Man*

(1963). Within a decade of that book, "integral education" became a watchword of the human potential movement.

Turning to the influences of the East, Mildred learned that Borsodi had a strong interest in Confucius in whom Borsodi saw a mind trying to penetrate to the causes of social disorder. The goal is to get to the root of things, said Confucius, and when this is done, the right course opens. To get to the root we must earnestly investigate the world, human nature and the events unfolding around us. This principle, I believe, is the foundation of Borsodi's mission. He went to the root of the issue first in his *This Ugly Civilization*, and developed the art of inquiry in his subsequent educational work.

Mildred noted the names of other writers who influenced Borsodi's philosophy, including Blake, Madison, the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Copernicus, Comenius, Galileo, Newton, Pestalozzi, Oberlin, Froebel, Gruntvig, Thoreau, Sun Yat Sen and "scores of other favorites." He also seems to have had a deep affection for Gandhi. Borsodi assembled his library not only for his own use but also to share with others the basic knowledge they needed to define and solve their problems, to learn in order to lead the good life.

The library of the School of Living was started with books from Borsodi's personal collection. The School of Living headquarters, completed in 1936, had a library room with built-in shelving for hundreds of books. While working there in 1939, Mildred read several of them and discussed them with Borsodi. She reported one extended conversation she had with him about the English arts and crafts leaders including Eric Gill, Hillaire Belloc, John Ruskin, William Morris, and others. She said that Borsodi knew them well. He told her that his own system was "substantially but not entirely" like theirs, mostly because, in his view, they only covered four of the universal problems. I believe a good understanding of the British and American arts and crafts movement is useful in understanding Borsodi. That movement was another protest against the dehumanizing influence of the industrial revolution, a return to a more natural, communal level of living, of good books, of an agrarian life, of crafts that are finely designed and wrought by hand. Of greater importance, was a self-determined life based on learning and reasoning.

And, of course, there is the influence of Henry George. George developed a popular alternative economics. What is the source of wealth, he asked? Wealth is a function of land, labor and capital. For George, access to land was the foundation of a just and equitable society. Land is not only the surface of the Earth but includes the whole material universe outside of us. Land, he maintained, is a natural endowment, a common heritage. Land held in speculation makes it too costly for common use. Land, not capital – as commonly held in his day and ours - is the source of wealth. By wealth George meant the value gained through employment of land. The connection has more than economic importance. George wrote, "for it is only by having access to land, from which his very body is drawn, that man can come into contact with or use nature." George also advocated education for all people to help them understand and resolve the issues of their lives.

Industrialization changed our relationship to the land. For untold generations farms were the source of livelihood. Once farming represented 85% of employment in the US,

today less than one percent of our workforce claims farming as an occupation and only two percent of the population live on farms.

Cities have consumed a lot of good farmland. They were built in agricultural regions, starting as villages, shops and markets. Development has now covered vast stretches of this land, eliminating farms and orchards by the thousands of acres. That process continues. Cities became the home of factories and department stores, and jobs shifted from self-subsistence farming to city. In cities we find large areas of appalling poverty.

It was to this that George responded. For him, the key term in the economic equation is labor. Capital is the product of land plus labor. In fact, labor is the source of all wealth for it is only through labor that land can be made productive. Without labor there is no value created. Capital is not the start of the process but rather the end result. Capital can, and should be, used to aid production, and capital is increased by a just and equitable return of interest.

The Populist and Progressive movements (notably the former) seem to have shaped Borsodi. George was a cornerstone for these movements, particularly the Populists. As president, Theodore Roosevelt worked to shape a national policy along Populist and Progressive lines. Roosevelt took a deep interest in traditional American values. In 1908 he formed a Commission to study the life of the American farmer, family and community. The *Report of the Commission on Country Life* was first published in 1911. In short, the Report called for rebuilding a traditional agricultural civilization in America.

This Ugly Civilization

During the early and mid-1920s, Borsodi published two popular and pioneering consumer advocacy books. They supported his going back to the land thesis. *This Ugly Civilization*[57] was Borsodi's third book. With *This Ugly Civilization*, he shifted gears. It was highly critical of American urban-industrial society. He became more radical, more philosophical. With it, he began to focus on the problems caused by the modern urban-industrial, highly commercialized, economy. He carefully defined the problem, and, of greater importance, he stated two solutions. The first was by example; he personally went back to the land to achieve personal economic independence. Second, he clearly stated the reason why this change of lifestyle is necessary, with his philosophy of life, the philosophy of the independent, self-reliant, self-sufficient personality. He called it quality mindedness. He called for a peaceful revolution, through education and homesteading, to achieve this healthy state of mind.

The first part of *This Ugly Civilization* is Borsodi's critique of centralized industrial production, distribution and finance. He indicted commercial enterprise as dehumanizing. He started Chapter I with this rather poetic statement:

This is an ugly civilization.

> *It is a civilization of noise, smoke, smells, and crowds – of people content to live amidst the throbbing of its machines; the smoke and smells of its factories; the crowds and discomforts of the cities of which it proudly boasts.*

[57] A new version of This Ugly Civilization, with an updated introduction, can be found at https://www.amazon.com/This-Ugly-Civilization-Ralph-Borsodi/dp/1943687226

Borsodi listed some examples of ugly cites such as Pittsburgh with its clouds of soot, Chicago with the smell of the slaughterhouses, New York City with its crowds, crowds and more crowds. And there are many more such ugly cities. In short, these proud products of industry, while giving us material comforts, rob of us of the pleasures of living.

He goes on to describe the psychology of industrial work:

> *The servitude of the factory which it enforces uniformly upon all men harnesses skilled workers and creative individuals in a repetitive treadmill which makes each muscle of their bodies, every drop of blood in their veins, the very fibres of their being, cry out in voiceless agony that they are being made to murder time – the irreplaceable stuff of which life itself is composed.*
>
> *For America is a respecter of things only, and time – why time is only something to be killed or butchered into things which can be bought and sold.*

The institutions that dominate this society are led by "acquisitive, predatory, ruthless, quantity-minded men" who have the power to impose their will.

Borsodi closed the first chapter with a QED (what was to be shown) to his opening statement:

For this is an ugly civilization.

> *It is ugly because of its persistent failure to concern itself about whether the work men do, and the things they produce, and above all the way they live, create the comfort and understanding essential if mankind is to achieve an adequate destiny.*
>
> *And it will remain ugly and probably become uglier year by year until the men who are able to mitigate its ugliness free themselves to do so.*

The second part of *This Ugly Civilization* is about the pursuit of a better life. This includes both a material aspect (personal economic independence) and a philosophic aspect. With the former, Borsodi described his model homestead and its benefits. With the later, he began his discussion of the manner of education needed to achieve a quality state of mind.

Borsodi further described, in 150 pages, the history and impact of industrialization. It came about, he reported, with the invention of more complex and efficient machines that were driven by waterpower. This happened initially with textiles in England, where production went from homes to factories. Adam Smith in his 1776 *The Wealth of Nations* described a division of labor for making pins – a lot of people each doing one operation in turn – an assembly line that produced a lot of pins but turned people into automaton cogs in the factory system. The book came out just as Watt had perfected the steam engine to power the industrial revolution, turning laborers into machine tenders doing unskilled, repetitive, and monotonous work twelve hours every day at poverty wages.

Efficient machines produced great wealth, and wealth harvesting then became the primary objective of business. As laws and procedures to support industrialization were established, factories became huge, businesses became bigger, monopolies were formed. More and more factories were built, and this resulted in greater competition. With increased competition the struggle for businesses to survive became more intense. New tools and procedures were invented, such as Taylor's scientific management, to milk the last drop of efficiency out of human labor.

Borsodi made it clear that it is the factory, not the machine, that is the problem:

> *If mankind is not to be made into appendages to machines, then domestic machines must be invented capable of enabling the home to meet the competition of the factory – the right kind of machinery must be used to free man from the tyranny of the wrong kind of machinery.*

The factory system radically changed the structure of society. It herded people into cities and made them wage earners and consumers instead of producers. It changed the economic foundation of the family. It changed the status of women as the center of her life moved outside the home. Two-income families were already becoming the norm. It changed the concept of the home -- no longer the place where you take root, no longer a place to really live. In the city, indeed, people often no longer even owned their home.

Reforms were being pursued for wage earners, and Borsodi acknowledged four of them: Shorter work hours, higher wages, lower prices of commodities, and improved workers' social and political status. Borsodi was more concerned with what the factory system was doing <u>to</u> the wage earner. He listed eight issues:

1. It mechanized workers and turned them into cogs in the industrial machine.
2. By introducing more efficient machines and processes, it reduced the number of workers required to produce them and made low-paying menials of the rest.
3. It brought workers and employers into conflict.
4. It made it almost impossible for a worker to be self-sufficient.
5. It destroyed skilled craftsmanship - a means of self-expression as well as livelihood.
6. It left workers without initiative and self-reliance.
7. It transferred the economic satisfaction of the home economy to the factory, depriving the family of intimacy with growing things and of self-reliance.
8. It turned the arts and crafts into repetitive work.

Or, as Adam Smith stated it, it created "a manufacturing animal."

Farming was a balanced, part-time occupation. Farmers spent time not required for farming (i.e., during the winter) in trades and crafts. The artisans and tradespeople who had shops in the village usually owned from one to 20 acres of land near the town. They, too, worked part time and grew much of their own food. There was give and take between work and play. There were numerous holidays and celebrations and fairs. In contrast, the factory worker had a steady, year-round, routine timed by the clock.

In Part III of *This Ugly Civilization*, "The Person in the Drama," Borsodi cut to the chase. The factory is a product of history, of the people who define it. He described three social types. The great majority are the average members of society. Perhaps too harsh a term or perhaps illustrative, he calls them the "herd mentality." They go where they are led. There is a smaller minority of *quantity*-minded people who are characterized as acquisitive, predatory, dominating. They have the power, and they shape history. They give us the ugly civilization. There is a smaller minority of the *quality* minded who give us that which is beautiful in civilization.

The progress of the human race depends on which style is dominant: Quantity or Quality minded, brute strength or intelligence. The predatory command us; the cultured try to civilize us. If we want the latter, we need institutions that encourage intelligence.

This is Thomas Jefferson's theory. He advocated educational institutions that would produce a natural aristocracy, not a ruling elite, but men and women of intelligence. These are the quality minded. These are, Borsodi asserted, the teachers of humankind.

Borsodi went into some detail about each of these styles. The quality minded he exemplified with John D. Rockefeller – powerful, avaricious, inhumane. For the quality minded, he started with Harvard President Charles W. Eliot who wrote of the ideal qualities of character produced by education:

- *An available body. Not necessarily the muscle of an athlete. Good circulation, digestion, power to sleep, and alert, steady nerves.*
- *Power of sustained mental labor.*
- *The habit of independent thinking on books, prevailing customs, current events.*
- *The habit of quiet, unobtrusive, self-regulated conduct, not accepted from others or influenced by the vulgar breath.*
- *Reticent, reserved, a few intimate friends. Belonging to no societies perhaps. Carrying in his face the character so plainly to be seen there by the most casual observer, that nobody ever makes to him a dishonorable proposal.*

It is what Eliot considered the "durable satisfactions of life." Eliot's is a concise statement of the values to which men and women of superior qualities, as described by Confucius, attach importance. Confucius said that the Superior person awakens and "can begin his[her] warfare upon the all-encircling falsehoods of our civilized convention." It takes serious commitment to achieve this.

At this point we find what we might call Borsodi's rule in his statement: "Every individual is a law unto himself because each individual is the product of a sequence of events which are not exactly duplicated in the life of any other."

The quality minded individual is not driven by acquisition, wealth or power, rather they "[e]xtract beauty, truth and goodness from the common stuff of life, no matter what his/her vocation, much as a miner extracts gold from crude ore, and thus enable [themselves] and those about [them] to understand more and to see more, to feel more, and know more than they would otherwise apprehend." They put more value on ideas, "ethical ideas, intellectual ideas, esthetic ideas" -- the intangible things. The quality minded, however, are not impractical and dreamy but rather down to earth. They are skillful. They think critically, check the facts. Their ideals are about permanent things. Ideas endure the centuries; everyday affairs are soon forgotten, like last week's newspaper. And they work to achieve the good life for themselves and their neighbors.

Borsodi summarized with these lines: "The individual quality-minded [person] may not be able to prevent society from plunging into the indignity of a mechanized dark age, but he/she may be able to live for themselves."

With that we go to Borsodi's proposed program for doing that. First, Borsodi made a clear case that a quality mind was in part a product of an agrarian lifestyle, a life lived on the land. It is about communities of quality individuals. He suggested the organization of what we now call intentional communities, groups of people who come together around common values. He offered a constitution for its formation, the preamble of which reads:

> *We, the members of this homestead, in order to form a more perfect home, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common interest, promote the general welfare and*

secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our prosperity, do ordain and establish this constitution.

This is, of course, a paraphrase of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America. It takes us to Borsodi's core values, values also found in The Declaration of Independence. Borsodi wrote: "For quality-minded men and women, the economic independence which such a homestead would furnish would be of revolutionary consequence." This revolution is embodied in a key principle, and I think a telling one. This is what I consider Borsodi's Declaration of Independence:

If the majority of our artists, writers, architects, engineers, teachers, musicians, scientists were in this way to secure the freedom to refuse to do work which outrages their tastes, life for everybody would undergo a radical change. The mere fact that businessmen would lose their power to dictate to the idealists of the world; that they would have to solicit the services of idealist rather than the idealist should beg them to utilize their services, would be sufficient to change a society in which emphasis is placed upon money into a society in which emphasis would be placed upon ideals.

Under these conditions, the plutocracy would fail, and a new leadership emerges.

Relative to this, Borsodi quoted Confucius:

To learn, and then to practice opportunely what one has learnt – does not this bring with it a sense of satisfaction?

To have associates in study coming to one from distant parts – does not this also mean pleasure in store?

Are not those who, while not comprehending all that is said, still remain not unpleased to hear mean. ?? of superior order?

Borsodi stated that the homestead earns the basic needs of the family in the equivalent of eight months, leaving a third of the calendar open for other creative employment – not merely for leisure but work and learning and engagement with living. Borsodi noted that during the Middle Ages, one-third of the calendar was devoted to holidays and festivals. He also wrote:

A beautiful civilization needs more men and women to whom the work of their crafts and their professions is the expression of their own inner aspirations.

The world needs amateur writers, painters, sculptors, dramatists, teachers and scientists. It needs men and women who can appreciate the great achievements of the arts and sciences because they are themselves engaged in contributing to them. Many of the greatest achievements of the human race in the arts and sciences have been the work of amateurs – men and women who worked in many fields and brought to bear upon each of them that fresh point of view which the specialists and the technicians do not supply.

Such as 'A Benjamin Franklin who is a printer, a writer, a scientist and a stateman; a Thomas Jefferson who is a farmer, a philosopher, a teacher, a statesman, a lawyer and a writer; a George Washington who is a military strategist, a statesman, a surveyor and a farmer: these are worth more to the world than dozens of one-track-minded specialists and technicians.'

The final part of *This Ugly Civilization* is devoted to "The Philosophical Aspect." Borsodi wrote that all crave but few are capable of experiencing what he defined as "comfort:"

There can be no conquest of comfort, even though we surround ourselves with all the comfort which civilization offers us, until we answer this question for ourselves and put into the answer

whatever may be needed of the accumulated knowledge of mankind, of personal experience, and of the understanding that makes for wisdom.

The Barriers

Borsodi introduced the falsehoods that are the barriers to wisdom (and therefore to comfort). They reveal themselves through self-contradiction. By exploring conventional assumptions, we reveal these untruths.

Borsodi raised a crucial philosophical point about the nature of order. Does order come out of Nature, out of our scientific understanding? He said no. Order in Nature is apparent but not necessary. Order is, in fact, of our own devising. The extent that such order corresponds with truth is important because it promotes our survival.

Truth comes out of wisdom: "The wiser we are, the profounder our knowledge, the deeper our understanding, the greater are the probabilities of our survival and the greater are the possibilities of our conquest of comfort." Our understanding of things has value:

Only to the extent to which they contribute to [our] survival and comfort.

Only as we free ourselves from servitude to arbitrary and non-creative routines; from conventions which do not contribute to comfort – only as we give ourselves the time and leisure necessary to develop wisdom, do we begin consciously to create patterns of our own and so take on one of the attributes which give dignity to our conception of deity.

This can happen only when the quality-minded attain sufficient freedom. It is they:

[W]ho formulate what we may call mankind's laws of normality: norms deduced from the study of the necessities of human beings; norms which must be observed if men are to live comfortably; norms the violation of which are followed by premature decay and premature death.

Wisdom must stand the same pragmatic tests as convention. It has to work. The difference is that the free person's actions are consciously directed, chosen. The wise, the quality mind, must, therefore, free themselves from convention, for their own sakes and for prosperity.

Borsodi included a poignant poem (his own, I believe):

It is an ugly world, my friends. Perhaps it may be made a beautiful world, my friends.

It is an evil world, my friends. Perhaps it may be made a good world, my friends.

It is a foolish world, my friends. Perhaps it may be made a wise world, my friends.

Free yourselves, my friends, and it becomes yours to make it what you will.

Seeking the objective of obtaining wisdom we encounter the barriers to achieving it[58]. There are ten of them:

1. Economic
2. Physiological
3. Social
4. Biological
5. Religious
6. Political

[58] Borsodi first used the term "problems of living" in this section.

7. Moral
8. Psychological
9. Educational
10. Individual

Borsodi devoted several chapters to the barriers and how to overcome them. Again, the answer is education. One of the bright rays of Borsodi's genius was his capacity to penetrate to the essence of issues, to achieve a compelling clarity of understanding, something that the radical, contemporary American sociologist C. Wright Mills call a "lucid summation." Mills said that the lucid summation, the product of the sociological imagination, provides not only clarity but also the moral energy needed to affect change in a broken society. Borsodi had that lucid imagination.

Barriers to what? The answer, said Borsodi, is "our individuality." Each of these barriers represents an externally composed restraint. And even in a "democracy" we are far less free to determine our own lives than we would wish. They are all built into the way we live. The barriers are, in one sense, statements of problems, and in another sense, suggest goals to be achieved. Each of these barriers is more fully described in my chapter on *This Ugly Civilization* found in both of the *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future* books[59].

The tenth barrier, I would like to note, the Individual, brings focus to Borsodi's main objective. We are individuals, each with unique needs and desires. We crave the joy that we can secure from doing creative work. However, "The greater our individual endowment, the greater is the antithesis with which life confronts us." We are torn between the desire for society and the desire to be ourselves, between wealth and joy:

> *If we are to conquer this final barrier to comfort, we must resolve the conflict between our individual desires and cravings for a personal fulfillment and the demands and limitations which marriage and home and society place upon us. We must end the antithesis between our own ego and the other egos with which it is necessary for us to come to terms.*

We have a choice of devoting ourselves to self-expression or cultivating the social life, or both. Rejecting either diminishes us. Family and friends are part of our lives.

> *Both the personal and social aspects of life must, if they are to be made endurable, be infused with our genius. Certainly, if we aspire to be superior beings, that superiority should be used to ennoble every task in life and not our special talents only.*

Borsodi's School of Living

I think it is clear that the foundation of Borsodi's School of Living was to educate those who were ready for the quality life. I will repeat his statement of objectives from the second edition of *Flight From the City*:

- To associate a select group of artists, craftsmen and teachers in a demonstration of the contribution which decentralized, self-sufficient living in the country may make to redress the economic and psychological insecurity of our industrialized civilization
- To study and develop the possibilities of the home and homestead as a productive and creative institution

[59] My A Confident Future manuscripts can be found on the Borsodi page at www.transitioncentre.org.

- To furnish to men and women the opportunity to follow a carefully developed plan of learning and experiences in living securely, comfortably and richly and in leading others to live equally well
- To offer those who may be able to come for short visits only a place to see and study the relationship of homesteading and domestic produce:
    - To the past, present and future
    - To our present industrialized, centralized, organized, political society; and
    - To make life more meaningful to themselves here and now.

He often said that what we most need is a philosophy to guide the way we live our lives. For Borsodi, that philosophy grew out of reading, participation with the Georgist movement, and engagement with a growing network of leading minds. In part, where Borsodi's philosophy was going can be found in an ideal that prevailed at the time of the formation of the American Republic. The agrarian ideal of that time held that a free, self-sufficient people must be educated, and that society would be guided by those with a knack for both learning and for leading -- not industrial plutocrats, but farmers.

Borsodi advocated personal independence and economic self-sufficiency – in short, personal freedom. That ideal challenged the Dayton homesteaders. Freedom comes at a high cost. Were they willing to work for it? Or did they just want relief – for which they would pay with dependency. They chose to accept dependence. Borsodi concluded that they were poorly informed; they lacked the adequate education to make the thoughtful decisions agrarian democracy mandates.

Borsodi well knew that the public would not readily accept sweeping changes. He had already documented the obstacles he found to the acceptance of social innovation with the Georgist movement. At the root of the change process would have to be systematic education and leadership development.

Borsodi believed that the Great Depression, an economic crisis, was a symptom of the age, but that it also marked a transitional period.

> *Industrial civilization is either on the verge of collapse or of rebirth on a new social basis. Men and women who desire to escape from dependence upon the present industrial system and so have no desire to substitute for it dependence upon a state controlled system, are beginning to experiment with a way of living which is neither city life nor farm life, but which is an effort to combine the advantages and to escape the disadvantages of both.*

The term "decentralism" was carefully chosen by Borsodi. There was a strong "distributist" movement in the country which Borsodi was part of. It originated in Great Britain and at least partially had roots in Henry George who was extremely popular in Europe. Borsodi further developed that idea and gave it a context more appropriate to emerging conditions in the United States.

Distributionism, or decentralization, was about getting people back to the land, restoring the family farm, family production of its needs, and agrarian roots and traditions. It was about small, local enterprises and personal liberty. It was about the dignity such life affords. Borsodi exemplified this ideal.

In *This Ugly Civilization* he made it clear that we need to end centralization of industry, economy, government, education and even religion. Both *This Ugly Civilization*

and *Flight From the City* described how families could break the cycle and achieve the security that had been lost in both the cities and countryside, and he demonstrated how his family did that.

As noted above, in 1936 Borsodi erected a building at the center of his first land trust community at Bayard Lane in which to house his School. It was on four acres. It had a garden where staff raised most of their own food and conducted practical training. It had a meeting room, library and office, a modern kitchen, and dormitory space upstairs for eight people. There was also meeting and workspace in the basement. From the headquarters, it supported crafts and guilds, produced a long list of publications, and offered seminars in five areas:

- Homemaking. In an earlier chapter I listed the publications of this division.
- Agriculture, or rather gardening: the cultivation of vegetables, orchards and raising of small farm animals from fowl to goats.
- Crafts: Workshop practices including making furniture, weaving and production of other household implements and farm products. Looms were manufactured by the School of Living with its label.
- Building: Borsodi learned construction and remodeling. He built Dogwoods and other structures from the ground up. This was a natural part of homesteading life. With the Bayard Lane community, a guild system, with several groups of workers, was formed to do construction.
- Small Business: Training in how to establish a personal business. This was also called "Applied Exchange."

Two Threads:

There are two major threads in our lives: Self and Society. These are two potent and troubling influences. They are seemingly mutually exclusive qualities and can cause stunning conflict. They have been the subjects of thoughtful people since at least the time we first started to record history. They are at the core of the great religions and social philosophies. Borsodi knew that we must reconcile these two forces; not diminish one in favor of the other, but to bring them together in a powerful synthesis. This is the foundation of his School of Living.

What defines our species is self-consciousness. At some point early in our lives we awaken to "I." There is only one of each of us. We are each a product of our individual experiences. The world becomes subject and object. But we are also a social species. As a species we are unique in our consciousness and we are unique among the higher animals in our capacity to bond with others. The other Eusocial[60] species are mostly ants, bees and termites; colonizing insects that have created profoundly intricate societies. Such species have an exceptional capacity to survive. They operate from instinct. Humans are different. We think. We imagine. Our minds are not constrained by the laws of nature or, for that matter, the facts (the product of our beliefs and actions) of history.

That the human species is a part of nature is more than a cliché; it is an absolute fact. We too often impose our ideals on what Nature should be. I think we need to get to the

[60] According to biologist E. O. Wilson, of all the millions of species there are just 19 that exhibit the quality of being Eusocial.

basics, the facts of life as Nature defines them. To start with, our species is the product of four billion years of the evolution of life on Earth. Within each cell is a master template of our being, DNA. In that coil of molecules is recorded every step of the evolution of life. When the sperm and egg join in the womb, the organism that will become one of us starts as a little bud of cells and then grows through the evolutionary stages of life. Over these billions of years life has become increasingly complex and at the apex of the tree of life is us, defined by the most complex organism of all – the human brain. With it, Nature has become aware of itself.

What defines our species is that awareness – of self and of other things. This takes place in a newly evolved brain structure called the neocortex. It is in that part of our new brain that language came into existence. In that part of our brain, we remember: We are aware of the past, present and we imagine futures. We are able to not only adapt to changing circumstances, we can also anticipate the course of events and imagine alternative solutions[61]. I say "we," but memory and imagination are functions only an "I" can do. How we accomplish what we imagine is the "we" part.

Our capacity to learn

Only humans have the capacity for abstract language. That makes us a learning species. With the invention of writing, we gained an additional capacity to inscribe our experience on media that can be sent across space and time: passed down from generation to generation[62]. Inevitably we developed libraries and schools. The core value of the School of Living is Borsodi's realization of the great power of this human quality that has not been fully developed. Indeed, our educational systems are problematic in many ways.

Borsodi developed a model for what he considered "right education." It is, first of all, focused on the individual. It is problem centered. It is integral and holistic, not specialized, and it consults the accrued wisdom of the species – all of it: the good, the bad and the ugly.

It is not learning for learning's sake. It is about how we adapt, survive, make progress, and find understanding and meaning in life. The true function of right education is to develop our individual capacities to the utmost so we can contribute to our community and to the progress of our species. This is a dynamic process, a process that is never in equilibrium and never should be. It's like walking a tight rope, or expressed another way in the Kath Upanishad, "the razor's edge."

The human mind is an astonishing function. As such it has a natural purpose. While it has the capacity of consciousness, memory, imagination, language, humor, etc., it has evolved for one purpose: To solve the problems of survival. It is an organ of adaptation. It comes fully awake only in the face of a problem, a threat.

There are actually three brains built one upon the other that reflect the evolution of life, sometimes referred to as the reptilian, mammalian, and human brains. Awakened to threat, our response starts through the lower brain and the result, especially to threat (real or imagined), can be raw, brutal and purely animal. But we have a higher capacity that

[61] We also have extraordinary eye-hand coordination, and that hand is capable of astonishing manipulation: we are makers.
[62] Written language also includes musical and mathematical notations.

allows us to anticipate and to work deliberately to achieve something better. That is, if we have the discipline and skills to do so. Borsodi sought to give us such a system.

Borsodi's credo came to be expressed simply in two short statements (1940):

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is the supreme value, the School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind.*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, the School of Living aims to assist adults in becoming aware of and the defining the major problems of living common to all people.*

With this credo Borsodi accomplished two important objectives. First, he established the universality of human concerns. Second, he provided for a continuation of human experience through the generations with his approach to accessing the accumulated wisdom of the human race – all of it, East and West, classical and modern.

Free America

We do not know the full content of the educational program at the School of Living during the late 1930s but we can gain some insight from a publication Borsodi co-founded and edited, *Free America*. It was a journal for the decentralist's movement. In 1937 Borsodi, Herbert Agar and Chauncey Stillman started *Free America*[63] with a respectable mail list of 4,000. It was produced monthly for nearly ten years and ran articles of interest to decentralists. All three served as editors until Agar and Stillman, both US Navy Reserve officers, were called into service with America's entry into World War II. Borsodi remained as a leading influence during and after the war years. He became a recognized leader of the decentralist movement. During the war years he also titled the School of Living newsletter *The Decentralist* (covered above).

Prosperity and Security

We can gain considerable insight from two of Borsodi's publications immediately following the founding of *Free America*. In 1938 he published *Prosperity and Security* and in 1939 co-authored *Agriculture in Modern Life*. *These two books* must, in my opinion, be read together. I have summarized them in this manner in a chapter of my *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living*.

Prosperity and Security picks up on the theme introduced in *This Ugly Civilization* –the capacity of a family to self-reliantly produce much of what it needs to live. It is an original, unique economic theory that is highly critical of what Borsodi considered the prevailing but false, theories of economics. He observed that scientific economics (and he challenged economics as a science) ignores the largest industries in the country, the productive family homestead and small-scaled, local, enterprises, which offer the greatest long-term security. Borsodi asserted: "The fundamental economic assumptions of present-day radicals and conservatives, capitalists and communists, democrats and fascists, seem to me to be so false," and that, he said, led him to examine afresh the accepted approach to the study of the economic activities of mankind. It is not conventional capitalism although it advocates a free and an open market. It is a decentralized market

[63] Allan Carlson edited a selection of articles from Free America in his *book Land and Liberty*.

free of the strictures of government and big business. It has no use for the collectivist ideologies of the day in Russia, Germany and Italy, or for that matter of the New Deal.

Borsodi believed that small-scale production is actually more efficient by producing approximately two-thirds of the things we consume. The most important enterprise is the family, related to one another by marriage or ties of blood, pooling and sharing to some degree their incomes, and dividing what they purchase or acquire or produce on their farms and in their homes among their members according to their respective needs and requirements. He proposed that the family homestead/farm be chartered as a corporation, a perpetual entity with no inheritance taxes. It is to that end that Borsodi made this effort to establish a new economic philosophy and give it practical expression. *Prosperity and Security* lays the theoretical foundation for *Education and Living* in which he more fully described the role of the individual, the family and the small community in achieving a decentralized and self-sufficient local economy.

A Plan for Rural Life

In *Agriculture and Modern Life*, Borsodi joined forces with two agricultural leaders in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal administration and provided an insightful alternative to the New Deal. He made no bones about his disregard for government centralization. In three chapters he stated his case and in the final section, a dialog between the three authors, he made it clear that he heard a different drummer. It gives greater clarity to his mission at the time with his School of Living[64]. I think it significant that Borsodi was "on stage" with two extraordinary and influential individuals who shared, in part, his basic values but who were less strident in their opposition to urban industrial society.

According to Borsodi, in order to comprehend the confrontation between agriculture and modern life we need to understand the special cultural conditions of modern life that came at the end of the medieval period. These conditions include science and guidance by natural laws rather than tradition, to prefer reason to intuition or revelation and the dogmas which are mystical or religious in their origin. Modern life is first of all scientific.

A second cultural condition which is distinctly modern is the difference between what we call the machine age and the handicraft age; between the age of steam, electricity, and gasoline, and the age of the windmill and the waterwheel; between the age of transportation by railroad, automobile and airplane, and the age of the horse-and-buggy; between the age of mass production in the factory, and that of cottage and custom production in homes and small shops.

A third modern cultural condition is represented by the contrast between our present paper money economy – bank credit and corporate organization of business – and the barter economy of the past with its organization by villages and regions, and its preference for metallic money and tendency to provide for the future in terms of land, livestock and goods, instead of bank deposits, life insurance, stocks and bonds; between an economy in which exchange takes place continuously in stores and one in which trade takes place intermittently in fairs and temporary markets.

[64] The foundation for Borsodi's rural renaissance is also in his reports appended to the second edition of *Flight From the City* covered in more detail in my *Learning and Living* volume.

Still another condition is the contrast between the city life of today and the country life of the past; between what is urban and metropolitan and what is rural and agrarian.

Borsodi said that agriculture is a way of life and by its nature it is, in fact, a vocation, a calling. For him, agriculture is the science and art of cultivating the land vs. food production as a business and industry. Agrarianism is something essentially American. Science could enrich it without having to surrender it to modern commercialism and industrialism.

Borsodi insisted that what is wrong with agriculture today is caused by over a century of modernization, commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization. How can modern life be readjusted to what is inherent and inescapable in the art and science of cultivating the land?

He also noted that we seek to ameliorate the horrors of industrial civilization by building schools, hospitals and other public buildings in our cities, and by socializing more and more the incomes of industrial workers in order to introduce some measure of security into the essential instability of industrial employment.

Borsodi was not advocating legislation or a return to primitive farming. He wrote:

> *Primarily I am advocating education. The farmer must be taught that his economic salvation depends upon abandoning his present preference for producing for the market, the engineer must be taught that his real task in agriculture is to help the farmer to produce efficiently on a small scale; the politicians, that his real duty is not to subsidize the uneconomic commercial farmer, but to free the family-sized farmer from the handicaps which have been place upon him in the interests of commercialized agriculture, of the industrial system, and of the metropolitan cities of the nation.*

Returning to family production would result in people moving from the city to the land. But, what would happen if we doubled the rural population, critics challenged, if farmers cannot now secure a good living, how would doubling it achieve the aim? Borsodi was convinced that such a reversal could not only be made to produce a higher standard of living, but that it is entirely within our power to achieve such a reversal. In an interval no longer than the span of one or two generations, he averred, a counter-transformation could be achieved by educating farmers of the country to the truth about the futility of industrialization of agriculture. The task calls first for a new country life education, and later for the specific political action which would follow from such education – the ending of all subsidies by way of tariffs, freight rates, and expenditure of public money.

Prices would not rise. Farms would become smaller. There would be a greater demand for small machines both in the farm home and for use on the land. More land would go into woodlots and grass. There would be more of the home crafts and more domestic production.

To end poverty in the country, he concluded, we need a program for agriculture and for modern life which places the satisfaction of the needs of the farm family ahead of the development of industry – the fertilizer industry, the packing industry, the milling industry and all the other industries and businesses which enjoy a parasitic prosperity. We need a new program which places the current interests of human beings ahead of the development of the industrialized state, and which does not assume that the expansion of industry

should have priority over the happiness of the people. Only with such a program will we be using modern knowledge for the purpose of lifting the curse of Cain off of the back of the farmer:

> *Cursed is the ground for their sake. With sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles, shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of they face shalt thou eat bread.*

For Borsodi, life on the land is not a curse. It is a blessing.

End Game

World War II brought this second phase of Borsodi's career to a close. With a war economy and a return to prosperity, the Bayard Lane residents decided to break up the land trust and secure their property fee simple. The School of Living continued to operate under Borsodi's direction. He built a strong core team and support network. He continued to edit *Free America* and published the School newsletter *The Decentralist*. He completed his St. John's proposal, worked on a draft of a book on decentralism with the renowned British philosopher Aldous Huxley[65], developed a peace plan that anticipated the United Nations, wrote a best-seller, and took to the road on the problem of post-war inflation, and led seminar series on the problems of living.

Following the war, Borsodi shifted into a new, higher, gear. He formed two associated enterprises. The first was the School of Living Institute chartered in January 1945 "to promote this new type of education" -- "the scientific study of normal living in various communities." Carl Vrooman, of Bloomington, Illinois, formerly Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, was Chancellor of the Institute, and Mildred Jenson Loomis, of Brookville, Ohio, its Dean. The institute was headquartered at the Loomis Lane's End homestead. The School of Living at Suffern was shut down and operations transferred to Mildred and Lane's End. Local study groups were identified in Bethlehem, Pa., and in Ohio at Columbus, Coshocton, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

The second associated enterprise was Bayard Lane, Inc. Publishers set up to print books and periodicals dealing with subjects of interest to the School of Living. Herschel Papiroff was President, Frank G. Chiles, Vice President and Edward M. Borsodi, Secretary-Treasurer.

A publication from the end of the war (1946) reported that:

> *The activities of the School fall into three main divisions: (1) Research and Publications, (2) Education, and (3) Demonstration. …. the following is a brief outline of its present educational activities.*
>
> *The regular day at the School is divided into periods each of which is used as a basis for studying the practices of living. Every part of the day – including the rest and recreation period – thus becomes an integral element in the effort to obtain insight into the problems of living. The Seminars on the principles of living were conducted under the leadership of Mr. Borsodi afternoons and evenings. The Morning Experiment Period under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Toms begins with a discussion of activities and experiments planned for each day.*

[65] The book was not published but Huxley referred to their common theme, and recognized Borsodi's contribution in his 1946 *Science, Liberty and Peace*.

Among the projects and practices which will be the subject of experimentation, are the following: Allocation of Time; Indoor and Outdoor Chores; Nutrition; Weaving; Recreation and Recuperation; Gardening, Pruning, etc.;' Cows, Goats, Chickens, Ducks, Rabbits; Butter and Cheddar Cheese making; Freezing and Cold Storage; Preserving, Canning and Drying of Food; Economics of Home Production; Modern Laundering; Beekeeping and Pollination.

There were twelve bulletins, which sold well at a quarter each, of its Research Division dealing with the practical activities. There was also a substantial library of about 2,000 volumes. Borsodi took his seminar series on the road. I believe the seminars he held at Suffern and across the country provided much of the content of *Education and Living*.

Universal Problems of Living

Borsodi clearly believed that unless and until we have a program for the proper education of humankind, there will likely be little change in the "progress" of history; or should I say, in the saga of the rise and decline of societies throughout history. It was evident to Borsodi, his friend Sorokin, British historian Arnold Toynbee and a number of other historians and social scientists that this is indeed a period of decline. We either ignore the realities of history, deny them and accept the consequences, or make the effort to create the foundation for a new culture. That was Borsodi's mission.

Education and Living (1948) was the first of a three-volume series planned by Borsodi about education. Over the next nearly twenty years, he completed the other two: *The Education of the Whole Man* published in 1963 and *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society* in 1967. Along the way he also developed a university curriculum based on his problem-centered framework. Borsodi was keen on documentation. Between these three books alone there are nearly 1,800 pages of tightly written text. I summarized that work in my *Learning and Living* volume and will further condense that material, highlighting principles and practices, in this volume.

Borsodi's three educational texts need to be taken in context. *Seventeen Problems* has been taken by some as the master text. I believe that is a mistake. *Seventeen Problems* is an index to the accumulated wisdom of humankind. That book is not a textbook; it is an encyclopedic dictionary intended to define the many ways human beings have attempted to solve their problems. It filled a niche in his system. He intended to produce a volume for each of the seventeen problems, and drafts of several of these were completed. He wrote another small book, *The Definition of Definition*, to explain his rationale for *Seventeen Problems*. It's about clarifying words, ideas, and particularly ideologies. *The Education of the Whole Man* provides the theoretical framework, and *Education and Living* provides the foundational framework for the system; they have to be taken together.

These books, I must stress, are not just about education but also about living – about solving the problems of living. The objective is found in what Borsodi defined as "normal" living – the optimal development of the individual, the family and community. *Education and Living* describes each of these in detail and sets the process in motion.

The Problem-Centered System

The *Educational and Living* framework came out of a practice Borsodi started in the 1920s. As a recognized leader of the back-to-the-land movement, many people consulted him about their problems. He took notes on 4 x 6 cards that he habitually carried with him

and made notes of other problems he found in newspapers, magazines, and books, each bearing a date and time. These are real, not abstract, problems, which lead to solutions. After accumulating about a thousand cards,[66] he sorted them into categories. Borsodi was a taxonomist; he was good at analyzing masses of information into a workable classification of key ideas. The evolution of this classification took years of trial and error. It finally came down to a definition of objective human action – the "problems of living."

Borsodi found the subject-centered approach to education inadequate. He knew there had to be a better way of organizing knowledge, and that was a problems framework. "What," he asked, "are the really important problems of living which all men and women cannot avoid facing, and without proper answers, they cannot live like a human being?" What he developed was a short list of problems shared by all people in all times and places. He reorganized his library by problems rather than subjects.

Borsodi stated his case in a presentation at a conference in 1940 in New York City, something we might call his "elevator pitch":

> *Believing that the full development of each human being is the supreme value, the School of Living has as its primary purpose to assist adults in their study and use of the accumulated wisdom of mankind.*
>
> *Believing that such study and use of wisdom is best facilitated by being related to the universal and perpetual living experience of human beings, the School of Living aims to assist adults in becoming aware of and defining the major problems of living common to all people.*

In short, education must be person-centered, holistic and, above all, focused on solving the problems of our daily lives.

In *Education and Living* Borsodi published his first full definition to the problems of living framework. There were first eight, then eleven, and then thirteen in 1948, fourteen in 1957 and finally seventeen universal problems in 1968. He said there could be more of them defined (I have 21 problem statements organized as nine major topics).

The thirteen problems of living in *Education and Living* were expressed as questions:

1. Purpose: What is the purpose, my vision, in life?
2. Validation: How do I know what is true?
3. Nature: What is the nature of nature and of human nature?
4. Association: How do I associate with other human beings?
5. "Gregational": How do I associate with groups and how do groups associate with each other?
6. Operational: How do we organize collective enterprises?
7. Political: When and how should legal coercion (law) be used in a good society?
8. Education: How do we organize educational activities to improve human wellbeing?
9. Ethics: What makes an act right or wrong?
10. Esthetics: What makes an object beautiful or ugly?
11. Occupation: How should a person spend the whole of his/her time?
12. Possessions: How should land, money, and goods be owned or possessed in order that each person can achieve optimum living?

[66] His deck of cards eventually became some 8,000 statements.

13. Health: How can I achieve maximum energy (health), both physically and mentally, through a long lifetime?

Of great importance, it should be understood that the problems of living are not separate, isolated issues. They belong to a whole, universal, system. They are like, and were eventually represented as, the spokes of a wheel joined at the center (1957 photo elsewhere). We may address each problem in turn, but at the same time we must also ask how they relate to each other.

The system is not merely a method for solving problems. It is a teaching tool that develops the capacity for living a good life. Underlying this method is not only dealing with issues but also developing that quality mindedness Borsodi wrote about in *This Ugly Civilization*. It is a program for seeking the essence of what it means to live as an optimal human being.

I should emphasize that Borsodi's approach is strictly educational; there is no psychotherapy involved. Borsodi lived in an age of psychoanalysis, of Freud and Jung. Like them, he knew that society makes us "crazy," or in his terms, abnormal. But unlike the "head doctors," he believed that detachment from the cause of mental distress was arguably better than trying to cure the effects. Homesteading and decentralization are means for disengaging ourselves from abnormal society.

We cannot achieve normal living by instinct or intuition. We are thoroughly conditioned, and it is an arduous task correcting that conditioning. It requires reeducation, and that involves a school of normal living at the center of small independent communities of self-reliant, economically independent, homesteaders. By reeducation, by learning to solve the problems of living, we can be made whole. A normal life is a state of mind as well as a detached, simple, lifestyle on the land.

Borsodi called his approach "right education." Right education elevates our character and gives us a sense of nobility in life. The objective of right education is the solution of people's problems, not addressing social issues. "Modern problems proliferate and remain unsolved, because we spend so much time trying to deal with society and world problems without first dealing with family and community problems." If we focus on normal families and normal communities, wrote Mildred Loomis in *Go Ahead and Live*, "world problems would diminish and fade out in two or three generations." Borsodi noted that this would eliminate once and for all the need for nations – that social institution that has spawned endless wars in the modern era.

Borsodi wrote that *Education and Living* "is nothing less than an effort to explain not only modern man's failure to achieve the good life … but also to outline the manner in which he might learn how to live like a normal human being." We need to take definitive actions to change the way we live. How? Borsodi advised that we need to:

- Rigorously test our assumptions, our norms of living
- Prioritize individual growth and fulfillment
- Learn to make right decisions to advance our humanity
- Organize community, but, as Borsodi emphasized, the purpose of the group is the individual and not the reverse.

The Beginning of the School

Borsodi gave a bit of insightful history about the formation of the School of Living at Suffern, New York. Generous support came from Seward Collins, Richard Crane, Graham Carey and Chauncey D. Stillman. Nearly $300,000 (equivalent of $5.6 million in 2020) was spent under Borsodi's direction before 1939 and the outbreak of World War II. A major part of this was evidently spent on land and construction.

The central idea of the School of Living was not "instruction in country living and in folk arts and handicrafts; nor the development of a better method of dealing with unemployment; nor the solution of the housing problem," wrote Borsodi:

> *It was the scientific validity of decentralization –of the truth of the conviction slowly burned into my consciousness … that the progress and centralization for which modern industrial man has been taught he should live, was based upon a tragic error – a tragic misunderstanding of the true meaning of science – and that a whole new program of education has to be developed which would substitute for the prevailing mistaken objective in living, an end or aim which was right, proper and, as I have come to think of it, normal.*

Human beings, noted Borsodi, can be taught to believe anything, to adopt any ideology. That had been seen in the recent global war and the post-war ideological standoff with communism. Education, he insisted, should be a means to the good life. He wrote:

> *The ends and purposes of life are embodied in the ideologies which human beings accept or in which they believe. The whole of the study I am calling Education and Ideology*[67] *constitute an exploration of these bodies of idea and the development of a method for choosing among the thousands of ideologies which exist or may be formulated, those which can be used to teach men, individually and in groups, how to behave, and how to deal with the crisis facing them, like normal human beings"*

Regarding *Education and Implementation*, he wrote: "Man's life individually and socially depends upon the implementation of his ideas." If he fails to live the good life, to solve the problems of living, "it may be due to his mis-education; it may be due to the invalidity of his ideologies; it may be due to errors in implementation." He continued: "[M]en must not only be rightly education; not only must the ideas which they adopt be in accord with the norms of living, but so must be the methods and instruments which they use in practicing or implementing them." The scope of this work includes "the entire accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind … integrated." This was further developed as praxeology during the 1950s and became formalized during his time in India with his *The Education of the Whole Man*, published in 1963.

Right education is family and homestead based. Before the factory came the "household and neighborhood system." The household was the center of life, of the family's economy. Raw materials were produced, and finished articles were made and used locally. Every member of the household did their part. Children were gradually initiated into this way of life. John Dewey, who was rather too progressive for Borsodi, did support this basic ideal. Borsodi quoted Dewey: "We cannot overlook the factors of discipline and character-building involved in this: training in habits of order and industry, and in the idea of responsibility, of obligation to do something, to produce something in the world."

[67] "Education and Ideology," as noted, was realized with his *Seventeen Problems* book.

Borsodi continued: "In all this there was continual training of observation, of ingenuity, of constructive imagination, of logical thought, and of the sense of reality acquired through first-hand contact with actualities." There was "modesty, reverence and implicit obedience." There was a ready acquaintance with nature, with plants and animals. It was a process of continuous education. These lessons have been lost to city-bred children, and no formal schooling can supplant them.

Agrarian life shaped what people learned. Industrial education, on the other hand, seeks to adjust children and youth to conform to social expectations. The teacher is also trained and conditioned by these expectations. Conditioning runs very deep in most societies. The greater the centralization of authority the greater the conditioning. The Nazi, Communist and Maoist nationalist ideologies were appallingly illustrative. More recently we have Islamic fundamentalism. We in the US today live in a society that is ideologically highly polarized. Should we not be sensitive to Borsodi's basic premises?

Can we not ask if there is some more fundamental basis of life founded, as the Greeks proposed, on truth, goodness and beauty? Borsodi thought so. It is not just about the steady accumulation and propagation of new knowledge. There are eternal verities. Truth is eternal. This does not mean that the ancients were the final word on truth. They rather sought it. And they created the classical literature of their respective societies – a literature Borsodi thought should be shared and studied thoughtfully. We are seeking the essence of being human and that essence does not change; we have a good record of it.

For Borsodi, the central institution in society is education, the school. It shapes all other institutions. The leader is not the politician, priest, plutocrat, king or soldier, at whose hands humanity has suffered; it is the teacher. He added: "The time has come, it seems to me, when our schools should reflect the educational ideals of all the really great teachers of mankind, and of nobody else."

Borsodi wrote: "I believe that in a very real sense all life is education; that every person is an educator, and every relationship and every single event is life education." And again, education begins in the home. We expect parents to teach their children to live up to minimal standards of being a good person. Are the same levels of love and trust found in public schools? To what standard do teachers conform? Do they live up to Borsodi's standard of "*the stewardship of the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind*" (italics his)? The operative term is "stewardship." He added: "To the teacher [steward], truth is a holy trust to be professed unconditionally."

Borsodi placed a heavy burden on the teacher:

> *The true doctrine is made of sterner stuff. It demands much more of the teacher. It requires him to sacrifice comfort and position, and to face poverty, and if necessary, embrace exile, rather than to buttress the ideology of the moment if he believes that ideology false. In the final analysis it may require him to drink hemlock with Socrates, or risk torture and martyrdom with Hypatia, rather than abandon the stewardship entrusted to him. For the true doctrine requires the teacher not to follow, but to lead. The true role of the teacher and the school in society is to instruct everybody, both old and young, in the art of living intelligently, decently and tastefully, and in the art of organizing all social, political and economic institutions so that it is possible for people to live that way.*

The School, The Teacher, and the Educated Individual

Education is more than schooling, it is "an inescapable accompaniment of everything experienced in life," said Borsodi. Everything we know is a result of learning, of education. "Every individual is therefore the product of a life-long process of education." While genetics may shape our development, the content of our minds comes from experience. Living is education. Human beings, endowed with consciousness and language, are uniquely defined by learning.

Human societies shape what we learn and how we learn. We may learn what is true, what can stand the test of utility, or embrace what has no basis in the laws of nature or of common sense. This brings us to the topic of mis-education. Mis-education may be that which is omitted or the teaching of things that just don't stand the test of life. The most powerful educational force today is advertising. It is, however, not constrained by standards of truth.

There are four fields of education, the "cultivation which develops, either rightly or wrongly, first the perceptions, secondly the intelligence, thirdly the emotions, and finally, the actions of human beings." Right education attunes us to the world we live in. Right education produces a "normal," or optimal, human being capable of functioning effectively in life. Mis-education produces people with intellectual and spiritual deficiencies.

Instruction is also of four kinds: Authoritarian, perceptual, experiential and exemplary. Learning is, therefore, of four kinds: Submission, comprehension, discovery and imitation.

Most of what we learn comes from others, from teachers living or dead. There is a difference between a teacher who has a sense of responsibility for what is learned and those, such as advertisers and propagandists, who do not.

The school is "any institution, organized either partially or exclusively for the purpose of enabling one or more individuals to engage in learning under the guidance or instruction of a teacher." The list of "schools may include homes, churches, factories, offices, stores, newspapers and magazines, movie houses and broadcasting stations, hospitals, charitable institutions, political parties and social movements, government bureaus and military establishment." The content of instruction may be structured (curricula) or not.

A "good" school equips individuals to live as normal human beings:

> *It will furnish him with some of the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind; it will imbue him with some devotion to the good, the true, and the beautiful; it will help him to some extent to develop the potentialities of normal human beings. It will help prepare him to understand his experiences; it will help teach him how to adjust himself to events which he may not at the moment be able to control; and, finally, it will help him in seeking to improve, from the standpoint of normal living, both the physical and material world and the cultural institutions by which he is environed. In sum, every good school will in some manner help equip him to live more like a normal human being*
>
> *The supreme challenge to teachers today is the production of rightly educated individuals; individuals who will live as human beings are capable of living not only for their own sake but also for the sake of mankind as a whole. … Good habits, good institutions, and all the other good things are the by-products of the right education of the individual.*

From the Chinese classics, Borsodi related, we find that the order of a community starts with the cultivation of one's personal life, with self-understanding, or as the Delphian Oracle put it: "Know Thyself," and then a regulated family life. The cultivation of the personal life is the foundation of the order of all things.

Adult Education and Adult Problems

Right education begins not with juvenile education but with adult education. Adult education focuses on the problems of living – not the problem of how to make money but rather a framework that embraces all aspects of life. Again, these problems are universal. They apply to all people, to all times.

What Borsodi means by adult education is not remedial, or delayed, education, i.e., not what they missed while young. It is not more undigested information. It is not "mere intellectual titillation and entertainment." It is about broadening and developing the individual. He did not suggest that this system would not prevent problems from occurring but rather would prepare people to deal with them adequately.

Schools theoretically prepare us for life but there is a disconnect between childhood school learning and adult living. We need to continue to learn in order to address the problems of living during our adult years. Borsodi also noted that schools are compartmentalized, indeed the institutions of life, such as church and state, are in separate compartments, and so is the business world. "The concept of universality is," he wrote, "for all practical purposes extinguished. We need to understand the full scope of the life we live."

It must be stressed that a unique feature of Borsodi's system is that it is focused on the individual. The solution of problems is an individual endeavor, not a public or social issue to be solved by an expert or agency. In a democratic society we are expected to each make our own decisions and to become informed in order to do so. We must continue to question the status quo. We need schools and teachers who can re-educate adults. The role of the wise in the community is not to solve its problems but to empower every adult to do so. They are the stewards of the community, and a product of life-long education.

Borsodi again stressed that our problems are our OWN, not the group's, not society's, not government's, not the experts'. Specialization tends towards "one size fits all." It serves the interest of the institution that is making the decisions. We have acquired a lot of information, which continues to accumulate at a rapid rate, but we lack adequate tools for evaluating and integrating it in such a way as to make it useful to individuals and communities to address their own problems. There are, indeed, few who have the necessary scope of knowledge to bring about this integration. It is they, however, not the varied special interests, to whom we need to turn in the community.

The thoughts of most people are shaped by advertising, by professionals, Borsodi said, "who are paid to disregard objective truth. …. Today not merely public opinion but the common beliefs, tastes and customs of the population are manufactured to order." We are, he reiterated, bombarded by advertising in the mass media, in newspapers, magazines, radio (and then TV). And we should remember that Borsodi was an authority on advertising.

It has become increasingly true that the time we spend reading and the books we are offered are more for entertainment than practical application. I believe Borsodi would have been appalled at how culture itself has become increasingly commoditized. In his day, the market was about products. Over the course of the last quarter of the twentieth century, the US developed a service economy as manufacturing went offshore. More recently, the advertising market, now largely digital, has shifted into a higher degree of what is called "user experience," or UX. The focus is on the consumers' emotional engagement with products and services. In effect, we now pay directly for what was once an advertising cost. It has become a new commodity in itself[68].

So, what is the alternative? Borsodi wrote:

> *My answer is by furnishing people in every community a new kind of leadership through the agency of a new kind of educational institution; by establishing schools of living or community universities and through them, providing such leadership in every community; by organizing the potential leadership of communities – the educated, thoughtful and concerned minority – in such a manner that every individual and group in the community will think it natural to turn to the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind for light upon the problems which they have failed to solve or which they have not been able to solve properly.*
>
> *Through such study groups and under such leadership, it would for the first time become possible to bring to bear upon these problems integrated, objective, and impartial study of the manner in which mankind in its long history has tried to deal with problems of individual living and the social problems of groups, communities and nations.*
>
> *Such schools of evaluation and integration of all knowledge and wisdom would fire the imaginations of the people. Such schools and such leadership would make it possible to escape from the segmentation and special interest with which the problems of living are disposed today.*
>
> *Evaluation and integration of the data of all the sciences and of the wisdom of all teachers, past and living, on each problem would become possible from the standpoint of the whole human being and the whole of life.*
>
> *A specifically educational method and educational leadership would develop and deal with individual and social problems on the basis of reason, not superstition; universality, not insularity; of common welfare, not special interest; of function, not convention; of science, not prejudice; and of beauty, not novelty.*

It has and is being done. Borsodi again referenced the Danish folk school movement, and the teachings of Bishop Grundtvig who believed he could uplift the lives of Danish farmers through inspired education. The Folk Schools transformed Denmark from a medieval to a modern nation. It reduced tenancy and made farmers independent (far more so than even in the US).

Borsodi cited John Frederic Oberlin (1740–1826), an obscure Protestant pastor in France, who transformed a local church into a school (for living) and thus transformed the culture of an entire valley in a decade. He persuaded the peasants to build their own roads, reform agriculture, build better cottages and barns, revive arts and crafts, establish a library, local schools and a nursery school. He received many honors for his work and Oberlin College in Ohio was named after him.

[68] At this writing the virtual reality of the Metaverse is an emerging market.

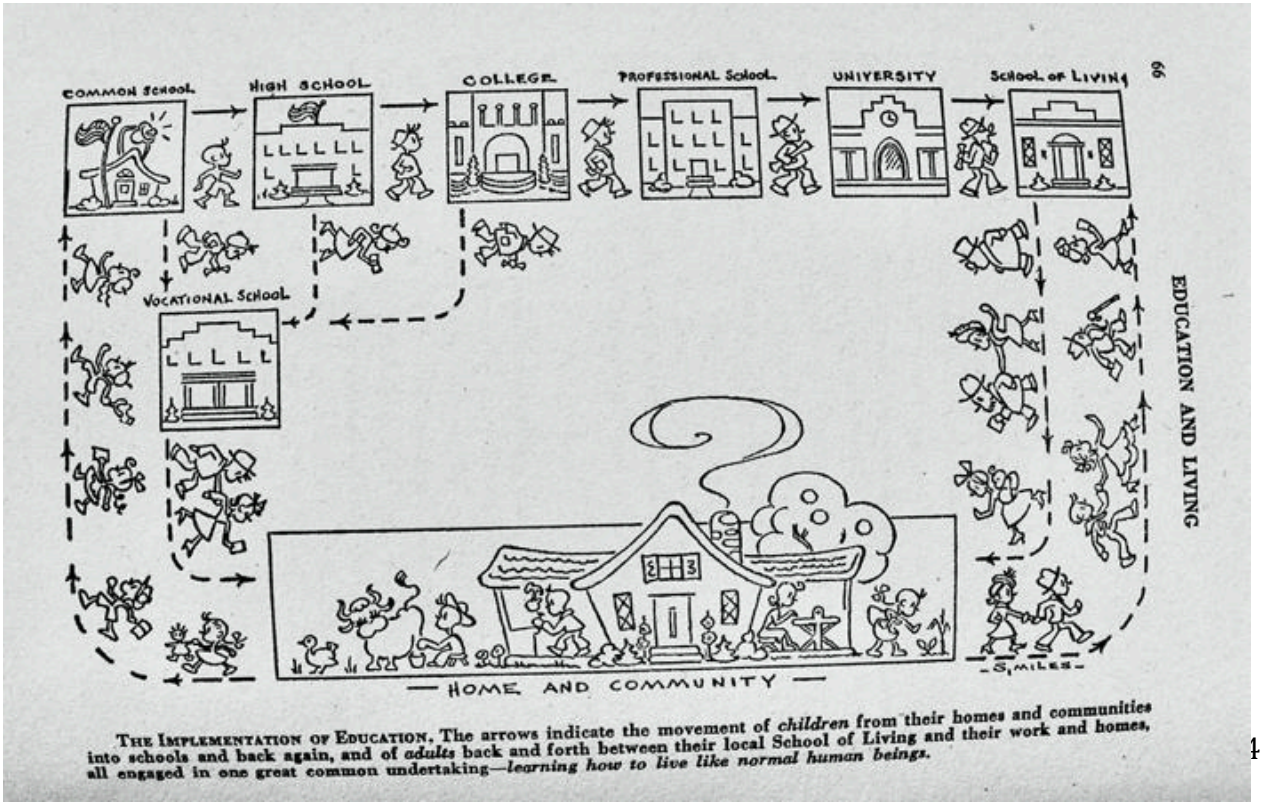
Borsodi also cited Dr. J. J. Tomkins in Nova Scotia who created a school for his parishioners to help them to learn self-reliance: "Under the leadership of educators using adult education – and neither business nor government – as their means for organization and implementation, these impoverished people became their own bankers, their own merchants, their own wholesale distributors of their products; even their own land developers and building contractors. They learned how to help themselves family by family and through cooperatives which they organized, group by group and community by community." Thus, Father Tomkins, with the help of educators who embraced his vision, Borsodi wrote, "succeeded in revolutionizing the conditions of living of these remote victims of modern commercialism and mis-education."

In China, Dr. James Yen, a product of China's literary aristocracy, set up adult educational schools in a remote province. Almost 500 local villages adopted the model and supported their schools on their own. Novelist Pearl S. Buck wrote of this:

> *We realized that literacy alone was not enough. Literacy isn't education – it is only a tool for education, a means to the whole end. The people had to get an education which involved the whole of their life … not so much to fit them for life as to re-make life. Later … we tackled public health, agriculture, economics and local government.*

Yen, Buck reported, had told her that stopping at literacy, as Borsodi noted had happened in the US, "… would bring disaster. There begins the downfall of education. I say sometimes that non-education is better than mis-education. Now when these people want a better living and a better life, that is wholesome. But if you only instill into them a lot of new ideas and new desires and don't equip them with real knowledge or real skills to satisfy their new desires, then all you have done is to make a disturbance in the community of a very undesirable kind. "

Yen did not seek to make the people different – the farmers remained farmers – but to help them achieve a better life.



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION. The arrows indicate the movement of *children* from their homes and communities into schools and back again, and of *adults* back and forth between their local School of Living and their work and homes, all engaged in one great common undertaking—*learning how to live like normal human beings.*

Borsodi's School of Living reshaped the lives of many who attended. It "changed their values, their habits, their ideas …. The idea of co-operative land acquisition has brought together whole groups of people who otherwise could not, or would not, have dared to establish homesteads of their own." It helped people born and raised in the city to learn not only the skills but also gain the understanding to pursue self-determined lives.

It takes a School in each community, with proper leadership, to guide adult education. Borsodi presented an image of the educational process that included all traditional forms of education from common schools to vocational schools to universities and professional schools. All of these programs serve the community. Before and after the formal educational process is the School of Living. It shapes the community. It provides the final stage of education for the university/professional school graduate and prepares them for leadership in their community. And, of greatest importance, it provides life-long learning for the community. Whatever their level of attainment in this system, all are, he wrote "engaged in one great, common undertaking – utilizing the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind in learning how to live."

Realistically, Borsodi reflected, the state of the academy, and of the professions, can be "mediocre and visionless," however:

> *It is not what they are at present that counts. It is not the feeble light that flickers in their heart at present which is important. It is what the best of them already are and what the poorest of them might be led to make of themselves which counts. … If they [the educated minority] cannot discharge this responsibility, then nobody can.*

Borsodi suggested a reorientation of the universities. He proposed that they become economically independent, regional institutions. In 1942 he did, in fact, develop such a model for St. John's College. He devised a plan to make the college a self-sufficient learning community, and also advocated a new objective for education. He envisioned that, instead of launching the young into a chaotic commercial world of some distant city, they return home to serve, stay connected to the university, form a university extension program and bring that institution into the direct service of local communities. These regional universities would be governed by the men and women who graduate from them. Quoting James Creece, the President of Drexel Institute of Technology, with a mission to provide instruction in "the practical arts and sciences," to support his case, Borsodi described "a self-governing association of men for the purpose of study; an institution privileged by the state for the guidance of the people; an agency recognized by the people for resolving the problems of civilization." This, in effect, was the mission he established for the School of Living when formed and described in *Flight From the City*.

Juvenile Education

While Borsodi's system was for adult education, he also wrote extensively about the education of the young. He considered juvenile and adult learning two distinct systems of education. While still founded on the family, some juvenile education can be conducted in schools, much of it outside the classroom. In *Education and Living* he covered four age spans from birth to age 20 and a chapter that further developed his early adult education model.

Mis-Education

Borsodi was highly critical of public education at all levels. He admired certain educators including Harvard's Elliot, Chicago's Hutchins, and St. John's Barr, but these were the rare exceptions. His critique of schools, colleges and universities came down to three issues:

1. Education had become highly centralized; cookie-cutter, one-size fits all.
2. It was fragmented and compartmentalized.
3. It was abstract and not practical and hands-on; in short, not about living.

Most of that critique focuses on the problems of the centralization of industry, the economy, and politics as well as education. The solution is decentralization, which he defined in these terms: "Decentralization … is not merely the opposite of Centralization; it is not merely the negation of Centralization. It is a positive process." As he described it, decentralization is communitarian, cooperative, provides local autonomy in the governance of affairs and promotes personal freedom. Borsodi's decentralization is not a political model. He suggested that we need not a new state but a new state of mind. It is, first and foremost, a model for development of individual human potential. The means to that end is personal education.

Education, Borsodi again stressed, must become society's dominant institution. It must be a local enterprise, not a national or even a state program. He reiterated (and this is a theme that can be found in George's *Progress and Poverty*): "Civilization will only be saved if we turn for guidance to the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind and insist that the teachers and leaders of mankind do the job which they really should be doing – teaching mankind how to live."

I am not going deeply into Borsodi's critique of education. He wasn't the first to be worried about modern, "progressive," education and he was by no means the last. To make sense of that today would require further extensive research into the "progress" of education since *Education and Living* (1948). *Education and Living* is more about Borsodi's solutions than his problem statement, and how we achieve those solutions, I would argue, is still valid.

In summary, Borsodi asked, "What is the goal of education and what is the role of the teacher?" He left no doubt as to the answer. He emphasized that, "education is to guide people in how to live well." He insisted that "[t]he true role of the teacher is to seek and teach the truth – to guide old and young in the art of living intelligently, healthfully and tastefully, and in the art of organizing all social, political and economic institutions so that it is possible for all people to live that way." And added: "Education must help determine and shape culture."

Normal Living

The second volume of *Education and Living* is chiefly devoted to defining what Borsodi called "normal" living. Again, by normal he didn't mean average; he meant optimal. Right education has the objective of the "Humanization of Man." Implementation of right education means the achievement of personal goals, and Borsodi went to considerable length to define this. I will summarize these very briefly.

It is evident that Borsodi was strongly influenced by the educational philosophy characterized by some ideas of the University of Virginia founder Thomas Jefferson, who believed that democracy could only work if citizens were literate and well informed. Jefferson was a champion of personal independence and also firmly believed in small-scale, decentralized society. At that time, the great majority of farms in both the north and south were small family enterprises. The agrarian ideal, in America and elsewhere, was smothered by the rise of industrialism (and Southern plantation slavery).

The roots of Borsodi's educational philosophy are in his own personal sense of independence and his self-education. Borsodi's aversion to public schools is evidenced in homeschooling his two sons during the 1920s. In *Flight from the City*, he described how he and Myrtle Mae developed a generalized, non-specialized, curriculum for them in order to develop an attitude that education is holistic and life-long learning for living.

Again, one of the key elements of Borsodi's critique was specialization. We should understand that specialization is a rather recent historic trend, a product of the acceleration of the expansion of knowledge. Even into the nineteenth century there were only three basic professions: Law, medicine and theology (we could add military leadership). With the rise of universities towards the end of the nineteenth century, focused on vocational preparation, a host of new "professions" began to appear.

With the twentieth century, specialization proliferated. Our modern college curriculum took shape; colleges developed departments for each field of knowledge and universities collected these departments into colleges. Each professor has his or her own special field of inquiry, not, for example, "history" but perhaps no more than a single generation of the history of a country such as the French Revolution or Victorian England. At about the beginning of that century, many students had studied in Europe, and particularly in Germany, where independent academic departments such as economics, sociology, political science, philosophy, and psychology had formed. It was there that the research university was formed. The sciences, natural and social, became professions. American students brought this model home. The American research university dominates higher education today.

Before the modern age, higher education was the foundation for preparing (mostly) men for life in society. Since the Middle Ages learning was founded on the seven liberal arts. and education consisted largely of the "classics," often in the original languages (Greek and Latin, and Hebrew for students of theology), and a familiarity with literature. Those "well-bred people, people of good tastes, that is, educated people, were expected to be conversant about great ideas. This gave them a common language and a common understanding of the human condition.

In the nineteenth century (and well into the twentieth) literature included social and political philosophy. Natural philosophy, what we call science today, was also a popular subject. Jefferson and Franklin were both adept in natural philosophy. The works of Adam Smith and other early economists were widely read as literature. Darwin was considered required reading. The list included Emerson, Thoreau, Whiteman, Melville, Hawthorne and other American notables. It included poets and notably the great English poets. Goethe and Kant were high on the list. The so-called "Renaissance man" had encyclopedic

knowledge. A comprehensive library, however, could be had in a few hundred books. The fabulous 32-volume *Encyclopedia Britannica*, introduced in 1911, was the masterwork of human knowledge. It barely included then emerging technologies such as the automobile and airplane. There is no mention of radio or wireless communication (there is an article about radioactivity). But it has been said that if you had the need and had no other books, you could build, or rebuild, a civilization with this set of volumes alone.

Over the course of the late nineteenth century, natural philosophy evolved into chemistry, physics, biology and other fields. Mechanics became engineering – a wide variety of specialized fields. Power printing multiplied the number of specialized books and journals. As knowledge exploded it became increasingly compartmentalized. The Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress classification systems were developed to organize this vast flood of diverse printed material. Each field tended to develop its own jargon. When I was in graduate school, there were at least 28 distinctive schools in the field of sociology, all fiercely competing for limited resources. I should also note that while Borsodi championed Harvard's President Elliot, it was Elliot who advocated the elective system of education that steadily eroded classical liberal education.

Borsodi understood the benefit of specialization. He considered himself a specialist first in economics and then in education. But he knew that the loss of a broad, humanistic, education, a holistic understanding of the human condition, deprived us of our essential humanity. He was, and still is, by no means alone in this criticism.

Right-Education: The Humanization of Man

To reiterate, "[r]ight-education is that education which results in the acquisition by human beings of characteristics which lead them to act individually and as members of groups, like normal [optimal] human beings." It is about personal choice, rationally and reflectively selected and implemented, in pursuit of the good life. It includes an understanding that the prevailing forms of education, and mass-media indoctrination, are mis-education.

The universal problems-of-living framework gives us not only a list of defined problems but also a compendium of information about the various ideologies associated with each, a review of which gives us a range of options that includes "normal" and "abnormal" options. Which do we choose?

By working through the major problems of living, by consulting the accumulated wisdom of humankind, by becoming informed and thoughtful, by seeing the big picture and the long view, we can achieve a capacity to comprehend life and take appropriate and effective action to make it good.

The Ideology of Normal Living

A key outcome of Borsodi's system is self-expression. For the normal individual, self-expression involves the utilization of his entire personality, integrally and harmoniously, to realize his utmost human potentialities[69] from birth to death. And this requires consultation with the accumulated knowledge of the human race.

[69] Borsodi was a pioneer, along with his friends Aldous Huxley and Abraham Maslow, and with contemporary Alfred Korzybski, in the use of the term "human potentialities."

> *The man or woman who does not learn how to live normally, who does not observe the law of living in all three of its aspects* [below], *does not realize the full potentialities and creative possibilities of the human personality. The failure to realize these potentialities not only dooms the individual to dissatisfaction; it involves the substitution of frustration for satisfaction. Only by learning how to live normally in this full sense can modern man end the frustration to which his present devotion to the ideology of Progress and its implementation through Centralization, condemns him.*

There are two forms of norms of living: Knowing what to do and doing it. Borsodi wrote: "All the conditions of man, both normal and abnormal, are the consequences of his actions. To this there are probably no exceptions."

The Problem of Method

The accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the human race, Borsodi believed, contained what we need to formulate the norms of living. Human nature has changed little, if at all, over the course of history, he again stressed, so that "[a]ll the major problems of living have been faced over and over again by the great minds of the past, and all the major solutions of the problems have been prescribed, and often tried, over and over again, in the history of mankind."

Borsodi said that we need to digest knowledge rather than merely accumulate it. We have learned enough, he wrote, "to eliminate most of the serious pre-scientific errors of … the past." There is still, of course, much to be learned, but our job is to use what we know rather than merely focus on gaining more knowledge. That brings us to the problem of the method for evaluating, for digesting, what we have.

Borsodi proposed a triptych of methods: the deductive, the pragmatic, and the metric. We must use all three and by doing so we gain a geometric improvement in outcome. We use these methods to establish the validity of theory and practice. We have a broad array of knowledge including "history, biography, religion and philosophy, literature, poetry, music, the drama and the dance," which must be considered along with the scientific knowledge of biology and physics. We use knowledge and method and action integrally.

The basic drives are closely examined: Hunger (self-preservation), sex (self-reproduction) and self-expression. The first two drives we share with all animals. Only humans have the "expressic" instinct – or as Emerson put it, "an instinct for perfection." Only humans have abstract language. We have the capacity for artistry. Finally, only humans are able to express themselves possessively – in clothing, architecture, furnishing of the home. All three instincts are part of our being. Borsodi wrote that "[n]o action is normal which precludes the harmonious satisfaction of all three of man's basic instinctual drives and basic norms." To which he added, "only those acts and patterns of action which involve no frustration of the basic survival, sexual, and expressic instincts are normal." This he argued logically by the method of deduction.

Normal living is at its root pragmatic. As such it throws off convention and embraces an alternative lifestyle that works relatively free of frustration. The pragmatic method uses the test of how well our actions work in life. For example, our diet – the food we eat. Does it promote health and longevity, provide energy, digest properly? Then, as now, we know that processed foods are a health risk. Digestive remedies occupy a lot of store shelf space. We can choose healthier foods.

The third method is homeotic, which is to say, "by the numbers," using statistics. Borsodi, as an economist, liked his facts and figures and he used them liberally. You can, however, lie with statistics – make them say pretty much anything you like. Special interests, including advertisers, are good at "massaging the numbers." They can also be used or refuted for purely ideological reasons. The studies of specialists can leave out a lot of important ideas from other fields resulting in an incomplete presentation of things. We must be more exacting. Our facts need to be validated and put to the test. We need an adequate, holistic approach to metrics.

The Accumulation of Wisdom

With the inevitability of death comes the question of the meaning of our lives. Since the beginning of awareness, humans have developed elaborate beliefs and rituals about death. Is death going to sleep never to awaken? Is there conscious life after death? Does the spirit that animates us during life return to its original state? Borsodi addressed all of those questions but did not dwell on it; his main focus was on how we live our lives day to day. He wrote:

> *Such inquiry, it seems to me, points to some such norm as this: Action here and now is the only thing which really counts. It is what to do here and now about this life which is our proper concern. If the manner in which we deal with each problem which confronts us here and now is the manner in which it is normal for human beings to deal with them, we shall not only enjoy all our rights and fulfill all our obligations to the past but to the future and to the eternal and absolute, whatever that may be.*

In addition to the question of whether there is a conscious existence beyond death, there is also the question of the continuance of human culture – what we pass from generation to generation. And this leads us to one of the most important questions about human life, the generational continuity of consciousness. Borsodi believed,

> *It is impossible to dispose of any very important problem humanly without asking four questions: What have we inherited from our ancestors which must be taken into account in present behavior? What has posterity the right to inherit which we must provide in the present? What do we owe the living? Finally, what do we owe ourselves as individuals after having taken into account what we have received from the past, what we are receiving in the present, and what everybody receives as they enter upon the future?*

There is a universal pattern in life. As each generation learns, it passes on its experience, its solutions to the problems of life, to the next. There is something of a chain of being here, of:

> *… great humanists like Aristotle, and Confucius, and Mencius, and Cicero, and Shakespeare, and Voltaire, and Goethe, and John Stuart Mill, and Jefferson, and Lincoln; …to all the leaders and teachers of mankind, not only humanist and philosophic but also materialist and scientific, religious and artistic; and even to the masses of primitive and civilized mankind with their common lore and tradition wisdom, for light; testing rationally and by scientific method what we find in each and find anywhere applicable to each problem with which life confronts us.*

It should be clearly understood that while we have that accumulated knowledge, there is no fixed answer to any problem. Each must be addressed on its own terms. We learn from the past, but we live now. And we pass on what we have experienced.

Function and Organization

Normal living is a program of action, function and organization. It is about purpose. Purpose may be functional or non-functional "in accordance with whether or not the acts performed and the ends which individuals seek to attain are essential to the existence, to the continuance, and to the characteristic form of action or expression of both the specific organs of human beings and of human beings as a whole." For example, eating is essential but eating for pleasure and without regard to health and nutrition is non-functional.

Normal living is balanced living. "Normal Living is impossible unless there is harmonic fulfillment of all the major functions of man." There is a penalty for disregarding any major human function – self-preservation, self-reproduction, and self-expression.

We need not only purposes but also organization and method to fulfill them. "The essence of organization is time; the occupation of time; the planning of the spending of time." The emphasis, again, is on living, on not wasting time. The bigger we get the more effort is required to organize not only time but space and material.

Re-Education

Re-education is about the normalization of humankind, "of first determining the proper ends and purposes to which human beings should devote their lives; secondly of instilling in them the desire to devote their lives to this newly defined objective; thirdly of supplying them with knowledge of how it is possible to achieve it, and finally of leading them to act in accordance with it." Individuals and families can be taught to solve their own problems and exercise initiative. It is adult education, about adult problems. It draws on the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of humankind. It is integral (and not specialized). Since we have been mis-educated, it is about re-education. It is about right-education.

Adult education is not delayed education:

> *True adult education must consist of a comprehensive program which aims to furnishing the responsible adult an adequate basis for (I) choosing among alternative ideologies those which are valid postulates of action; for (II) choosing the specific social, political and economic institutions which need to be established, reformed or abolished in order to implement ideas calling for group and public action; for (III) choosing means of implementing ideas which call for personal action; and for (IV) choosing leaders who are educators rather than power-seekers.*

Above all, adult education is about personality and character-building. It motivates as well as informs. It is also about "cultivation of the Holy Earth, to the organization of normal families and the creation of normal communities."

Schools of Living: The Organization of Re-Education

The School of Living, said Borsodi, is a new type of university intended to be established in every community, a graduate school for adults, which would be "the central and most influential institution in each of the communities of the nation." It educates parents to bring up their own children to normal living and produces an educated minority – teachers – to guide the community.

Sinclair Lewis' *Mainstreet* (1920) depicted small towns starved for fellowship, lacking in spirit, without vision or plan, populated by "two-legged animals" infected with

materialistic barbarism. The School of Living and the normal community restore the essentials of human life. Small communities can be normalized. We must learn how to attract the attention of people in the community to this end.

Human beings are endowed with imagination, memory, understanding. "They dream dreams and try to realize them." The School of Living is an institution to help each achieve their highest aspirations.

A School of Living is a fellowship united by a great idea about life here and now, which is "simply the teaching of normal living; the method of realizing it." This takes commitment, a vision of a better world, a decision to prepare, to learn from the accumulated wisdom of humankind, to solve the problems of living. The method is organized informal education. It doesn't happen in a classroom; it is for active people. It's not about fear, sex, vanity and greed but "truth well-told." It is not zeal or bigotry but humane and proportional. It should also involve festival.

Borsodi reiterated that the School must get people's interest and create a desire to live like normal human beings by moving people to action. It can start with a study group, affiliated with a "mother" School, for analyzing the major problems of living and exploring the alternative solutions of each of them. The group raises funds to employ a trained leader (Deans in Schools of Living) "who devote themselves, apart from whatever time they spend in homesteading and housekeeping, primarily to the work of building and equipping the School, enlarging its membership, and completing its panel, so that the School might begin the work of normalizing their community." The School should be financially independent.

The School can finish basic studies, confer degrees of bachelor of living, master of living and doctor of living. It has a research library organized according to the major problems, and ideally it would employ a research librarian. It should have an extension relationship to a regional university, with its own impressive building, at the very center of the community, with meeting rooms, seminar rooms, office, and library. A list of topic expertise to draw on includes:

- Philosopher
- Theologian
- Psychologist and Psychiatrist
- Sociologist and Social Worker
- Cultural Anthropologist
- Educational Scientist
- Public Relations Counsellor
- Poet-Orator-Writer
- Musician and Dance Master
- Painter and Sculptor
- Actor-Dramatist-Director
- Industrial Designer
- Hygienist
- Nutritionist and Biochemist
- Physician
- Sexual Scientist

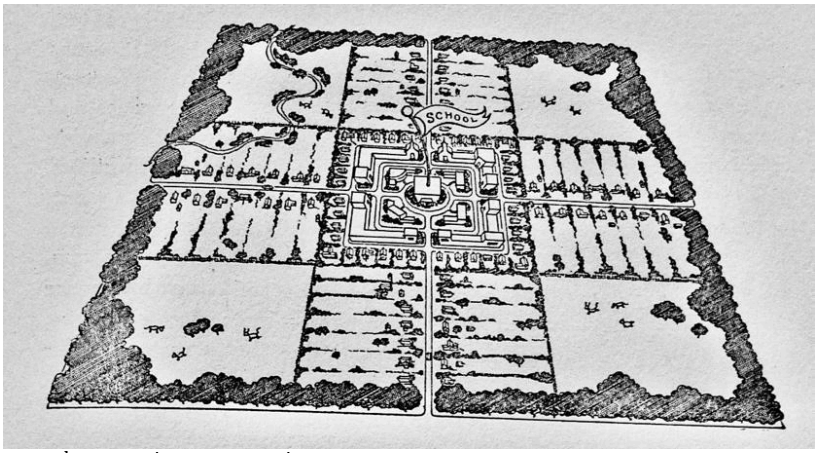
- Population Scientist
- Historian
- Political Scientist
- Jurist and Attorneys
- Criminologist and Penologist
- Police and Military Scientist
- Political Economist (Chrematistike)
- Home Economist (Oikonomikos)
- Agriculture and Forestry Scientist
- Financier and Banker
- Accountant (C.P.A.)
- Architect and Landscape Architect
- Appraiser
- Business Management Specialist
- Engineer
- Insurance and Investment Counsellor

The School provides three activities: "Instructional, which deals with the present; festal and commemorative which has its roots in the past; and inspiration, which looks to the future." It would maintain a perpetual survey[70] of people and land use in the community from which is drawn the community plan (as in Shirley Mile's drawings below). The plan should extend to 100 years into the future.

Challenge to the Teachers of Mankind.

Borsodi cited Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago: "The crusade to which we are called …. is nothing less than to procure a moral, intellectual and spiritual revolution throughout the world. The whole scale of values by which our society lives must be reversed."

Borsodi described several types of leaders – religious, military, hereditary, business and, of greatest importance, educational. He gave a long list of educational leaders from ancient to modern times. These are unofficial leaders who have no power or authority. They work by persuasion and influence, by learning and reason; they are members of their community. They "must individually bear some share of the responsibility for the state of mankind." They must equip themselves to lead. The job is to build a new world, a new culture.



The School of Living Community

Borsodi asked Shirley Miles[71] to draw a diagram of a community equipped with all of the

[70] I would suggest using Geddes' Regional Survey and community asset mapping.
[71] Shirley Miles was a member of Liberty Homestead at Dayton, homesteaded in Ohio and became a founder of Melbourne Village.

essential institutions. Miles provided a bird's-eye view of a community as envisioned by Borsodi.

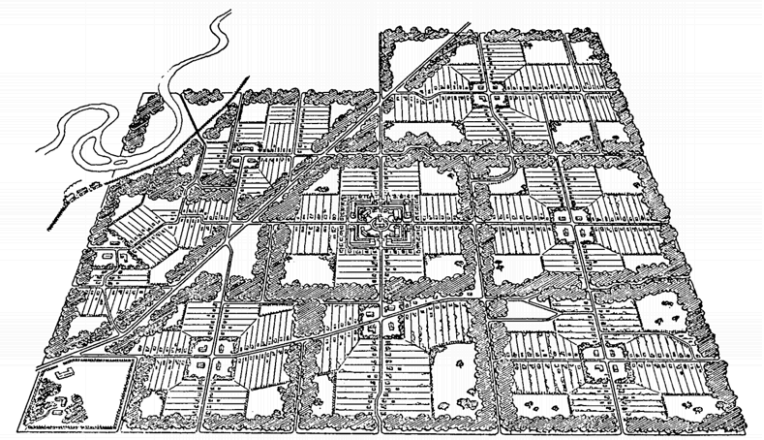
In summary, the School of Living is a locally managed learning institute that seeks to bring out the best of our humanity, to promote strong families and communities. This idea has always been the foundation of what we call the American way of life, a free, democratic society of self-reliant people who govern their own affairs at a local level. A large literature on this issue was published during Borsodi's lifetime.

Shirley Miles School of Living Community

Since we no longer have the institutions around which a successful community can be formed, the School of Living provides them. Community was intended to be a major outcome of the School of Living. The School of Living would give organizational structure to a community of homesteaders. The School as depicted, is at the very center of the community. Miles listed a number of other features of the homesteading community drawn from her own small-town experience, mostly located in the community square surrounding the School:

Library and Museum
Common and High School
Vocational School
Auditorium
Churches
Hotel
Bank
Marketplace
Shops and Factories
Post Office, Bus Terminal
Town hall
Men's Club
Women's Club
Young Men's Club
Young Women's Club
Subsistence Homesteads
Family Farmsteads
Common Pasture
Town Forest

Miles also provided this drawing of a cluster of communities. The total population represented by this image would be less than 3,000 people. There is only one school for this cluster. While seemingly dense, there is probably less than one person per acre in this plan. Such communities would allow relocation of large populations from the cities.



DIAGRAMMIC suggestion for the "equipment" of a normal community. The diagram is based upon a study of Jefferson Township, in Montgomery County, Ohio, in which "Milestead," the homestead of Shirley Miles, the artist, is located.

Melbourne

Virginia Wood, Elizabeth Nutting, and Margaret Hutchinson, former colleagues of Borsodi at Dayton, founded the American Homesteading Foundation (AHF), incorporated in

Ohio in May 1946. At the first AHF meeting bylaws were presented. The purpose of the project was:

> *To establish homesteading groups and provide therewith opportunities for these and other groups to study the principles, practices and further possibilities of modern homesteading.*
>
> *In furtherance thereof; it is proposed to buy, sell, mortgage, lease and otherwise deal in real and personal property; to establish and maintain schools; to publish relevant literature; and to do all other things necessary and convenient to the encompassments of the foregoing purpose.*

This model was consistent with Borsodi's homestead community ideal. What unfolded over the following years in Florida, then India and New Hampshire, would bring Borsodi's educational system to maturity, at least for a start. He made it clear that he laid the foundation, but it was up to others to build on it if they could.

AHF acquired land in Florida and began developing Melbourne Village. Margaret Hutchison described the Melbourne Village program "as a plan of action that would enable the villagers to help others as well as themselves in times of economic crisis, when growing food and bartering skills would serve as cushions." She added that Borsodi saw homesteading as a return to the "early American ideal of individual initiative and democracy" without any lowering of the standard of living."

In 1948 Melbourne Village applied for and received a charter from Borsodi to establish a School of Living. Borsodi offered a series of seminars there on the "Philosophy of Normal Living."

Borsodi's wife, Myrtle Mae, died in 1949. He met Clare Kittridge at Melbourne Village and they were married in 1950 and built a house there. Borsodi sold his home (Dogwoods) in Suffern and transferred his printing machinery housed there to set up a print shop in a small building in Melbourne Village. Priority was given to republishing a second edition of his *Education and Living.*

The social dynamics of the country at the time supported Borsodi's program. The war was over and inflation, as Borsodi had predicted, was high. The national debt was staggering. The economy was in a deep recession and unemployment growing. People were drawn to the School of Living model by a sense of need. Borsodi was surrounded by friends, many of whom had been friends for years, and new supporters at Melbourne. It was seemingly an ideal setting for him.

Elizabeth Nutting's brother, Notre Dame professor Dr. Willis Nutting had given his perspective on Borsodi's program in "Why We Homestead" at the first annual meeting of the AHF. From the minutes of that meeting we read that:

> *He emphasized the values in this way of life for individual development, real and satisfying family life, and a richer and more stable community setup. He stressed the greater security families may enjoy when they live in their own homes where they can raise most of their own food the year round and where in case of depression, members of the community can barter their various skills, thus maintaining a high standard of living regardless of the value of the dollar. He also stressed the importance to our natural life, of a leavening of people who are independent and secure because, as he put it, 'Each would become increasingly his own boss.'*

Nutting knew what he was talking about. He and his family had established their own productive homestead near Norte Dame.

In Borsodi's own terms (from an interview September 3, 1956 – the 22nd anniversary of the founding of the School of Living in Suffern):

> *The founders of Melbourne Village hoped to fulfill this ideal by having modern family homesteading in a small community with as much local government and jurisdiction as possible. Modern family homesteading implies several things: (1) The home and land is owned by the family and is of itself a basis of security. (2) The economic life is centered around the family as much as possible with commodities produced by the home for use of the home. (3) Modern machines, equipment and methods are used for production.*

In another prospectus Borsodi laid out four principles for the new community:

- Real democracy, not just votes but "constructive group thinking and voluntary cooperation."
- Productive homes where families can produce much of their needs themselves. This was "early American independence."
- Development of people which places normal living above material means.
- An education-centered community "dedicated to the development of well-balanced effective human beings." It was intended to serve the needs of the villagers.

A brochure made it clear "that the purpose of Melbourne Village was not to subsist but to attain a higher standard of living, not to return to primitive living but, in the philosophy of Ralph Borsodi, to use modern technology with its time and labor-saving devices for more creative living."

Borsodi and the Village founders were committed to the School of Living idea of creating a homesteader's community and an innovative educational program to support it. It was they – Elizabeth Nutting in particular – the School of Living core team as the village Executive Council, who defined the policies of the community and administered the entire community. Borsodi was teaching "normal living" out of his *Education and Living* book. The expectations for personal development were initially high and in demand. That, however, became a minority position as community membership grew.

Right Education: The Humanization of Man

Returning to his theme of right education, as a means to ameliorate the faults of modern education at all levels, Borsodi reiterated:

> *If it is education which determines the manner in which human beings live, then any process of education which produces human beings who behave in an abnormal animal-like manner may well be called mis-education*
>
> *Modern man behaves abnormally, and the conditions of life which he has created for himself are abnormal … he has either deliberately chosen or has permitted himself to be persuaded to devote his life to a mistaken life-purpose. … along with them the conviction that he, as a modern man, is properly educated.*
>
> *… [T]he great social, political and economic problems which constitute 'the crisis of our age,' and events in the adult world which are shaking civilization to pieces, cannot be disregarded. The social environment, including education, obstruct the development of character and life-conception. You can't change character by reforming institutions (social environment). It has to come from within.*

On the other hand, "[r]ight education is that education which results in the acquisition by human beings of characteristics which lead them to act, individually and as members of groups, like normal human beings."

Borsodi concluded this argument with: "Who shall lead? … teachers who have equipped themselves to lead…"

> *… [W]hat is the part in life which those whom I have been calling teachers should play? … who must individually bear some share of the responsibility for the state of mankind, and who cannot avoid wielding some of the influence exerted by teaching upon mankind, I address this challenge. …. The time has come when the teacher must cease to be a mere hireling. The time has come for the teacher to lead. … A new world must be built. … a school and university-centered society.*
>
> *… [T]he accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind must be made supreme in the hearts and minds and over the behavior of mankind. To us the building of this new world, individual by individual, family by family, and community by community, calls us to a crusade. It calls not only for a moral, intellectual and spiritual revolution in the hearts of those whom I am calling teachers; it calls upon them for triumphant creative action. … It cannot come by compulsion through the use of arms and police forces, nor by playing on man's fear of hell and hope of heaven, and certainly not through material plenty, material security and boundless material progress. It must come only through persuasion and only as a result of influence and leadership.*

In essence having moved the headquarters of his School of Living to Melbourne, in 1952 Borsodi incorporated the School of Living of America, Inc. in Florida. There was continued collaboration with Lane's End where Mildred Loomis had programs of her own as described above.

Also, in 1952, Borsodi and Clare set out on a cruise around the world which included an extensive series of stops in Asia countries where he explored the impact of western industrialization[72]. Mildred Loomis wrote:

> *In many countries Borsodi talked to leaders of thought – in the Philippines, Japan, Nationalist China, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. A friend in India, Shyam Chawla of The Ambala Tribune, made contacts for Borsodi in Gandhian schools and universities. In many places the Borsodis lived with common people.*
>
> *He went to discover, if possible, what Asia could contribute to solve the modern crisis. In the great struggle between Liberty and Authority, which would Asia choose – agrarianism or industrialism, decentralization or centralization?*

As we will see, his meeting and making friends, particularly in India, would lead to another step in the development of the problem-centered model of education.

University of Melbourne

Back at Melbourne, Borsodi and his friends begin to think more deeply about a university, a graduate-level program to prepare the teachers to rehumanize humankind. Late in 1952, it appears that serious work got underway. An organization was formed, and a board assembled. Those were challenging and tumultuous years for all involved. We pick the story up in 1954.

[72] Borsodi's highly critical book, *The Challenge of Asia*, was published in 1956.

Borsodi had conducted a number of seminars beginning at Oberlin College June- July 1944. There were eight of these seminars delivered across the country. He called these "anti-lectures" (a term borrowed from Henry James) whose task is to challenge but not to demand acceptance of what he or she says. A final seminar was held over two weeks at Melbourne in February 1954. The logical next step was a program to continue this series with "a framework for searching inquiry and study."

In 1954, the School of Living of America articles were amended to form the University of Melbourne, which was chartered as "an institution for higher learning devoted to the Arts and Science of Living." It had a mission of addressing a world in increasing disequilibrium which seemed at the time to be falling apart. Rather than a wonderful scientific progress there was "instead world-wide disillusionment, world-wide bewilderment, world-wide revolution. There had been two terrible world wars and the Great Depression." And then came an emerging Cold War and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In response:

> *The University of Melbourne has been organized by a group who recognize that, in dealing with the problem of creating a sane and peaceful society, neither religion, nor science, nor patriotism, nor revolution has saved us. They believe that the time has come to consider whether the failure of the institutions upon which mankind has pinned its hopes may be due not so much to the political, economic and social errors of its organization, but fundamentally to the mis-education of the leaders and the rank and file of mankind. They believe that the time has come to consider whether the challenge of our times does not call for a crusade aimed at re-education and right-education.*

The crisis in education was highlighted by Robert Maynard Hutchins who was also a pioneer in educational reform. He was quoted: "The crusade to which we are called is nothing less than to procure a moral, intellectual, and spiritual revolution throughout the world. The whole scale of values by which our society lives must be reverse."

In summary, the convictions which led to the establishment of the University of Melbourne were:

1. There is a serious – almost fatal – defect in modern education;
2. This defect evidences itself in a lack of faith in liberty, an unwillingness to trust in the implementation of truth, a desperate reliance upon power and might, and sometimes a cynical preoccupation with material wealth;
3. This defect in education of the leadership of the West explains the confused manner in which the free world is dealing with its critics and trying to defend itself from its attackers;
4. This defect is philosophic in nature and no amount of specialized vocational education, no matter how efficiently it is provided, will correct it; yet
5. There is a chance that this defect might be remedied, and, by a kind of intellectual catalysis, a new idea introduced not only into American higher education but into higher education in the rest of the world as well, through a course of study such as that planned for the University of Melbourne.

Borsodi added:

What the University of Melbourne is doing is to concentrate on the study of the missing factors in education. It furnishes its students with a means for forming a philosophy by which they can live genuinely serviceable and satisfying lives; a method of choosing among the conflicting philosophies of life from which modern man must make a choice. It initiates them into a method of education which can be introduced in some form into any school, and which may become the basis of a curricular revolution which will build a real sense of moral responsibility and inspire students with ethical and esthetic values which are genuinely civilized; which are both cosmopolitan and indigenous; which are, in the final analysis, the values of normal human beings.

In the "Objectives of the University," Borsodi wrote:

The University of Melbourne is a university – not a "westernity" or "nationality." Its concept of culture is neither American nor Western; its orientation is deliberately cosmopolitan. The real aim of higher education should be Man – not Western Man, not National Man but Civilized, Humane, Universal Man.

It is not an intellectual department store. It is universal because its one objective, the study of Praxiology, is universal in nature; its approach to study (surveying and integrating the knowledge and wisdom in all the arts, all the science, and all the philosophies and religions of mankind), is universal in scope; its course of training in how to write and speak is of universal utility. It believes not only that knowledge can be integrated, but that it must be, and that such integration is an essential prerequisite to graduate study – that without such integration, the graduate runs the danger of becoming a highly trained and specialized barbarian instead of a genuinely civilized human being.

Its curriculum is organized not in terms of subjects but … in terms of problems – of the basic problems of living – [which] leads to integration: to the examination of all the arts, all the science, all the religions and philosophy of mankind for the purpose of evaluating what each has to offer, in the way of answers to the basic problems with which living like a civilized human being confronts every man and woman, everywhere.

It considers that learning how to earn a living without consideration of how to live is not higher – but the lowest kind of – education.

It carefully restricts its student body to a small number of men and women who are representatives of different cultures, different nationalities, different religions; who are sufficiently mature, intellectually and emotionally, to seek the root-cause of everything; with whom sheer association will itself constitute a liberal education. Since intimate fellowship in such a small group is unavoidable, right selection of membership is itself a contribution to the education of the entire student body.

Unlike a research university, its mission is not about the accumulation of facts. It does not rely upon professional pedagogy, no matter how skillful. It relies mainly upon the inspiration of intimate sharing in the search for truth with leaders of all fields of thought and action. What is presented to the student body is therefore examined and subjected to challenge in every seminar by a visiting faculty of great distinction, representative of important, and particularly, of opposing schools of thought.

St. John's

Borsodi had already given some thought to a self-sufficient university in his 1942 St. John's thesis. The St. John's great books curriculum was founded only a few years after Borsodi established his School of Living. He and St. John's president Stringfellow Barr became friends, with Barr visiting Suffern. As noted above, in 1942 Borsodi proposed a

plan to form St. John's into a larger, self-sufficient community along the lines of his School of Living. They accepted it as a thesis and awarded him a MA degree.

Borsodi admired the St. John's curriculum which consists solely of the study of the great books. There are no lectures, only seminars. The program introduces students to the entire scope of western culture. The approach is Socratic: Questions are asked, answers probed. It teaches critical thinking. It includes arts, music and lab work, often repeating landmark original experiments in science. In short, it nurtures Borsodi's ideal of quality mindedness. I believe Borsodi envisioned the University of Melbourne modeled on St. Johns only with a focus on the problems of living rather than merely a review of literature.



University of Melbourne Cornerstone

Founding the University of Melbourne

Melbourne Village founders, as noted, intended the community to include an educational program. A number of members who were largely affluent and well-educated, supported this mission. Others did not; they just wanted a delightful retirement place. The university committee proposed buying a 20-acre lot on the edge of the village. In part due to the tension between the visionaries and the growing number of retirees, the Melbourne Village board balked at having the university on its property. They also objected to having a racially mixed faculty and students. The university group then worked with officials and community leaders in Melbourne to find another location and began construction of a building. On October 6, 1955, the cornerstone of the of University of Melbourne building was laid.

A dedication seminar for the university was planned for December 27, 1955 just prior to the university's (postponed) formal opening. There was another year's delay until the official opening.



University of Melbourne Headquarters Building

According to a brochure, the University of Melbourne was a graduate school. The program was opened to a maximum of thirty [full time] students per term[73]. Tuition was $500 (equivalent to about $4,400 in 2021) for one mandatory semester in residence. Students would work through the then 14 (briefly 15 and then 16 before settling again on 14) problems of living in twelve weeks and then spend three weeks writing and developing their own unique personal expression of the program. For a Masters' degree students were required to perform research in their field and write a thesis. For the Ph.D. they would do more extensive work and write a book. These works were intended to be published by the University of Melbourne press (students paying the cost of printing but would receive a royalty), and these books would be used to develop the library.

The term "university," rather than "westernity," was about two points. First, the curriculum was based on eastern as well as western works (St. John's was only western). Second, the program was universal rather than specialized. Students were expected to become familiar with the whole scope of human knowledge – a point Borsodi had emphasized from the beginning, at Suffern, starting with homeschooling his own children, more fully outlined in *This Ugly Civilization*, and further developed in *Education and Living*.

Rather than produce innumerable specialists, it represented an integrated educational approach. It was at this time that the spoked wheel model of the major problems was produced (apparently by Mildred Loomis, above) to show the integration[74] of the problems radiating from a common hub. The program was based on "a praxiological philosophy" (from the Greek word praxis which means practice; or the study of purposeful human behavior).

Mildred gave a brief outline of the University of Melbourne experiments in her book *Ralph Borsodi: Reshaping Modern Culture*. She had more to say in an article, "The New University," published in the *Journal of Higher Education*, December 1956. Mildred made a point of contrasting the program of study at the University of Melbourne compared to other colleges and universities, such as Columbia where she had obtained her master's degree. She used a term Borsodi possibly originated: "intellectual department stores." She said that she, as did most other students, came away with a sense that they would take their place at the peak of civilization, only to find "world-wide disillusionment and world-wide revolution." She had much more to say in critique of higher education such as: It suffers from superficiality, specialization, is unrepresentative of the world at large; it "fails to touch the emotions, to fire and inspire with purpose, and to quicken the consciences of students."

The University of Melbourne, she continued, represented a very different approach: What we know is aligned to how we live, the problems cover all of living. The program is based on a modern and scientific understanding of reality and each problem is related integrally with all the others. Finally, "it is directed toward individuals and not toward groups or masses. It recognizes that ultimately all problems – even those which call for some collective action – are dealt with individual by individual." Praxiological education "equips individuals for rational, humane, and effective personal conduct and individual behavior. It makes ethical and aesthetic considerations a part of all individual action. It

[73] It was intended that at least half the students would be from the non-western world.
[74] The integral model was employed by leading writer Ken Wilber nearly half a century later with the creation of the Integral Institute.

replaces modern man's preoccupation with wealth and power; it assists each person to form his philosophy of the Good Life based on the good, the true, and the beautiful."

The stated challenges the University of Melbourne addressed included the assault on liberty of recent history and the inability of "free" institutions to secure, let alone advance, the cause of freedom. The response:

> *The University of Melbourne has been organized to furnish mature and qualified persons, who show promise of being able to teach others, an opportunity to frame for themselves a philosophy within which human liberty stands as rationally justified and to be desired.*

The focus was on the effectuality of individual human actions. The program addresses the "Unexamined, mistaken or irrational answers to the universal problems of living," which, once properly accomplished, allows the discovery of solutions. To do this requires the "whole of human knowledge." The outcome is a science of human action.

Mildred noted that a library, holding some 4,500 carefully selected volumes, had been collected at Melbourne classified under the universal problem topics.

Journal of Praxiology

Borsodi launched and edited the *Journal of Praxiology* in March 1955, a professionally printed magazine format, printed by the University of Melbourne Press (meaning by Borsodi), 6 x 9 inches with light green covers. The *Journal of Praxiology* was billed as "A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Integration of Knowledge on the Basis of the Major Problems Involved in the Humanization of Human Action." Subscription was $3.00 per year. It appeared quarterly for ten issues with the last dated March 1957.

The back of the front cover of the first issue states that the University of Melbourne is:

> A Self-Governing Association for Study
> An Institution for the Guidance of People
> An Agency for Resolving the Problems of Civilization

That first issue consisted of a symposium of 21 distinguished persons responding to Borsodi's idea of praxiology. Each contributor made a statement about the topic and to each Borsodi responded.

The second issue, June 1955 (Summer), was the University of Melbourne catalog. A second catalog appeared as the fourth issue, December 1955. With these two issues we get Borsodi's vision of the university. The basic content for the two catalogs is essentially the same except for the list of problem topics and faculty. The Summer issue was for the 1955–'56 university term. The curriculum for the Spring 1956 semester, scheduled for February, was to begin with a week-long seminar on the Major Problems of Living, each morning at 9 a.m., Monday through Saturday. Following that were 13 seminar topics, one for each of the then 13 (and as noted the number varied) universal problems in *Education and Living*. This opening was, however, postponed.

The inside cover carried a "Challenge and Response." I think this might be considered a mission statement and is worth considering in full:

I. Challenge: The University of Melbourne believes that the crisis of our times constitutes a challenge to which the world of education must make an adequate response. It believes that no response will be adequate which is not universal – which does not include the contributions and contributors of both East and West.
II. Response: The University has been organized to furnish to graduate students who plan to devote themselves to careers in education, in the humanities, or in the social sciences, an opportunity to frame a philosophy by which to organize their work and plan their lives.
III. Plan: The plan through which it proposes to provide such an opportunity is a problem-integrated survey of the bodies of knowledge in various cultures of the world which comprise man's accumulation of answers to the problems with which living has confronted him.
IV. Faculty: The faculty will consist of distinguished exponents, from many countries and cultures, of alternative answers to the major problems of living.
V. Method: The method upon which it proposes to rely is the seminar, led by panels of resource-leaders.
VI. Hope: The University believes that any institution of higher learning anywhere may use this plan. It hopes that its own experience will lead many schools to adopt it. Above all, it hopes that its students will find in it the basis for a response adequate to the challenge with which the times confront them.

The university, it was stressed, is such in that it addresses universal issues. It is not an intellectual department store, but embraces all departments of knowledge. It is not about the accumulation of facts, but in their application. It is universal because of its praxiological objective – solving our problems is a practical concern for all people in all times. It believes that knowledge can and must be integrated. The problem-centered, rather than subject-centered, approach gives it this universality. All fields must be included.

In one article, Borsodi wrote that the "main defect [of education] seems to lie in the failure to develop a sense of personal moral responsibility." To that, regarding institutions of higher education in particular, he added, that they "are manifestly failing to inspire their graduates with a philosophy of living – with goals to which to devote themselves – remotely comparable in ethical and esthetic values with the quantities of technical knowledge with which they are now equipping them."

The "almost fatal defect [is] a lack of faith in liberty, and unwillingness to trust in the implementation of truth, a desperate reliance upon power and might and sometimes a cynical preoccupation with material wealth." And so, "The University of Melbourne seeks to remedy these defects."

For all of our material progress, there is a widespread sense of crisis, Borsodi lamented, "world-wide disillusionment, world-wide bewilderment, world-wide revolution. It has been a violent and troubling century." To correct these trends requires leadership in right education -- a study of praxiological philosophy, the study of human action, "the study of how to act wisely and how to live like a normal, civilized human being." It is about effectively overcoming the problems of living. It is a matter of learning to rigorously define the problem, then bringing the accumulated knowledge of humankind to bear on its

solution and then to apply what has been learned to achieve the good life. There is no single solution to the world's problems.

Again, it was stated that all formal instruction at the University of Melbourne was to be held by the seminar method led by a lector and a panel of resource leaders. The sessions would begin at 9 a.m. daily for an indefinite period followed by individual "reading, research writing, discussion, consultation and recreation." Attendance only at the first seminar was obligatory.

Each seminar was devoted to one of the universal problems, encouraging a probing of students' assumptions and "the illumination of the problem being considered." These problems, it was emphasized, are not to be treated in isolation but as they relate to each other.

Borsodi quoted Confucius: "Men of superior minds busy themselves first in getting at the root of things, and when they have succeeded in this, the right course of action opens to them."

Know thyself. Each student was required to submit a personal life-history and life-plan. They would consult with faculty about this work and continually revise it during their program of study, and then continue to develop it throughout their lives.

> *Each candidate for admission must submit, as the major document in his [her] application, his [her] personal life-history and life-plan. This should state his [her] religious, philosophic, economic, and political beliefs; should list some of the books which inspired and instructed him [her] most; and name the relations, friends, mentors and teachers who, in his [her] opinion, exerted the greatest influence upon him [her]. This document will indicate the level of self-understanding and the degree of maturity and seriousness of his [her] vocational and life objectives. It should also be prepared so as to show his [her] command of the English language, the quality of his [her] writing style, his [her] work experience, avocational and recreational interests, and any other ability and interest.*

This plan was to be supported by three personal reference letters. And each applicant must have a physical checkup.

Conversation and group discussion were a regular part of the program. This was intended to help students study the issues on their own and would include faculty and particularly visiting faculty. A lot of emphasis was put on both speaking and writing and illustration to help the students clarify and express their understanding. They were being trained as future teachers and leaders.

Each week, on Sunday afternoon, was a Convocation of the entire student body and open to the public, "occasions upon which they give formal and symbolic expression to their common ties, beliefs and aspirations." The program was non-sectarian and consisted of music and an inspirational, rather than informative, lecture, followed by discussion.

The semester ended with a writing period in which each student chose a topic of interest. For the master's degree, a student could work independently and produce a paper or (and this was encouraged) a group exercise of three to six students could work together and produce a book to be published by the university press. For the doctorate, each student would produce a book.

The student's thesis was to demonstrate their ability to work systematically. The doctoral dissertation was to be an original contribution. There was also a comprehensive oral examination. The examination board sought to evaluate how each student expressed themselves in writing and speaking, with the emphasis on character and capability. Emerson was quoted in this regard: "The force of character is cumulative … Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt action, and do not see that virtue and vice emit a breath every moment."

The University of Melbourne had both a library and a press. The library, as noted, consisted of 4,500 books classified not by subject but rather by the problems they addressed. The press was Borsodi's, and he was a trained and experienced printer. *The Challenge of Asia* and the *Journal of Praxiology* were printed by the university press. So, too, was a new edition of *Education and Living,* a boxed set of two paper-bound volumes. The press also printed School of Living publications edited at Lane's End.

Student admission was limited to 50 "carefully selected mature men and women. …. Only those who are committed to teaching as a serious life vocation, whether they intend to teach in formal institutions of learning or through writing, the arts, the ministry, civic leadership or other professions which influence a substantial number of people." And further, "It is, therefore, very important to avoid admitting students who are not seriously committed to a vocation of leadership, or who are not properly equipped for the contribution which they themselves must make to the University program." Priority was given to having as many students from the Orient and Africa as from the Americas and Europe. A basic formal academic education was a preferable prerequisite.

The faculty consisted of residential and visiting faculty. There were six resident faculty members listed: Bart Berrie, Ralph Borsodi, Jane Button, Lillian McDonald, Elizabeth Nutting, and John Turner.

What is Praxiology?

The remaining eight issues of the *Journal of Praxiology* can be divided into two categories. The first issue was a symposium on Praxiology. The remaining seven issues were standard professional journals with collections of articles. Each of the issues was dedicated to one of the universal problems. Those seven issues carried 83 articles with distinguished names on the list of authors.

The first issue was entitled "The Concept of Praxiology." There were, as noted, 21 contributors. Overall, the respondents supported Borsodi's basic thesis but there was also some criticism of the concept. Each made a statement, and I have summarized Borsodi's responses in my *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living* volume.

Borsodi opened that first issue with a definition of praxiology: Actions; practices; conduct; behavior. He noted that the dictionary called praxiology a "proposed science." He intended to have "proposed" dropped from the definition: "For if anything deserves to be made into a science," he wrote, "it is the study of individual behavior, both as it appears in the personal activities and in the social relations of individuals." He added that "the study of human action is the study of studies." He continued, "For one reason, because in the study of human action all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind can be

focused and integrated; for another because just as nothing is more important than human behavior, so no science can be more important that the science which deals with it." It's not that we lack the information needed to define this science of praxiology but rather that it is scattered around among various disciplines.

In a letter that was sent to each symposium participant, Borsodi cited a number of recent books about human action. He noted that his interest in this idea dated to the formation of the School of Living in 1934 and added that the approach of praxiology is "from the behavioral in contrast to the societal standpoint; from the standpoint of human relations in contrast to that of social and group relations; and from the individual and familial standpoint in contrast to that of the social. As we see it, it calls for a re-appraisal of present methods of education in philosophy, in the humanities, and in the social science."

There was resistance by some panelists to the use of an unfamiliar word such as praxiology. It's ambiguous, strange, one said. Maybe "men in action" would be better. Borsodi acknowledged that such abstract, "objective," description can be a fetish. As a student of meaning, Borsodi understood these reservations. He did, in fact, associate "praxiology" with the "Humanization of Human Action" in the publication's banner.

Praxiology is less concerned with the study of human behavior than how one should act. Does that mean it is confined to purposeful action? Is it based on moral principles? Does it apply to action not determined by conscious decisions? Or is there some invisible hand? Borsodi responded that it is not limited to purposeful action. He suggested that we need a science that allows us to better understand all forms of behavior. One supportive respondent put it in these terms: "praxiology is the generalization, inclusive discipline of all the concrete practical sciences." As such it would have a different structure than the pure sciences.

In response to the question of how to make men better, Borsodi wrote, "Individuals are the source and the dynamic of social forces," and cited a long list from "Jesus and Buddha, Mohammed and Gandhi, Rousseau and Marx, Adam Smith and Jefferson, Napoleon and Hitler, Lenin and Mussolini … such as these have over and over again altered [the course of history] for the better or for the worse." He added: "Education is a means and living an end. Education must then be tested by its effect on the quality of living." This is what we have lost, he said, and continued:

> *What modern man desperately needs, and what above all those who presume to educate him need, is an adequate philosophy of life. In its absence modern man will either be satisfied with what is – automobiles, television, atomic bombs and all the other gadgets of the times; or he will look back longingly and try to recapture the faith of former times; or in desperation embrace, not the utopian socialism of Robert Owens and William Morris, not the utopian decentralism and agrarianism of Mahatma Gandhi, not the gradualism of Roosevelt and Nehru, but the ruthless philosophy of Marx and Engels, or Lenin and Mao.*
>
> *For the teacher this is nothing to be lightly dismissed. As Henry Adams eloquently put it: "A parent gives life, but as a parent gives no more. A murderer takes life, but his deed stops there. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."*

In summary:

> *It will involve rigorous concentration upon certain techniques, certain bodies of thought and knowledge and certain ideals. It will aim to equip the student to marshal his thoughts, to speak*

> *effectively in public, and to write clearly; these are the techniques; they are educational in nature. It will also aim to furnish the student with insight into the major problems all men confront and knowledge of the most important prescriptions of different arts, sciences, philosophies and religions with regard to them. These are the bodies of thought and knowledge, they are praxiological in nature. Finally, the course will seek to imbue each student with the ideals appropriate to free and responsible men.*

One comment of note, Oliver Reiser, a University of Pittsburgh professor, addressed the issues of the chaos of specialization. Reiser was a close student of Korzybski's General Semantics. He published a seminal book entitled *The Integration of Human Knowledge* in 1958. The movement to developed integral knowledge, of which Reiser was a leader, is a topic in the last chapters in my *Alfred Korzybski: Time Binder*[75]. There are a lot of consistencies in Borsodi's and Korzybski's works.

There is an excerpt from Lewis Mumford's *The Conduct of Life* in which Borsodi noted points of dramatic social change that are typically associated with names like "Confucian, Buddhist, Christian, Mohammedian, Marxian," etc. They come out of moments of crisis and disintegration. They are often associated with "a single decisive personality, or a small group of informed and purposeful men."

Borsodi reasserted the University of Melbourne program purpose as to:

> *Furnish people in every community with a new kind of leadership through the agency of a new kind of educational institution. Establish schools of living or community universities, and through them provide such leadership in every community that every individual and group therein will think it natural to turn to the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind for light upon the problems which they have failed to solve or which they have not been able to solve properly.*

Borsodi believed this approach could be used for transforming existing universities into effective learning institutions. It would require a change of method: "Right education is fundamental to the inculcation of the knowledge which will develop this ability to reason and decide on behalf of one's own liberty and wellbeing, as well as that of others."

Mildred Loomis believed the University of Melbourne offered courses that "go to the root of everything." Students do not study subjects' they study sixteen universal and perpetual problems of living. "The real problems of man," she wrote, "never change – from place to place, or time to time. Their forms change, but their essences do not." From this study, she was able to personally "substitute much clarity for confusion, integration for fragmentation, satisfaction for frustration."

Mildred raised the question, "How to produce whole men instead of mere specialists? The University of Melbourne method, she noted, is integrative. It is organic. It embraces the emotional as well as intellectual. It is practical – it is about solving the problems of life. It is praxiological, "directed toward individuals and not towards groups or masses. It recognizes that ultimately all problems – even those which call for some collective action – are dealt with individual by individual." What society needs is not corporations and governments and institutions, but rather a determining majority

[75] "The Integration of Human Knowledge" can be found starting on page 203 at this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DP5dqXU6oU2khoXsvwWq-MxCQj9BIcr4/edit

educated and equipped with "effective means and measures" without whom civilizations disintegrate into barbarism.

Vol. III, No. 1 of the Journal focused on the gregational problem. The timing of this issue was important. In January of 1957 Martin Luther King, Jr. and other black pastors met in Georgia to coordinate civil rights protests. This issue particularly addressed education in Asia with a focus on India, and King had learned much from Gandhi. A conference was proposed by Borsodi on that topic.

Borsodi's contribution was "The Problem of Gregational Ethics." He defined the gregational problem as how groups treat each other and provided a chart that listed gregational forms (further developed in *The Education of the Whole Man*, below).

Borsodi noted that the root of the problem was one of parochial values. As a result, we are in a period of ideological conflict that "makes this an age of moral confusion." He voiced a concern about "Moral Relativism." This persistent situation suggests something absent. We need not only moral values, but "individuals with a passionate determination to act in accordance with them." We devote vast sums, he observed, to science and technology but not to the solution of ethical problems.

Borsodi listed five distinctive kinds of ethical problems (which are discussed in *The Challenge of Asia* following). He continued with four "crucial" problems of how groups should treat each other and offered four approaches. He proposed that the achievement of a more adequate understanding of moral laws comes out of a study of the gregational problem.

This issue was the last of the *Journal of Praxiology*. Borsodi submitted his resignation as Chancellor of the University of Melbourne on July 19, 1957. As to what happened at this point, we have little documentation, but it is clear that racial issues were always an undercurrent since at least Dayton some twenty years earlier.

The University of Melbourne was dedicated, as noted, to education and diversity. In this image on the wall of the University of Melbourne headquarters building, we see a representation of human diversity, and the bird of peace, a book, a scroll and the scales of justice. The figures represent the diverse peoples of the world in common pursuit of order and justice.



University of Melbourne Diversity Relief

Borsodi wanted the university to be a place open to people of all colors, traditions and beliefs. I can't help but feel that his upcoming flight to India was perhaps an expatriate's quest. There, with friends of Gandhi's, he found a far more inclusive environment.

After the last issue of the *Journal of Praxiology* came out, in March 1957, it is reported that Borsodi shut down the press and put the equipment up for sale. He was

moving on. Dr. Willis Nutting, who had taken a leave of absence to support Borsodi and the formation of the University of Melbourne, carried on through 1957 and 1958 with seminars, lectures and study groups. He continued the program personally for some years after he returned to the University of Norte Dame.

Thus ended the University of Melbourne and Ralph Borsodi's connections with Melbourne Village. Regardless of the outcome, Borsodi had been a driving force in the founding and early history of Melbourne Village. The University of Melbourne was a manifestation of Borsodi's ideas and methods. The university experiment brought new people and new ideas into the community through its seminars, and it transported ideas far afield through the *Journal of Praxiology.* It offered something new and unique to American higher education.

The University of Melbourne experiment was short-lived, but it gave Borsodi and friends, including Mildred Loomis, an opportunity to bring the School of Living universal problems framework to a high degree of organization. In 1958 Borsodi and his wife Clare returned to India. Borsodi had continued a strongly engaged with Gandhian educators in India whom he had met prior to Melbourne and they invited him back. He was treated with distinction and his Indian friends helped him produce some of his most important works. They continued to support him to the end of his life.

Problem-Integrated Education: A Syllabus."

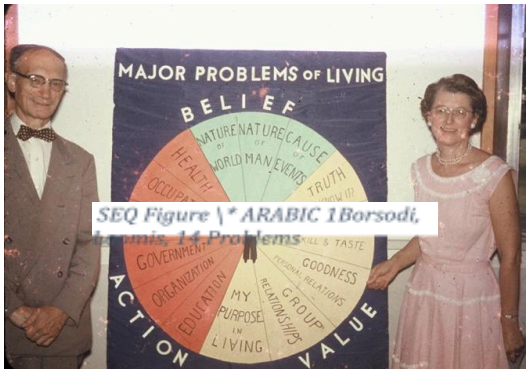
The objective of the University of Melbourne, as noted, was a graduate level curriculum based on Borsodi's universal problems of living. In the second chapter of the last part of *The Challenge of Asia*, and drawing on his *Education and Living,* Borsodi provided a comprehensive outline and a very clear statement of the aims and purpose of his system:

> *Man, in sum, is first and foremost a problem-solving animal. His every action, in so far as it is genuinely human, is always the resolution of a problem.*
>
> *The significant difference between man and all other animals is that he alone has the capacity for formulating his problems verbally and symbolically, and for dealing with them, if he will, rationally, reflectively and imaginatively.*
>
> *Higher education ceases to justify being called higher unless it equips the individual with an adequate method of determining what to value and what to believe.*
>
> *The basic problems of mankind with which every individual everywhere in the world is confronted – the problems which are universal and perpetual and not local or momentary in nature – should be the basis for equipping the individual to meet the challenge of these challenging days.*
>
> *The first step is clear and comprehensive formulation of the problems. Until the individual has learned what these basic problems are, he is unequipped for choosing among the many alternative solutions of each one of them.*

The most difficult problem he needed to overcome was the "integration, in some form, of the enormous bodies of specialized knowledge scattered about in its schools and courses. Integration is essential because without it there is no assurance that the education it furnishes will deserve to be called higher."

Integration of knowledge from every special field is impossible; but integration based upon the basic problems with some part of which every special field deals, is not.

Problem-integrated education, then, would be a course of study in which, the basic problems have been formulated, the individual would be equipped adequately to evaluate the knowledge which every art and science; every theology, philosophy and ideology; every theory and doctrine, has to offer mankind.



SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1Borsodi, Loomis, 14 Problems

The Fourteen Basic Problems of Mankind

The *Challenge of Asia* was published as the University of Melbourne experiment was drawing near its end. There were fourteen problems of living listed and they were divided into three groups. This structure became an important architecture for the problem-centered framework for a decade. This fourteen-problem framework is perhaps best illustrated in this photo (which I repeat) taken in 1957, with Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis.

The first seven topics are: "Problems which call primarily for study and reflection, problems which can be dealt with while sitting still perhaps surrounded by books in a library or while studying in a classroom," are all problems of thought (or mentation). There are seven of these.

The Three Basic Problems of Belief

Among the first group, problems of thought, are three that deal with what we believe to be true.

I. The Problem of the Nature of Nature (Ontological)
II. The Problem of the Nature of Human Nature (Anthropic)
III. The Problem of Events and Their Causation (Etiologic)

The Four Problems of Evaluation (Values)

The remaining four problems are about the evaluation of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

IV. The Ethical Problem
V. The Problem of Beauty versus Ugliness (Esthetics)
VI. The Problem of Truth versus Error (Epistemological)
VII. The Problem of Purpose and Motivation (Epistemological).

The Seven Basic Problems of Implementation

The second group of seven problems are problems of action. These are the problem which cannot be resolved by thought alone. "Problems which call for motor rather than mental action, as in dealing with the problem of occupations – the use of time in working, playing, and resting – are essential problems of action.

VIII. The Problem of Mental and Physical Health (Psycho-physiological)
IX. The Occupational Problem

X. The Problem of Possessions
XI. The Organizational Problem: Enterprise and Efficiency
XII. The Civic Problem: Harmony versus Violence
XIII. The Institutional Problem: Social Conservation versus Social Reform
XIV. The Educational Problem: Humanization versus Provincialization

On Method

In *The Challenge of Asia* summary of his system, Borsodi wrote:

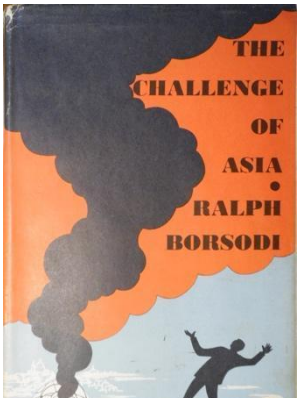
> *Problem-integrated education is praxiological in nature. It equips the individual for rational, humane, and effective personal conduct and individual behavior. It makes ethical and esthetic consideration a part of all individual action. It replaces modern man's preoccupation with his predominately economic philosophy by a philosophy in which the good, the true, and the beautiful are considered at least of equal importance to wealth and power.*
>
> …
>
> *What we need to do is to equip the individual with the means for basing his thinking and his action upon valid postulates, human values, and effective means and measures. When we can deal with our personal problems, we can solve social and political problems. … In the absence at least of a determining minority of such individuals, civilization begins to disintegrate, and barbarism begins to replace it.*

Problem-integrative education has four noteworthy virtues:

1. It is integrative. It is about how to produce whole persons instead of mere specialists. It is about overcoming intellectualizing and the mere accumulation of factual and technical knowledge.
2. It equips the student with a tool with which to evaluate not only special fields of knowledge but the experiences of life itself -- a clear definition of the problem at hand.
3. It forces those who take part in it to examine their basic beliefs, basic values, and basic notions about living, and to consider whether those which they had unconsciously accepted might not be false to the realities and eternal verities of life. It inspires us to apply ourselves.
4. It is directed toward individuals, not groups or masses. It is about the problems each of us deals with.

I think it is extremely important to understand that Borsodi's approach is about individuals. Each of us must accept the responsibility for solving problems be they personal, community, job-related, etc. Each of us must be prepared to define and solve problems and be equipped with the necessary tools to solve these problems, and that means doing the work to get them fixed. With each individual doing that, social issues will resolve themselves.

India



The Challenge of Asia: A Study of Conflicting Ideas and Ideals was published in 1956 by the University of Melbourne press. Borsodi devoted a good part of the book to fundamental principles and made clear his choice of liberty over authority. It's not a question of having democracy or not. If democracy is not the right

answer, then what is? Borsodi's answer: None of them. The answer is not the vote, but rather in knowing how to live. You cannot make a democracy out of a unit of government larger than a local community.

It is also about right-education. Right education is not about literacy, not about ideology. It is learning how to live the life of a normal human being. It's about learning to live in harmony with other people, learning to provide for the security of your own family, and about building collaborative community. It requires a revolution in education. Borsodi wrote:

What the crisis in the world calls for is not revolt but learning.

> *We must learn, learn, learn – old, simple, elemental, platitudinous truths about how human beings should live, how they should treat one another, how they should organize the relations between the enterprises they establish and conduct. Then each year there would be less and less need of government, and government – both democratic and non-democratic – would shrink and shrink until not we but our "children's children's children" finally reach that far away Golden Day when mankind can be fully trusted, when liberty will be enough, and government will have entirely withered away.*

In this regard, Borsodi resonated with Gandhi. Gandhi had taken India through a political revolution; not just to create another nation state but to form a culture where people lived self-sufficiently and with liberty. How more ironic, said Borsodi "than the completeness of [India's] rejection of the greatest personality it has contributed to our times." While acknowledging their debt to Gandhi, "the leaders of India are subconsciously engaged in repudiating the kind of India to the realization of which he gave his life."

> *The India which Gandhi envisioned, the India of the village and the country-side; the India of the spinning-wheel and cottage industry; the India of satyagraha and ahimsa. This is the soul of existent … India, as Liberty is the soul of free America.*

We have a similar condition in America, he wrote, where "the America of Thomas Jefferson – the America of the Declaration of Independence; of national rights, state rights, local rights; of homesteads, of farms, of shops and independent business," has been largely lost. Instead, we get "the official and practical America of Alexander Hamilton – the America of manufacturing and tariffs; the America of big cities, big business, big government."

He concluded:

> *The soul of American is not to be found in the manufactures and financiers who have built its cities and factories; it is to be found in Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln; in Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry D. Thoreau; in Walt Whitman and Benjamin Tucker; in Thomas Paine and Henry George.*

The Gifts of Asia

The gifts of Asia are in two things that must not be forgotten, said Borsodi: a way of living, and an attitude toward the mystery of life. In it "are the seeds of salvation for the whole troubled world." Borsodi devoted several chapters to these "gifts." Again, he noted, not everyone in Asia has embraced them. Many of India's political leaders turned to the industrialism of the west. Of them Borsodi wrote:

He believes in only one idea: Progress. He has only one ideal: a materialistic one. But he has two ideologies – the ideology of Capitalism, and the ideology of Communism – and both of them are false.

These two ideologies are locked in a death struggle. What is the alternative?

What we need to do is neither to embrace what is false nor to be satisfied with what is half-true. What we need to do is to dedicate ourselves to what is wholly true.

What we need to do is to discover not something new but to rediscover what we have permitted to die. What we need to do is to substitute for our present materialist quest, the quest of the good, the true and the beautiful. We need to replace the mistaken idea of progress with the idea of living like normal human beings; we need to replace the ideal of material wealth with the ideal of education from the cradle to the grave; we need to replace the ideologies of Capitalism and Communism with the ideology of Liberty.

Borsodi again made it clear that he was not anti-capitalist. "The Capitalism which must be abandoned is predatory Capitalism; the Capitalism which must be saved – if Liberty is to be saved – is fraternal Capitalism. …. True Capitalism is commercial, not industrial. True Capitalism is agrarian; it is rural and villagistic – not urban. … The acid test is the free market." But, he asked, do we understand what a free market actually is?

The first chapter of *The Challenge of Asia* addressed Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Borsodi opined that the western, Christian, sense of superiority towards Asian faiths, is a mistake. He reiterated that he "went to Asia looking for ideas – ideas which might help America in its present quandary, and help, at this time of crisis, the whole world and not only Asia." He described the many things we can learn from the East.

While Schumacher[76] gets the celebrity for "Buddhist Economics," Borsodi was there first and with not only Buddhism but an array of eastern faiths and philosophies and their influence on economics. Borsodi described the history and principles of Buddhism and a meeting with a Buddhist patriarch. He wrote that "in the Buddhist countries of southern Asia, I found in Buddhism a great and neglected force." The virtues of Buddhism include: "[I]ts realistic pessimism; its gentle metaphysics; its emphasis upon the meditative life, … its middle way of living." Above all, tolerance. To this he added, "What is true of Buddhism is also true of Confucianism, of Taoism, and, at least to a degree, also to Brahmanism." He cited Gandhi's ready embrace of the principles of different faiths, particularly in his path of non-violence. Asian leaders, in contrast to Buddhist principles, were interested in ruling and progress.

The second gift of the East is the family and village. Although this is, more or less, universally true of all cultures around the world before scientism and modern industrialism, modern Individualism and modern centralism. Both capitalism and communism have rejected these traditions. In the West we have forgotten the virtues of the family system. All civilizations have been based on village living and strong family. The family was extended through generations and kinship. It was imbedded in the embrace of a more extended unity in the village. The virtue of the system is security. The family was a production unit. Borsodi had presented the case of the family and small community in *Education and Living*.

[76] Schumacher was, in fact, a devout Christian and a Catholic convert, who mainly wrote and spoke about Christian economics.

Prescription

Part II of *The Challenge of Asia* is called "Prescription." There are four chapters on the nature of the political world and what we might do about these problems. I think this is really the foundation of the book. In it Borsodi further revealed a personal philosophy of life, expanding on elements of this philosophy in previous works. This articulation of his philosophy, which is a succinct statement of what he believed, clarified his mission with the University of Melbourne and continued to define his work through the remainder of his life.

To start, the crisis of the world, he said, is political, not economic:

> *The political ideas and political principles upon which we are relying, from top to bottom of society, are utterly inadequate. Everybody seems to be improperly equipped and inadequately educated for the task with which we are confronted. Never before in the history of the world have we had so much government; never before have we had so many laws; never before so many public officials to execute them. And never before have we had so much war, nor wars more bitter nor more bloody, nor prospects of wars as dreadful as those which we face today.*

In summary:

- The first truth about governments is that they are created by men. They are very human. There is nothing holy about them, nothing that claims our veneration.
- The second truth is that governments rely on compulsion; they are systemized, legalized coercion.
- Third, we have no choice about being governed. It is in our nature. We are social creatures.
- Fourth, at worst, governments use bad means for bad ends. Too often it is seen as a necessary evil.
- Fifth, government is not a country. "The truth which should never be forgotten is that government is one thing, the people over whom governments rule, another."
- Finally, the objective of government is not liberty.

In regard to the last point, Borsodi quoted Paine: "Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections; the latter negatively by restraining our voices. Society, in every state, is a blessing; but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one."

In regard to the "Nature of Harmony," all acts, wrote Borsodi, "are either harmonious or violent." Violent acts he defined as those:

> *… that have characteristics variously describable as compulsory, coercive, forcible, belligerent, aggressive. They need not be injurious or destructive in intent; they may be, as a matter of fact, defensive and protective, but if they involve the use of force directly or indirectly, they fall into the category of violent acts.*
>
> *In contrast, all acts which can be truly described as free, voluntary, and peaceful, fall into the category of harmonious actions. No act of government … is ever really free, voluntary and peaceful.*

Harmony means things fitting together properly, that form a connected whole, and function systematically. This can mean community, society, and even humanity as a whole, when directed toward the common good; for the benefit of both the parts (individuals) and

the whole. "If the members of a community freely and voluntarily play their proper parts so that the whole functions as it, by its nature should, there is harmony." A synonym of "harmony" is cooperation. Competition, when not predatory in nature, can be harmonious; for example, in competition in games where skill is exercised and respected by all players. Competition in an actual free market can be harmonious. Much of our political and economic philosophy, however, assumes an inharmonious rivalry.

Is Violence Natural?

Borsodi devoted a chapter to the nature of violence. He sought to provide a better understanding of it; to define it as a problem to be solved.

If man is innately violent, education is futile. Misconduct is, in fact, due to mis-education. Humans are typically violent when they are afraid or angry (often linked). We are capable of violence but there is another side to human behavior, and it can be nurtured. Right-education seeks to attain what Borsodi consider our "normal," higher nature.

Borsodi went further into the nature of coercion. He stated that governments are allowed to use coercion against their citizens, and some use this power with more enthusiasm than others. The range of coercive behavior defined as legitimate action by governments includes the power to fine, to imprison and even to deal death. Coercion is usually imposed through law and regulation rather than at the muzzle of a gun. This is also true, he said, of non-governmental organizations.

Liberty versus Authority

The chief problem is the conflict between the ideas of liberty and authority. Liberty is an inalienable right of normal human beings; it is a birthright, a natural right, not something granted. No government can grant liberty, and none can deny it.

We have an enormous body of objective knowledge about the nature of humankind – biological, physiological, psychological; historical and biographical; anthropological, sociological, etc. Borsodi asked, "What does this knowledge furnish us with regard to whether man is an individual organism or a part merely of an organic collectivity? Is the individual, or is society, the unity which must be the object of consideration when we speak of man? Or is there some third unit – the family, perhaps – which is the real unit of the species of animal which zoologists call homo sapiens?"

Society is not man; it is something we invented. Society, said Borsodi, exists for man, not man for society. Both family, which predated society, and society exist for man. The family and the individual are inseparable; therefore, individual and family rights must come first; society and governmental powers second.

As a right, liberty carries correlative obligations. Foremost that we must all recognize the right of liberty for every human being.

In reality, we cannot choose between authority and liberty. There is a road between. It is the Golden Mean, that is, choice, a middle way between abnegation or the use of force. It is through reason and education. "True progress – humanized progress – comes in only

one way and from only one thing, *from learning how to live, and how to deal with the problems which confront us, like normal human beings*" (emphasis by Borsodi).

At root it is, as Mark Twain said, that we know too much that just isn't true. The source of this mistruth is our system of education: school, family, and other institutions. A course of action is required "which unfortunately demands an intellectual discipline … to which few of us are willing to submit ourselves."

> *The lesson of history is there to be learned: not progress, not industry, not invention, not the machine, not science, not art, not institutions, but human cultivation, human understanding, human compassion, and human conduct are primary.*

Borsodi elaborated this thought:

Rightly educated men will be neither stupidly reactionary nor blindly progressive.

They will be neither afraid of change nor hostile to what is old.

They will not be ashamed to follow, nor hesitant about leading.

They will periodically re-examine their basic assumptions.

> *They will have trained their intelligences so that they can distinguish between institutions which need reformation and those which need preservation, between institutions which should be abolished and new institutions which should be substituted in their place.*
>
> *They will have trained their emotions so that they will be abler to distinguish between knaves and honest men; between fanatics and reasonable men; between demagogues and disinterested reformers.*
>
> *Above all, they will have emancipated themselves from the twin fallacy of thinking that right institutions can produce a good society if it is composed of, and led by, venal people; or that good people can produce a good society, no matter how frustrating the intuitions through which they try to implement their goodness.*
>
> *Finally, they will have learned that of all the virtues, none is more important than intellectual honesty.*

Borsodi further defined right education by these principles:

- Right education cannot be achieved in the current school system. Education is more than literacy; 99% of current education is mere instruction.
- Right education considers knowledge as raw material which we use to establish our rational understanding of existence – our beliefs.
- Right education is practical. It puts ends above means. It is about values: ethical, esthetic, epistemological and teleological – training in evaluation.
- Right education not only enlightens, it also enlivens –it moves us to implement what we have learned.
- Right education involves a faith in the liberty to learn.

Borsodi quoted Confucius, in "The Great Learning:"

> *Things have their roots and their completion. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last is the beginning of wisdom.*
>
> *Those who desire to create harmony in the world must first establish order in their own communities. Wishing to establish order in their own communities, they must first regulate their own family. Wishing to regulate their own family life, they must first cultivate their own personal lives. Wishing to cultivate their personal lives, they must first set their own feelings*

right. Wishing to set their feelings right, they must first seek to make their own wills sincere. Wishing to make their wills sincere, they must first increase to the utmost their own understanding. Such increase in understanding comes from the extension of their knowledge of all things.

From the greatest of men down to the masses of people, all must consider the cultivation of the personal life the foundation of everything.

The Education of the Whole Man

Borsodi returned to India in August 1958, invited by B.D. Patel, Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth, a rural university set up on Gandhian principles, some 75 km (47 miles) southeast of Gandhi's ashram located in the Sabarmati suburb of Ahmedabad, for a six-weeks lecture and study tour. Soon after he arrived, he was asked to describe decentralism, a subject dear to his Gandhian friends, and produced his "Pan-Humanist (Decentralist) Manifesto" in October 1958. The full text can be found at this link[77]. In it he called for a cultural renaissance led by teachers. He started the pamphlet with these lines:

A new world is being born.

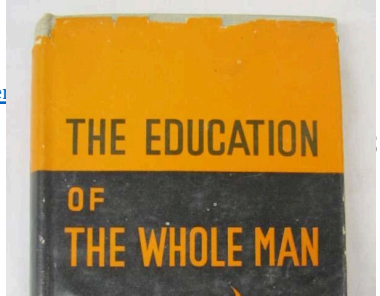
If this new world is to be a better world than the one now dying and to make possible a fuller fruition of the human spirit, then it will be very different from the Capitalist world of today, and different from the world which the dictators of Russia and China are providing, and different from the Socialist world into which most of the world is now drifting.

Concerned and thoughtful men and women are challenged to arrest the present drift and drive into a mechanized barbarism, and to contribute to the birth of a world in which persons will be free to realize their potentialities as creative beings. Such leaders must have the courage to assert themselves and must discipline themselves to think about all the institutions essential to such a world.

This document begins and ends with a call for leadership, a leadership not of warriors, kings, priests, politicians, businessmen or financiers but of "concerned and thoughtful teachers," writers, artists, poets and even men in women in professions who "consecrate themselves to the search and realization of what is true, what is good, what is beautiful." In short, this is founded on the quality-minded individual he described in *This Ugly Civilization*. Above all else, these gifted people, whatever their profession, must teach a more humane way of life and must, in fact, exemplify that way of life.

Decentralism is also about how to revive the small community, how the small community is nested within the larger human social system (an ethos Borsodi called "pan-humanism"). All human beings all around the world, he asserted, have the same right to a quality life, to a just and secure form of life that is denied them by the predatory practices of established and dysfunctional urban-industrial social institutions.

Following the popular reception of his *Manifesto*, Chancellor Patel invited Borsodi for an extended stay in India to develop a curriculum to train these teachers. Friends in India rallied to his support. By the fall of 1960 Borsodi completed the manuscript. Unfortunately, after two years of strenuous work, he became seriously ill and was hospitalized. Released from the hospital he tried to return to work but was soon back in the hospital and then returned to



[77] Pan-Humanist Manifesto: https://hgarchives.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/borsodi-a-decer

the US, to Exeter, New Hampshire, where his wife Clare had found them a new home, for convalescence. *The Education of the Whole Man* was published in India by Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth in 1963. The book can be download at no cost at this link[78]

The Education of the Whole Man is an astonishing work for any scholar to produce, let alone a man in his seventies. It displayed an incredible range of knowledge. Though not formally educated, Borsodi was clearly well read and seems to have had a virtual photographic memory. He was a systematic note taker. As one might expect of an economist and accountant, he worked easily with numbers. He had the rare talent for managing a huge mass of detailed information, extracting the key ideas, defining each, and carefully classifying all of them into appropriate categories. He would then go on to explain each idea. The scope is broad because it is about the whole person. The book is daunting perhaps because it is a doorway into an incredible mind; a vast landscape of ideas; and it is an original work. It is his masterwork on education. In it he provides the theory of his model of an integral, problem-centered approach to learning that develops our optimum capacity to not only live fully as a human being should, but also to lead others.

Borsodi's objective was to stimulate thought. Before you can get an answer to your problem, you have to ask the right question. Our major failure, then and now, is that we too often ask the wrong questions. It doesn't matter what answer you get, how logical your reasoning, how thorough your research, if the answer, even if it might be absolutely true, is to the wrong question. He formalized that method at the University of Melbourne and with this book gives it full articulation.

Once you have the question, you must also have the facts and figures, and they need to be accurate and true, empirical and concrete. The problems are about life, not about abstractions. Being universal, those problems have been addressed everywhere in the world throughout time. With the invention of writing, much of that wisdom has been preserved, so we have a vast accumulation of knowledge to draw from. But it must be made accessible.

Borsodi provided a structure for his system, and it was elaborate and detailed. There are two books in this one volume, 39 dense chapters. The first book is a general treatise on his educational model. It contains nine of those chapters.

A major feature of the system, it must be understood, is that it is integral. The West, Borsodi observed, has lost the idea that all subjects are each simply different aspects of human nature. We have lost this perspective over the course of modernizing education. We fail to solve problems in large part because we take them out of context. Specialized, narrow knowledge, while a powerful tool for analysis, simply cannot resolve the problems of life. We need an integral system and that requires an integral education. That is even truer today, as digital technology has made our lives far more complex.

Regardless of how you cut the deck, there is always a senior problem. The senior problem is how to guide human action. The key to that is the problem of education: how to shape and inform the capacities of the actor.

[78] *The Education of the Whole Man* free pdf download: https://research.library.kutztown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=solbooks.

Drawing in no small part from the inspiration of Gandhi, Borsodi proposed his curriculum for the elevation of men and women most receptive to uplifting humans, who in turn would become the teachers in their own communities. This was, as noted, Borsodi's model of leadership: the teacher.

The Book

The Forward to *The Education of the Whole Man* was written by S. Radhakrishnan. This was an extraordinary endorsement. Radhakrishnan was not only a renowned scholar but also a statesman, the first Indian Vice-President (1952–1962) and had recently been elected as India's second President. This is a brief summary of his endorsement of the book:

> *Science and technology, literature and art, philosophy and religion are varied manifestations of the spirit of man. They do not contradict one another but complement one another.*
>
> *In the name of science and rationalism many of our societies have broken off their connection with the past tradition. Their lives have become rootless. We have to grow our roots again. We have to combine ancient tradition with modern knowledge.*
>
> *The development of the human individual makes for the uniqueness of the individual. This uniqueness contributes to the fellowship of human beings. It leads one to the creative realization of the unity of mankind.*

Borsodi emphasized that the book is addressed to "educators." By that he does not mean only professional teachers, scholars or intellectuals, but rather all those who seek to positively influence the growth and well-being of those around them and who have four qualities which distinguish them from those to whom this work will be meaningless.

1. They are thoughtful about what they learn.
2. They are concerned. They realize that this is an age of crisis.
3. They have the courage to pioneer the opening up of new territory.
4. They are dedicated to making a difference; to be heard.

Borsodi made it clear that he was seeking a revolution to humanize humanity. It will not be accomplished by political means but through a slow process of reeducation. It will be achieved by a minority of true leaders - teachers.

He offered five suggestions related to his work, which he believed would come to sixteen volumes:

1. Each volume would be complete in itself.
2. *The Education*, he said, is the introductory volume and it should be read first. In it he made clear "both my purpose in making the study, and the method which I pursed in making it."
3. The meaning and significance of the series cannot be learned in just one volume but by studying several.
4. Each chapter begins with a quotation which was carefully selected and should be "not merely read; they should be articulated."
5. The charts need to be studied carefully, he insisted. They were compiled from the observation of about 8,000 "specific human actions." These charts represent a systematic analysis of these actions. He hoped that when detailed studies of

each of the major subdivisions of the problems has been made, "the social sciences will begin to approach the physical sciences in their utility."

He concluded his preface with this statement:

> *Only by making such decisions rationally and wisely, can we live a genuinely good life, contribute to good living on the part of our families, our neighbours, and the whole society of which we are a part, and so contribute to the creation of a better life for everybody.*

In his "Pan-Humanist Manifesto," Borsodi made a strong case for a cultural renaissance, the role of education and the importance of an influential group of teachers. About this he wrote:

> *Only a really adequate method of educating the whole man which is free from national, ideological and religious presuppositions, prejudgments and prejudice can make possible a rational and human evaluation of conflicting alternative schools of thought about human problems; it alone can end the present drift into ever more confusing darkness; it alone can create a new elite among the engulfing barbarians and provide the inspiration to make its members resist every group and every movement which tries either to persuade people to accept or to forcibly impose upon them false and mistaken doctrines like those of limitless wealth and centralized power.*

Borsodi reiterated that knowledge had become highly specialized and that you cannot integrate specialized knowledge. You can, he repeated, integrate knowledge around the universal problems. and through the study of these, produce a whole person:

> *For in the final analysis every science and every field of knowledge can be used as a basis for the resolution of one of these basic problems. If the problem is clearly defined, the student is equipped with a method of fitting everything he learns – and every special field of knowledge – into its proper place in his philosophy of life.*

Problem-integration starts with the study and understanding of the fourteen universal problems of living. Borsodi suggested that beginning college students should first take an introductory "survey of the whole field of human knowledge and wisdom" before entering their regular course of study. It should, he wrote, "lead them to discover that learning – not politics, nor religion, and certainly not business and money making – is the answer to the problems with which they will have to deal in the new world which is now being born." When they finish their final exams, he proposed that they attend a series of seminars on the fourteen basic problems. This is, in essence, the graduate-level curriculum he had developed at the University of Melbourne. It required but a single term to complete. Of great importance, they should come away from their education with "a sense of dedication to the task of building a better world and a better life." He emphasized that the universities of India could "humanize and cultivate men and women who will be able to measure up to the challenge of our times."

I should add that in a speech Borsodi gave in India in 1958, "Destiny's Challenge to India," he was reported by a local journal to have said:

> *Specialization is essential in science. It is essential in the operation of an industrial civilization built upon science. But specialization ignores the necessity for educating the whole man. To produce a whole man, and not mere lop-sided specialists, some method must be used which gives him knowledge of that which he actually needs to know in order to deal rationally and humanely with the problems he has to face. There is a special reason why I believe the best kind of general education is needed in Indian colleges at this time. That India should produce such*

philosophically equipped leaders is not merely an Indian but a world necessity. In this world it seems to me, India may be challenged in the same way that America was challenged after the II World War. History seems to be setting the stage for a drama in which the leading role may be played by India.

Borsodi said that he did not think China or the Middle East, because of their militancy, could achieve what India could.

The question which has an overwhelming interest for me is: What is India doing to prepare its leaders for the role which destiny seems to be calling upon them to play? What I am anxious to learn is what the educators of India are doing to produce leaders who will not prove as inadequate as have the present leaders of America?

…

The situation calls for emphasis upon ethics and high ideals; it calls for equipment with the liberal arts and a deep love of the humanities; it calls for philosophy and not only technology; it calls for inspiring the rising generation with a vision above the consideration of purely personal gain; it calls for cultivating in them such devotion to humanity as a whole that they rise not only above the customary preoccupations of the day but all merely local, provincial and national interests.

Is this just the boy crying Wolf, Borsodi asked? No, this was a subject studied by a number of leading contemporary minds. There was at that time a large popular literature addressing the rising state of crisis in the world from many disciplines and beginning even before the onset of the twentieth century. Borsodi listed many of these writers from Nietzsche to Gandhi and other Indian leaders. He wrote of Gandhi, "to whom not only Communism and Capitalism but Industrialism itself was anathema." Borsodi explained the work of Henry George, one of the leaders in American and global social and economic transformation.

Borsodi also wrote about his friend Pitirim Sorokin's idea of history and crisis. The basic tenets of Sorokin's theory of history were summarized in his *The Crisis of Our Age* (1941), which was written for a popular audience and was widely read. In it, Sorokin described the process of how civilizations break down with particular emphasis on the status of our current civilization. This book, I should stress, remains highly relevant in our twenty-first century. Civilizations are founded on moral ideals. The decline of civilizations occurs with the inevitable rise of a materialistic, sensate, culture which is morally relevant at best.

This shift in values in the modern world can be seen in the nineteenth century works of Darwin, Marx and Freud, all of whom radically employed the scientific method to "redefine" our understanding of the nature of the world and the human condition.

A serious problem is that science sees itself as utterly detached from life; there is an "antipathy to values," i.e., no right or wrong, good or bad, no truth, beauty or goodness. Borsodi believed that we must have a "science of axiology," a science of values, a position he had defended at Melbourne. He wrote, "I venture to make the positive assertion that the science of axiology is infinitely more important to the welfare of mankind than the sciences of physics, chemistry, mechanics and electronics combined.… Into this axiological and educational vacuum, a new venal and completely amoral priesthood – the devotees and votaries of the Advertising World – have marched." He added: "It is the advertising men

who tell us what to desire from day to day, and therefore to what we should devote our lives. They tell us what sort of food and fashions we should want; what sort of electrical appliances; what sort of automobiles; what sort of air-conditioned homes. They tell us what to read, what sort of music to like, what sort of drama to consider worth seeing." . Advertising developed its own science of motivational research and drives technological innovation. With it they have supplanted traditional moral values "which the Chinese called *li* or fraternity, and the Japanese *bushido* or loyalty, and the Hindus *dharma* or duty," with self-interested, acquisitive, materialistic values.

"What it calls for, our response to this chaotic age," Borsodi wrote, "is an educational revolution. It calls upon the scientific world to stop its insensate preoccupation with the physical and to replace that with the study of what is human. It calls upon the Scientific World for the development of the neglected normative sciences, and upon the Education World for an integrated curriculum based upon them."

> *What the situation calls for is not an economic nor a political nor a social revolution, but an educational revolution. A new program of education is what the crisis of the times calls for.*

Education is about the ideas we have. Borsodi wrote: "Ideas, like minds and bodies, can be either healthy or diseased." Many ideas related to industrialism and urbanism "have all the appearance of health and rationality, but which if carefully examined, prove to be exactly the opposite." In short, the modern educational system has failed us.

> *For ideas are subjective, not objective in nature. They are in the souls, or if you prefer the minds of men, not outside them. They move men, even when they refer to things which are objective and outside men. Men tend to think that it is they who possess ideas. But the fact is the other way about." [For example] "That men should believe that mere wealth, unlimited means for material and sensate gratification of their desires, can produce a good society and make a good life possible, seems fantastic. … Yet this idea that men should devote themselves to the creation of a way of life which aims simply at the enjoyment of as much wealth as possible, is the idea common to both Capitalism and Communism, the ideologies responsible for the political crisis of our age.*

He concluded this line of thought with "maximum wealth and complete industrialization … are twin social pathologies."

> *There are, however, only four ways of satisfying human wants: first, by making what we want with our own hands; second, by trading what we have in surplus and do not want for what we do want; third, obtaining what we want from someone who has it to bestow as a gift; and fourthly, appropriating or stealing what we want.*
>
> *There is only one way of making clear the truth about false gods of this kind, and that is through right-education. The miscalculation which has exalted the pursuit of wealth and abundance, must be ended; the mis-education which has enabled Panarchists to conceal the iron fist they wield in the velvet glove of demagogic promises, must be exposed.*
>
> *So long as education is fragmentized, the whole truth about man and society will never become known.*

The Nature of This Study

Borsodi again told the story of how he first began working on what became the problem-centered method. It started, he recalled, in 1935 by making notes about the problems he and friends encountered at the School of Living. They were not abstract problems but those of individuals - real problems to be overcome. This distinction between

abstract problems and real problems became a keystone of his system. This was a turning point for him. He was accustomed to working with problems in the abstract. His "Eureka!" moment came with the realization that "[a] problem of living, I found, was always a question of how to act; it was always a question about what an individual should do or feel or believe during some interval, long or short, in his life."

His next task was to translate abstract knowledge into concrete knowledge and practical solutions. The first step in this process was overcoming the problem of the fragmented, compartmentalized, and specialized nature of knowledge, especially in modern times. He developed a taxonomy of problems, inspired by biological classification, by grouping them by common traits. Eventually he developed first five then eight problem statements. In 1940 he presented his first seminar on eleven basic problems of living at Oberlin University.

The Education of the Whole Man addressed how the problem-centered system of education is to be developed: "For while it deals with the immediate problem of the right organization of education, it deals in fact with the problem of how to live a genuinely civilized life so that civilized life of that kind will become possible for the whole of mankind." And that is a problem that right education can solve.

This leads to the question of where to start. Do you work from the top down or from the bottom up? Borsodi is clear that it is not a mass educational effort that he has in mind. It starts with individuals, and particularly the small number who have the desire and will to take on this responsibility. It can start with a common school (particularly those like the Danish folk schools) or a university.

The book is addressed to teachers as he defined them above. The teacher has no political or economic power; they lead by example, not by authority. Students choose their teachers. What is needed is a new type of teacher, a new approach to education that is designed to humanize, to bring out the best in everyone. This is found in the root of the word "education," the Latin word "educare," which means "to bring out."

Borsodi again defined "humanization" as "the process by which human beings are taught to live and to act like normal human beings." The term "normal," he reiterated, means "optimal." It's what we could be if freed of all the arbitrary restraints and oppressions of life. He goes more into this in Chapter 7, but the complete description of normal living for the individual, family and community, is found in *Education and Living*, which can be downloaded at this link[79]. You can also find that description summarized in my chapter about "Education and Living" in *Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living*.

Again it must be stressed that it is the individual who solves problems, not collectives. While it is true that custom, tradition. dictators and other political "leaders" may define how those problems are addressed – the solution may be worse than inadequate. That applies to science, technology, industry, and advertising as well as social and political issues.

[79] Education and Living free pdf download: https://research.library.kutztown.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=solbooks

Regardless of what the nature of the social problem of which social action is a resolution, every social action is in the final analysis nothing but what the individuals of which society is composed in fact do. Only individuals initiate, only individuals oppose or acquiesce in what society is said to do … Living individuals may accept what individuals in the past have done about a social problem, but if they do, their acceptance, just as would be their opposition, is an individual action of their own.

In these terms, Borsodi considered society as no more than a fiction, albeit a legal fiction. A society is no more or less than what individuals decide it will be and by what they do or don't do.

The Structure of the Problems

Borsodi reiterated his grouping of the fourteen distinctive problem categories into two classes (described above), "problems of thought or of purely mental 'action,' and problems of motor-action – problems which involve the practice or implementation of what is felt or believed." There are seven in each class detailed in charts.

Borsodi began his elaboration of this framework with the seven problems of motor-action, of implementation that cannot be disposed of by thought alone. These seven problems are designated as praxiological, for each of which he gave a paragraph description that can be divided into forms that are predominantly personal and those that are predominately social.

The Seven Basic Problems of Thought, which can be disposed of through study and reflection only, fall into two categories: Problems of Belief (Noetic Problems) and Problems of Values (Axiologic Problems). The Seven Basic Problems of Thought share in common the fact that they can be resolved by thinking to a conclusion. The basic problems of belief, noetic problems, are defined as ideas gasped by the intellect alone. The three problems of belief can only be satisfied by hypothetical conclusions, i.e., "to the best of my knowledge and belief." The four problems of values, however, "call for conviction, for felt judgments, for conclusion as to the validity of which there is such conviction as to warrant their being considered absolute." Yet while values may be held absolute by some, they are not held equally by all. That does not mean that values permit the test of falsifiability: You may not be able to prove they are wrong. What is wrong is compulsion in their acceptance.

Borsodi prefaced his description of the problems of thought by again emphasizing the necessity of integrating knowledge, that the objective of Right Education is "the education of the whole man – is impossible if the individual is not taught how to integrate all the knowledge he acquires, all the bodies of knowledge or ideologies embodied in the arts and science, the religions and the philosophies of which he becomes aware, in terms of these seven problems of thought."

Modern education concentrates on the occupational problem. It is vocational and superficial. Borsodi closes this chapter with this thought:

Without a comprehensive concept of the nature of human action – of all activities and not only those concerned with employment – the curriculum will never make proper provisions for the education of a whole man; the necessity for providing leadership not only in the school but in every area of living in which education takes place will not be recognized; the concentration on methods of teaching which deal with the conscious mind – the intelligence – will continue, and the necessity for methods of teaching which deal with the emotions will continue to be ignored.

The solution to problems is always found in "ideas, ideals, and ideologies." What distinguishes human beings from animals, whose lives are defined by instinct - self-preservation and self-reproduction - is that humans alone use ideas and are capable of employing them in self-expression and self-realization. Only we can pursue the good, the beautiful and the true. We are not only capable of ideas, but throughout history the lives of human beings have been profoundly shaped by them. And there are a lot of them; often in conflict and not a few demonstrably false to the facts of life.

What are ideas, ideals and ideologies? At root, all three terms come from the Greek work "idein," meaning "to see." Ideas may be tangible, like a house, or intangible, like freedom. They may also be either true or false. Whether true or false, ideas define our behavior. An ideal is not what is but what should be. When we begin to plan a house, we move from the idea of a house to the ideal house we want to live in. So, it is not the idea "that moves men," as Oliver Wendell Holmes suggested, as much as it is the ideal.

An ideology is "a more or less consistent body of ideas, and often ideals, usually developed around an underlying central idea." We tend to think of ideologies as political programs, but they are much more than mere expressions of political behavior. There are ideologies in politics and religion and other areas by which adherents are identified. Borsodi noted some of the more general ideologies such as Materialism, Theism, Agnosticism, Atheism, Stoicism, Hedonism, Industrialism, Urbanism, etc. There are ideologies in music, arts and literature. For example, "modernism" in the arts is such an ideology.

Ideas, ideals, and ideologies represent a wide range of emotional "voltage." Ideas, Borsodi wrote, carry relatively little charge. Ideals are highly charged emotionally. But ideologies "are charged emotionally to the nth degree." Ideas stimulate the brain, but ideologies mobilize entire civilizations.

Borsodi considered a keen understanding of ideologies crucial to this work and devoted a great deal of time over the years to finding, analyzing and classifying ideologies. At this point he had between four and five hundred of them. In *The Education of The Whole Man* he provided two summary charts that listed and classified ideologies and connected them to the basic problems to which they applied. This classification, I would note, came together in final form in his encyclopedic *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society* (1968).

Borsodi considered himself a pioneer in the task of classifying ideologies. He found it an enormously difficult undertaking, but the problem framework allowed him to do this.

The Nature of Human Action

In his chapter on "The Nature of Human Action," Borsodi started with the thought that educators cannot avoid being social engineers. At root here is that the educator is responsible not only for proper method but cannot avoid the question, "what kind of society to educate for." Modern progressive education is about "adjusting" students to the world in which they live. Under our economic system it is about achieving the standard of living of modern industry. Adjustment is sociological, not praxiological; it is not designed for humanizing the student and equipping him or her to live as a normal (optimal) human being.

To achieve this will require a revolution in education. Borsodi stated this explicitly:

> *This is the contention of this study: that education should be based upon a science of human action, both individual and collective in scope; that adequate analysis of the nature of human action proves conclusively that the preoccupation of social scientist of all kinds – economists, sociologist, political scientists -with the sociological approach, introduces a hopeless bias into education; that it begins by making the educator accept the role of adjuster instead of leader; and ends by conditioning those whom he teaches to accept collective and political solutions for what they are almost gleefully told are social problems, when in reality most of them are problems that can be far better solved family by family, and individual by individual.*

Borsodi called for an "adequate study of the entity here called the individual human action." It must be emphasized that it is about *individual* actions. "Society" is a hypothesis. We need measurable facts, and one can only get those by looking at individual behavior. Lacking that, "social sciences will remain pseudo-science rather than genuine science."

"Social" actions are the result of the interaction between individual human beings during particular intervals of time and at particular places. Borsodi illustrated this:

> *What I am at this present moment doing is writing. A particular person, Ralph Borsodi, is performing this act; in a particular place, in my home in Melbourne, Florida, U.S.A.; at a particular time, on July 3, 1956.*

And, he adds, this act has a duration. He started at 10:43 a.m. and will continue until he does something else.

Borsodi further clarified the difference between doing and experiencing. Experience is an awareness of current action. Awareness, in turn, can be passive or active. Active awareness is itself an action.

Borsodi's praxiological axiom is that a healthy individual is capable of making his or her own decisions. One of the distinguishing features of a democratic society and free economy is that individuals make informed decisions. One of the dangers of democratic societies is conformity – herd behavior. A hazard of a society of abundance is that we too readily expect our needs to be taken care of automatically. In an increasingly complex society, we depend on experts to solve our problems. In short, we acquiesce to external conditioning. Advertising conditions us to impulsive buying.

Borsodi made a distinction between action and interaction. To him, interaction is still a process of individual action. The problem framework, particularly as outlined in *The Challenge of Asia* and further in *The Education*, makes these various forms of action and interaction crystal clear. He concludes this chapter by again emphasizing that the proper study of human action is the individual and that:

> *… [t]he proper basis for equipping ourselves, and for teaching those whom we influence to deal with both their personal problems and the great social, economic and political problems of our times in a genuinely rational and humane manner, should focus all the sciences, all philosophy, all knowledge and wisdom [on] how the individual, individual by individual, should act.*

The Nature of Norms of Action

Why is it important to achieve a normal level of life? Human beings have survived millennia of abnormal societies. The difference, said Borsodi, is that under those circumstances it was only necessary to live long enough to produce a new generation. It is

more about "animal" survival than about being a human being. Few had the time or literacy to speculate on human possibility.

> *Finally, I am saying that he will never be able to live as man is potentially capable of living – that he will never cultivate the Earth, utilize its natural resources, profit from his cultural inheritance, and spend the years of his life individually and collectively, healthily, affectionately, rationally, conscientiously, and with good taste – until he develops a system of education based upon some ideal as normal living – or, to use the words of Matthew Arnold, upon the idea of "the humanization of man.*

Borsodi then offered his six principles of normal living:

1. We need precise definitions for the terms "norms," "normal," "normal living" and "norms of living."
2. The method employed is rational and scientific.
3. We need an exact understanding of the term "individual." We are male and female, there are distinctive stages in life, and we evolve during our lives.
4. We need to be clear on the definition of normal living in terms of its social and individual aspects. We are by nature connected to other individuals through the family ….
5. And, by extension, to the community – what is the relationship of the family to the community around it?
6. We must formulate the whole complex of basic problems. That will require a volume for each problem.

The Law of Human Actions

The underlying methodology for the universal problems is something modern social scientists have not even tried to formulate. We must start with the difference between man and animal – the human mind. Animals act on instinct; only human beings have the power to determine how we should act and to act as we should. There is a moral context to our actions and that story can be found in the tragedies of history – the mistakes we have made. We have not used our minds to maximize our potential. This should be the law of human action.

There are traits called instincts and drives that we all inherit – including those that are distinctively human such as consciousness, language, etc. There are also other traits that are acquired or learned, voluntarily or not. These acquired traits can be improved through re-education to form a healthier personality.

Borsodi went into more depth about the instinctual drives:

1. The drive for self-survival. At base this instinct is found in all living organisms. In man it is shaped by doctrines, particularly economic doctrines. Life is more than economics.
2. The instinctual drive for species-survival/self-replication – the sexual instinct. Again, a trait shared by all living organisms. Freud is particularly noted for his focus on the sex drive. He held that we could submit to the drive as animals do, or we can pursue sublimation, turning sexual energy into creative expression.

3. The instinctual drive for self-expression, which man alone possesses and, in Borsodi's opinion, takes precedence over the previous two instincts. It is the development of this endowment that makes us human.
4. The instinctual drive for self-annihilation – the necrotic "instinct." If we fail to live like a normal human being, fail to actualize the three drives above, then this drive expresses itself. Even the slightest frustration can result in lethargy or irritability. With more serious frustrations we may become neurotic. At the worst the instinct for self-annihilation becomes dominant.

Self-annihilation can take the form of suicide, addictive behavior or anti-social, violent behavior directed towards others. Borsodi gave a more complete description of this trait later.

In short, in order to achieve a normal life, we need to be taught how to do so. "Only by learning how to deal with both his personal and his social problems can modern man end the frustrations to which his present devotion to progress and its implementation through centralization condemns him." This education is in the universal problems.

The Definition of "Norm" and "Normal"

Borsodi reiterated that "normal" should not be confused with concepts such as "natural, average, conventional and uniform." It is above all not to be confused with "average."

A norm is a rule, or "authoritative standard." As such it is not "what is" but "what should be." A norm will always be a statement of an ideal, the qualities of an organism at its best. In nature, "normal" is the standard. An animal that becomes abnormal, diseased or disabled, does not live long.

"All of the conditions of man," wrote Borsodi, "both normal and abnormal, are the consequences of human actions." In short, "norms" are about actions. A norm may be either descriptive or prescriptive. Description tells us about specific attributes or functions. It is an act of understanding. Prescription may be either prohibitive or obligatory. Normal living is expressed in satisfaction, not frustration. He reiterated that norms change during the nine phases of life, and actions must be appropriate for each of those stages.

Borsodi clarified that "[a]n individual human being whose physical and mental attributes, and whose actions and patterns of action, fall within the normal range of variation for each such attribute or activity, and who fulfills all the functions of human living during each period of his life, and during his life as a whole, is a normal human being." While we are a product of nature, we choose our actions. We are a product of society and culture but again we may choose to rise above these limitations, or not.

Borsodi's statement "[f]ulfills all … the functions of an individual," refers to both biological functions and to social and economic functions. "Economically, it means self-support and contributing to the maintenance of a family. Socially, politically, intellectually, ethically, and esthetically, it means a personal contribution to sustain, and to develop further, the culture of the society to which the individual belongs." In short, it is about rising above mediocrity.

There are few normal human beings. The evidence of that is the unfortunate condition of physical and mental health in society. I would note that it was about this time that psychologist Abraham Maslow developed his model of the self-actualized personality. Maslow thought that only about one-half of one percent of Americans achieve that state. Why so few? Since every human being is potentially "normal," the reason for abnormality, says Borsodi, is mis-education, what we are taught.

Borsodi wrote that he thought that mankind has "accumulated the knowledge and wisdom needed to distinguish between normal and abnormal behavior." He added, "I further believe that this total accumulation – ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, philosophic and scientific – includes sufficient methodological knowledge and a sufficient number of methodological techniques so that it can be integrated and made a basis for the humanization of humanity." Indeed, human behavior, both optimal and pathological, has occupied the finest minds throughout human history.

> *All the major problems of living have been faced over and over again by the great minds of the past, and all the major solutions of the problems have been prescribed, and often tried over and over again, in the history of mankind. At this moment, evaluation and integration are probably more important than additional accumulation of knowledge. The key is integration. The methods of science can be used, the deductive, the inductive, the statistical, the experimental and the comparative, to help achieve this integration.*

While admitting that his system may not be the best or final, Borsodi proposed four methods for pursuing integration:

1. Praxiologic Criterion: Criterion" comes from a Greek root meaning a method of judgment. He distinguishes the meaning of "criterion" from "method" which he defined as an orderly procedure or process for arriving at a conclusion. "We are seeking methods which will provide us with means for judging the validity of normal living."

   Again, this takes us into the range of value judgements – into the evaluation of human actions. Borsodi added, "The classifications, from the standpoint of ethics, which I made of the eight thousand cases of human action finally resulted in the emergence of three categories, which I call (1) moral actions, (2) amoral actions, and (3) immoral actions."

2. The Psycho-Physiologic Criterion: There are four assumptions about psycho-physiologic criterion, and they need to be taken together - not separately – as a whole. As such they dramatically reinforce each other. These are, again, self-preservation, species-continuation (propagation), self-expression and the necrotic drive. Borsodi went into a more detailed description of each of these assumptions in this section. The first two are more or less self-explanatory. Borsodi provided some important thoughts about the latter two and I will try to summarize these.

   Self-Expression: This is something only humans can do and it "leads him(her) to devote his(her) self to arts and crafts and literary activities; to science and inventions and discoveries of all sorts; to both altruistic and egotistic forms of endeavor; the building of social and political institutions which maintain a balance between such altruistic and egotistic urges; to religious worship and the

quest of immortality, of paradise, of salvation, of nirvana and moksha; and to the philosophy and concern about the purposes to which life should be devoted."

It is in the field of self-expression that we rise above the instincts. It is here that we begin to express our humanity. Only human beings can act self-consciously.

The Necrotic Instinct: Borsodi summarizes it as "Every destructive and aggressive impulse in man, from alcoholism to war, whether directed toward himself or outward toward others, is an expression of the necrotic instinct." All the great warlords, and those who followed them into war, "were individuals responding to the necrotic instinct." He included other forms of withdrawal from life, such as mystical traditions – turning away from the world – which can be a response to the necrotic instinct. Narcotism is a response to being overwhelmed by misfortune.

What then is the alternative? "All actions and activities which do not and cannot satisfy man's basic instinctual drives harmoniously, are abnormal; only those acts and patterns of action which involve no frustration of the basic survival, sexual and expressic instincts are normal." These must be learned.

3. The Pragmatic Criterion: Pragmatic criterion are norms of living, of action. "We may sum up pragmatic criterion," wrote Borsodi, "by saying that it is a method for distinguishing between activities which are normal and those which are not, by the test of the way in which they work." To determine what is normal, as in our diet, we draw from the accumulated knowledge of humankind; historical, anthropological and geographic research, and scientific experimentation. Our choices are driven by experience; by choosing those things that work best for us.
4. Homometric Criterion: This is mathematical and statistical methods applied to the problems of man. An example is the ideal weight by height. Both are concrete numbers. As a practicing economist and accountant, Borsodi was keen on numbers and mathematical reasoning.

Borsodi warned again of specialization and particularly the abstractions found in the social science for which there is a lack of objective facts. He had some advice about how to correct the problem of social research – a method he used in developing the problems of living framework. In essence, it is the scientific method. He concluded this chapter with this further admonition:

> *It is perfectly obvious that the use of this method requires drawing upon knowledge from every field of art and science, including the humanities, and every religion, ideology and school of philosophy, either for the purpose of furnishing cases, of verifying the principles developed, or of passing judgement upon the solutions which different religions, different philosophies and different ideology now offer with regard to the problem under consideration.*

Borsodi demonstrated an extraordinary erudition in this discourse. He drew from East and West, ancient and contemporary, sources. He made connections with his Indian audience.

A Note on Methodology.

Borsodi proposed that individual human action can be described in these terms:

1. The name or identity of the particular person who performed the act being described.
2. The particular place where it was performed.
3. The particular day, month and year it was performed.
4. The interval of time during which it was performed.
5. The particular process for which it was performed.
6. The sequence of activities performed during the time-interval of the whole action.
7. The specific consequence which followed from it so far as society and the individuals involved in it were concerned.

The next problem is classifying these actions by common and distinctive characteristics. As the classes of basic problems were defined, so too were the ideas, ideals and ideologies related to them. This classification is mandatory. "Without classification, we have nothing but impulse, tradition, and dogma to fall back upon." Without an adequate classification, we have little prospect of integrating what we know.

However, the social sciences are lacking in this method. Borsodi said he could speak with authority about economics and with almost as much authority about sociology and political science. In short, he could speak to what they lack. The social sciences need their own taxonomy, much as found in biology, and will remain pseudo-sciences until this is achieved.[80] This is true of most fields of knowledge.

The humanization of humanity also requires planning. Borsodi clarified this in these terms:

> *It is the study of planning, individual by individual, by the thoughtful, concerned, courageous and dedicated minority of mankind; of planning by this … minority not of the economic and social and political life of their nation as wholes, but of planning for a better life and a better world by what individual men and women as members of their families, members of their communities, and finally as members of the whole of humanity can do.*

Again, it is a distinctively individual and not collective act of planning. It requires each such individual, each member of this creative minority, to do the work required. It requires a clear understanding of the human condition and the process of resolving the crises of our times.

Borsodi reiterated that he addressed this study to the educators of mankind. He noted that the "scholar" in Chinese texts and the "yogi" described in the Bhagavad Gita (karma yogi especially) are the kind of men and women he had in mind. I think Borsodi's *Pan-Humanist Manifesto* is a preamble to this theme.

These people can be interpreted as elites. They are, according to the Chinese classics, "superior" individuals. They are deeply thoughtful men and women regardless of their vocation. Without them, however, as Toynbee demonstrated, societies and civilizations, fail. So do organizations and groups.

It cannot be overemphasized that this work requires planning. While this is an age of planning, the bureaucratic planners seem to be failing to either maintain order or make

[80] It should be noted that biology, the study of living organisms and not matter, is the leading science in classification. And it should be understood that general systems theory and systems ecology evolved out of biology.

needed changes. Planners today have lost sight of the end and focused on the means. Therefore, the creative minority must formulate long term plans and provide the leadership needed to achieve them – leadership, not by direction, but by example and through education. It has to be done "by individuals, one by one, family by family, village by village, and these individuals need to be taught how to plan both personally and socially by humanized educators, instead of being taught to leave all planning to the professional graduates of our schools of planning." The great leaders in ancient history, such as Moses, Solon, Plato, Confucius and Manu, for example, were planners. Modern historical leaders such as Gandhi and King could be added to this list.

Planning is grassroots. The plan must be founded on the norms of living of individuals, families and communities. Borsodi summarized:

> *The three most important occupations in my considered view are neither governing nor engineering, as most men believe today, nor business and money-making, as most men believed yesterday. The three most important occupations are educating, homemaking and farming; the first because it is the educators of mankind who either humanize or fail to humanize both man and society; the second, because it creates the environment in which the young are either rightly or wrongly prepared for living like normal human beings; and the third because it makes most directly for collaboration with Mother Nature, for man's co-operation with the living soil, the living plants and the living animals of the Earth.*

Borsodi further stressed that:

> *Planning in the broad sense in which it is dealt with in this study, falls into two areas; planning the manner in which to deal with the personal problems with which life will confront us, in the various 'ages' through which we still have to pass; and planning for the public, for the social, economic and political problems with which we have to deal as a citizen and as a member of the whole human race.* Planning for man: planning for society*.*

Planning starts with the educational system, not the state nor the economy. Borsodi proposed to address this process at length in Volume XIV, which dealt with the education mainly of the individual; and the second part in Volume XV which dealt mainly with the re-education of the culture.

The Education of the Whole Man Book II

The second section of *The Education of the Whole Man* is a book unto itself. In the first section Borsodi provided his conceptual foundation for his universal problems framework and how it should be taught to university students. The second section (30. Chapters) addressed particular aspects of education. In these chapters, which can be described as essays, Borsodi clarified the basic principles and overall philosophy of Right Education.

The Problem of Education

There was a general uneasiness about higher education around the world both before and following World War II. Colleges and universities had become in essence vocational schools preparing students for success in life. Professors were specialists who knew a lot about a very small part of life. Students were also trained as specialists. They were not prepared for either citizenship or a balanced life. In 1959, Vinoba Bhave, who was considered the spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi, sharply criticized Indian education which he called "absolutely wrong" and asked for the educational institutions to be shut

down for six months to develop a system to meet the needs of the country. I believe that was in no small part a result of Borsodi's mission in India.

Borsodi noted that in 1944, Robert M. Hutchins, then Chancellor of the University of Chicago, made an equally strong statement in a speech to the faculty. Hutchins, who Borsodi called a friend, had several years before published his highly critical *The Higher Learning in America*. He called for a reversal of "the whole scale of values by which our society lives."

The problem of education, Borsodi understood, is complex, and he characteristically set out to clarify the problem, starting with the fact that human beings are the only animal that can be educated. Rather than fixed and inflexible as are the instincts of animals, humans have flexible natures. We are thus the product of what we learn; for better or worse. Consequently, education is our most fundamental problem.

The record of human history is not a pretty story. When animals strive for the basic necessities of life, some may kill for food or territorial control. "Man," wrote Borsodi, "kills … for glory, for religion, for power, for wealth, for patriotism, for ideology." The more we "progress," the more bitter and lethal the conflicts become. "The gospel of Progress, the belief in Materialism, the devotion to Hedonism, the cult of Nationalism, the doctrine of Centralization – these are some of the ideological germs with which modern man has been infected by those who teach and lead him."

These are not the characteristics of a normal human being. So how do we make education work to achieve the normal? Borsodi divided the problem of education into two parts, each complex in its own right: The problem of function and the problem of organization.

The first part of this, the second section of *The Education of the Whole Man*, is mostly dedicated to defining the functions of education. It includes the definitions of mis-education, right education and re-education. The second part, organization, consists first of the three-fold curriculum of physical education, intellectual education and emotional education. As the school is not the only means of education, it also includes consideration of the roles of the home and community. We must take the problem as a whole and embrace other ways of learning and teaching. Finally, there is the question of teaching methods: logical, illogical, and alogical. He subsequently more fully developed these ideas.

The Nature of Education's Function

Education has been used for many purposes. It teaches basic skills, it enculturates, it provides vocational training, it teaches us about the nature of God and the practice of religion, and it shapes the citizen. The way education is organized often depends on its function in our lives.

For Borsodi, "the nature of the educational problem indicates this function to be the humanization of mankind." Form follows function. It is about the education of the whole (wo)man: "man is normally a whole, and … his education must therefore be whole and not partial." We need a better understanding of how that function is achieved. This clearly cannot be done by existing practices.

Further, Borsodi stated that the needs of each individual vary, that education provides for both leaders and followers, and while both must be educated to be humanized, leaders and followers have different needs. He again admits that this suggests an "elite." He wrote, "the humanization of a determining minority of thoughtful, concerned, courageous and dedicated men and women; and the humanization of the masses who are less educable because they are less thoughtful, by such a properly educated elite." If the educational problem is to be solved, we must clearly understand this dual process. The humanized elite should be morally, esthetically, and intellectually qualified for leadership. This principle is recognized in the classical cultures of both the East and West. Gandhi was an iconic example. He was a man of action, and many who followed or associated with him were also outstanding leaders.

Humanization is the process by which people are taught to live and act like normal human beings. The term "normal" must (and will again be) clearly defined. To start with, the practice of enculturation found in schools and colleges is not humanization. Enculturation provides basic skills but essentially it is indoctrination. It is shaped by parochial ideologies. Enculturation makes distinction by race, nationality, religious dogma, etc. Humanization "aims not at adjusting the individual to his own particular nationality but adjusting him to the problems involved in living as a member of the whole human race." It is not only intellectual education, but emotional education as well.

Man is not born "human." It is a long road for the infant from its mother's breast to a mature man or woman. Borsodi again addressed the stages of life in this book. How well this process is guided determines our humanity.

The Organization of Education

These two terms, function and organization, need further definition. They will be recurring themes. Borsodi started with "purpose," which he defined:

> *Every activity and every undertaking, every project and every enterprise, can be analyzed in terms of its purposes and of the methods used in trying to realize them. And purpose in the sense in which it is here used is that condition which an individual sets before himself, or a group of individuals set before themselves, to be realized as a result of the execution of a project or the operation of an enterprise.*

Purposes may be functional or non-functional. Functional purposes achieve the end result sought in the statement of purpose. If the function is the humanization of humanity, "it follows that the proper purpose to which an educational system should devote itself is to prepare those who are taught in it to live like normal human beings; to teach them to deal with both their personal and their social problems like rational and humane beings." To the extent that schools fail to fulfill this objective, they are non-functional. A functional education, further, addresses the whole person. "Failure to educate wholly is failure to educate properly." To be fully functional, every part of the school's program must contribute to this end.

We must, therefore, pay attention to the methods used. Borsodi defined methods:

> *… like all purposes, may be divided into two categories, organized and unorganized; into processes which reflect prior thought and prior planning, and so can be said to be organized; and into activities which are impulsive, thoughtless, disorderly, planless, and so unorganized.*

Organization, again, requires detailed planning. "Organization is a cause of which efficiency in the fulfillment of purpose is the effect." We organize to ensure the intended purpose is realized. That must be achieved with efficiency, a minimum of wastefulness.

In most schools, what we call administration can hardly be defined as organization. With administration the focus of the school is the head office, not the teachers and students. It is how the school is run; not what it produces (as long as students pass the mandated standardized tests).

Another term for lack of organization is Institutionalism, one feature of which is that "the student body exists for the benefit of the institution, and not the institution for the benefit of the student body." In short, it is not functional. And yet a great deal of money goes into administration, centralization and standardization, and it becomes a factory system.

The Organization of the Curriculum

What is the task of education? Borsodi wrote:

> *The first and most important task of education, I hope I have made clear, is not enculturation; it is not the task of adjusting and preparing the young for life in the culture in which they happen to be born; it is not instructing them today in techniques and equipping them with knowledge which will enable them to "earn a living" in the industrialized civilization which has spread from England all over the world.*
>
> *The first and the most important task of education, is to humanize humanity – to 'educate' the population.*

The curriculum for the education of the whole person consists of two major components: Physical and Mental – a healthy mind and a healthy body. Mental Education is further divided into two parts: Intellectual and Emotional. Borsodi briefly outlined these topics, before going into further detail in the following two chapters, which I have summarized as follows.

The curriculum for physical education includes topics such as: Gymnastic, sport (teams), Athletic (individual), posture, nutrition, recreation, rest and sexual education. Physical education must also include useful and productive work, for example arts and crafts.

Mental education cultivates the intellectual powers and includes: Instruction, Cultivation and Humanization.

Emotional Education is new ground in curriculum building. It addresses the things we feel and includes:

a. Perceptual: We are more than mere intellect. "[T]he validity with which it plays its part is wholly dependent upon the validity of man's perception. These perceptions can and must be educated if the whole man is to be made a genuinely rational, rather than a merely rationalizing, animal."
b. Introspection: However, the intellect is about more than perception (sensation) alone. There are concepts that cannot be traced to the five senses, and these are susceptible to cultivation.
c. Axiological: The cultivation of values.

d. Volitational: "The fact is that all human action above the level of unthinking impulse and unthinking habit involves the making of choices, and when choices are acted upon contrary to habit and contrary to impulse, what is exercised is the faculty traditionally called the will.

These topics are not courses to be taught but practices to be embodied in student activities.

Emotional education is not so much what the teacher says, but the way they say things, i.e., in the teachers' bearing, their relationship with students, how they discipline, and what they demand of them. Traditional rites and religions have developed along these lines: "Everything which takes place in a school, from the lowest to the highest level, must be in effect ritualized for the purpose of the right kind of emotional education."

Instruction Versus Cultivation.

The idea of the education of the whole mind is ignored today. Borsodi preferred the term cultivation to "education" or "instruction." He distinguished between cultivation, or humanization, and instruction. In schools today instruction has become a science, and emphasis is on the method rather than the content of learning. It is utilitarian. "The student is taught to read and write not because this opens the door to knowledge and wisdom, to the enjoyment and the riches to be found in books, but because reading and writing are essential if he is to earn a living."

Instruction is primarily intellectual – it is about facts and figures. It is specialized, and while specialization may have its role, it does not address the whole person. It is designed to serve the factory, the assembly line.

Cultivation is in a large sense going beyond the basics. The basics must be provided to all, but education must provide for those who wish to rise to a higher level of under–standing and ability. Borsodi rejected the leveling effect of educational egalitarianism.

Borsodi found no essential difference between cultivation and what was once called liberal education. "From my standpoint, when American education began to abandon liberal education for scientific education, what was in fact being abandoned was the cultivation of the highly educable minority for the fulfillment of the role which they ought to play in any genuinely humanized society." Citing the Carnegie report on education issued in 1956, Borsodi added that:

> *A liberal education … should seek to instill in man knowledge of himself, of others, of mankind's achievements and heritage; it should promote in him the capacity for clear and rational thought, and encourage in him a sense of curiosity, criticism, judgement, and tolerance.*

Liberal education was rapidly disappearing from the curriculum. Borsodi again referenced Hutchins, who, along with Mortimer Adler and others, worked diligently to restore liberal education a quarter of a century earlier. St. John's gave this full focus.

Borsodi was not uncritical of liberal education; he believed it "produced appreciative, rather than creative, men." It lacked music and the arts. He added that a liberal learning should produce students who are "able to write in the language of the past 'clearly, forcibly, and elegantly,' at least the kind of letters and journal which most educated

men wrote before the Industrial Revolution." It must also produce "amateurs" with a mastery of many arts, including "many individuals who have a professional mastery of particular ones." He used Leonardo da Vinci and Thomas Jefferson as examples.

Philosophy is another topic of cultivation needed to produce whole (wo)men. But it is not standard philosophy. It must first of all:

> *…become an integration of all knowledge and wisdom, an essential prerequisite for rational and humane resolution of the problems with which everyman is confronted by life. It must not only make him familiar with the history of philosophers and their philosophies, it must equip every student with a philosophy by which he will live.*

The study of philosophy must evoke the emotions – it is not only the study of values, "it must make [you] feel them."

> *It must cultivate a love of truth and hatred of error, a love of beauty and hatred of ugliness, a love of goodness and hatred of evil, a love of devotion to the humane life, and a hatred of purposes which are bestial in nature.*
>
> *This part of the curriculum for intellectual education must include sensitizing his epistemic, telic, esthetic, and ethical potentialities; it must include equipping him with criterions for the evaluation of these values; it must include the cultivation of a conscience which makes him react to all his experiences in life as a thoughtful, considerate, courageous and dedicated human being.*

The cultivation of ethics is required. The wholly educated man must be a moral and not amoral person. Borsodi, as have others, noted that many highly educated people are amoral and some are 'decidedly unwholesome persons.'

The study of the basic problems of living is about the integration of knowledge and wisdom. That means not only the acquisition of knowledge but "an adequate philosophy by which to guide his own life." Subject-centered education completely ignores the integration of knowledge necessary to produce a whole person. There are too many subjects to make integration possible. Integration can be achieved only through the universal problems framework that provides a method for a critical, objective and logical examination of beliefs, values and activities related to the problem. It is a process of self-examination: What is my problem and how do I solve it? And it is a realization that these problems are shared by humankind and that a great deal of understanding has been accumulated about them over time.

The integration of human knowledge is not just another subject listed in college catalogs. "It has an entirely different purpose to fulfill." The distinctive nature of this method must be understood and set apart. It must underlie the planning of curriculum at every level. And it must provide principles of action:

> *To provide principles, the course must be normative and not merely descriptive; it must aim not at the cultivation of philosophic scholarship and erudition; it must aim at resolving the problems with which living confronts every human being, and with imbuing the student with the determination to live in accordance with the principles for which this calls.*

The philosophical attitude sought is a philosophy by which to live.

If there is a priority in teaching the problems of living, Borsodi suggested starting with the educational and occupational problems. The educational problem makes the student aware of the nature of right education and the importance of adopting a philosophy

by which to live and how to study problems to help him or her form such a philosophy. But ultimately, particularly in adult education, all fourteen must be studied.

The first course on the problems of living was given at the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin University in 1940. All of Borsodi's courses have been with adult and graduate groups. Undergraduate teaching in the major problems, he cautioned, requires experimentation. For the college level student, Borsodi suggested that when they start "the student should be given a kind of philosophic chart and philosophic compass with which to guide himself in his studies; and … in his last year of college work, he should make an intensive study of both the personal and social problems which will confront him after he graduates and comes with life in society at large."

That initial session should be one or two weeks "devoted to a sort of introduction to real scholarship and higher education." The student would be introduced to the basic problems at that time. A chart, suggested by a friend of Borsodi's at Ohio State University, would consist of "'a series of fourteen boxes in which to file anything and everything he learns for the rest of his life.'"

The last year of college would involve "an introduction to wisdom" with more time to study the basic problems and the wisdom of mankind "embodied in its arts and sciences, religions and philosophies; it should persuade him to try to deal wisely, and not merely impulsively or conventionally, with the problems which will confront him outside the ivory-tower world of the college classroom and college campus."

Perhaps Borsodi is bowing to the realities of the stages of life in regard to the undergraduate student. It is a matter of maturity. They are (then and now), due to a lack of life experience, less capable of making clear moral evaluations.

As a final note to this chapter, Borsodi reaffirmed that "intellectual cultivation and emotional education become virtually indistinguishable."

Integrated Education

The fragmentation of specialization creates a world of chaos with no sense of direction. While it provides a lot of knowledge about how things work, it does not tell us what we need to do or why. Borsodi wrote, "… to contribute to a better way of living and to the development of a better social order, integration of all this knowledge is essential."

Pantology, the scientific classification of all knowledge, had produced only one contribution to modern life -- the Dewey decimal system for the classification of books[81]. But the flood of new knowledge is overwhelming. Borsodi noted that there were seven large sub-divisions of biology with 50,000 original contributions being made annually. In 1948 MIT offered 1,008 courses for the training of engineers. There were 45 courses in chemistry. In the 1970s, I found 28 separate schools of sociology, all in competition for scarce resources and for students.

This represents a terrific volume of undigested knowledge.

But there is far more knowledge than science, and that is what has been accumulated by the high civilizations of the world, "mankind's accumulation of belles

[81] Borsodi described the development of the field of taxonomy in his book.

lettres, poetry, biography, fiction and in fact arts of all kinds. Philosophy and theory. History, sociology, political science, psychology, physiology." This list is long.

Discipline

There is a context of discipline and organization of study.

> *There are three student attitudes so obviously essential to effective schooling that their validity can be taken for granted. … The first of these is an attitude of genuine willingness toward the observance and the acceptance of discipline in the classroom, in the school, and on the campus. … The second of these attitudes is willingness to study and recognition of the importance of learning. …. Finally, there is the attitude of respect for the teacher and toward the institution in which they are privileged to study.*

Students who do not accept these principles, he added, should not be permitted in any properly organized school. The students who wish to learn have the right to do so, and it is the obligation of the educator to "protect […] them from being emotionally infected by students who have been emotionally mis-educated. … Schools exist to teach. …. They are not reformatories." There should be no compulsory attendance. The egalitarian right (mandate) of every child to attend school "is a degradation of the democratic dogma." "The moment a student ceases to learn," Borsodi concluded, "his rights to schooling cease to exist."

A corollary is "that the institution and the teachers must deserve to be respected." The process of right education begins with the teacher – "his own character must inspire the right emotional attitude in all those who come in contact with him."

Perceptual Education: The Cultivation of Sensitivity

We are largely, though not entirely, defined by sense perception. An overemphasis on sensation leads to mechanistic psychology such as behaviorism which denounces the role of the mind in human affairs. We are thus considered to be the effect of external stimuli or biological instinct.

Education is about planned experience in contrast to chance experiences.

> *The distinction between experiences which are perceptual and those which are introspective in nature, between experiences which have their ground in sensation and those which have their basis in recollections, imaginations, intuitions, and revelations, whatever this 'inactions' be called, is, from the standpoint of curriculum building, enormously important.*

Intellectual education, which represents the bulk of the curriculum, has little if any education of the perceptions. He wrote of the student: "Their senses have not been sensitized. They are blind to the beauties of nature and of art; they are deaf to the beauties of song and music; they are insensible to the beauties of poetry." Borsodi referenced Maria Montessori as a vivid example of sensitizing the perceptual faculty, albeit only for the very young. This is a process that must be continued throughout life.

There is a profound difference between animal and human perception. An animal reacts to sensation; it is instinctual. Humans also react but can reflect on what they experience. We do learn directly but we also are capable of a deeper, appreciative, understanding. It is deliberate and self-conscious, involving "discrimination, interpretation, recognition, recollection and classification of perceptions." Such appreciation

(understanding) is reflected in art, particularly painting. It is also cultivated in the scientist who explores, interprets and tests perception. Science and art come together in works such as those by Audubon and Faber. There is a difference between looking and seeing. Biologist Louis Agassiz had his students repeatedly draw specimens until he was satisfied that they really saw what was before them.

Borsodi added, "in educating the whole man so far as his perceptions are concerned, the goal ought to be: Every individual not only a music lover but a vocalist or instrumentalist; and every student not only an art-lover but participant in the creative and interpretive arts."

Introspectional Education: The Cultivation of the Self

Seeking education of the faculties other than just those of an intellectual nature is breaking new ground. This includes introspection, which involves "acts of intuition, recollection, imagination and conception." Introspection is a form of thinking. "it is thinking subjectively and not objectively; it is thinking not for the purpose of comprehending noetic problems nor for the purpose of controlling and directing action, but purely for the sake of self-comprehension; for the purpose of understanding, of integrating, and of realizing the Self." It is being thoughtful. It carries the admonition from the Bhagavad Gita: "Do not be impelled by the fruits the task might bring to thee."

Introspection is about the inner life. It is essential to the education of the whole man. It can be called spiritual. It often begins later in life. Introspection can be cultivated. It includes arts, music, painting, poetry, the cultivation of good taste. It is essential to humanization. Scientific psychologies, however, tend to consider the inner experience taboo. It cannot be weighted and measured and is thus discarded as unscientific.

For too many there is little sense of the self, of true self-consciousness. There is thus little difference between the state of sleep and what is called "awake." Borsodi cited Gurdjieff's and Ouspensky's "elaborate Esoteric philosophic system based upon this undeniable empiric fact that the whole person of most individuals is without any real unity other than of their physical body; that most persons have no integrated personality that serves to be called a Self; that for all but a very few introspective individuals, the inner life is but a flux of conflicting impulses, sensations, thoughts, tendencies, beliefs, desires, memories; and that there is no single 'I', but a plurality of 'I's' of which the one which spoke or acted at any given time was a mere matter of chance."

In conclusion, Borsodi wrote, "The cultivation of the Self, the integration of the Self, and the realization of the Self is impossible without the cultivation of introspection."

Axiological Education: The Cultivation of Values

Scientific progress has had a severe impact on values. Nietzsche wrote extensively about that. Liberal educators tried to preserve them. Axiologists try to better understand values. Axiology is, or should be, according to Borsodi, the science of values. He did a lot of work on this at the University of Melbourne.

Values are emotional rather than intellectual. They are what we base our judgments on – not as much on reason as on feeling, or a sense of right and wrong, good and bad. We take their importance too lightly. We give lip service to values, often saying one thing, doing

another. It is a rare person today who lives by a set of core values, and that is a failure of modern education, particularly higher education, to teach them. "Nothing represents a greater challenge to education than the task of making the individual aware of the real nature of his values – the convictions which actually shape his life – than equipping every individual with a rational method for testing his values and of inspiring him with the determination to live, both at home and in his work, both personally and politically, in accordance with them. … Emotional education must therefore not only be perceptual and introspectional, it must also be axiological."

Borsodi described two levels of emotional experiences: mild and strong. Mild emotional experiences, like the way people greet each other, can have an accumulative effect. It instills an attitude of habitual courtesy.

Strong emotional experiences can have an immediate and lasting effect. They can come as surprises or they can be planned, as in festivals, rituals and ceremonies. These are particularly powerful as rites of passage.

Volitional Education: The Cultivation of the Will

Borsodi observed, "The term will, the idea of will-power, and the act of willing, are today considered psychologically old-fashion." It is a recent loss. Throughout history, until relatively recently, willpower had been a virtue.

Will is exercised in contravention of intuitive impulse. The will becomes distinctive when choices are made that are "difficult, laborious, unpleasant." Wishing is not will; will is acting. It is the final phase that begins with "reflecting, imagining, wishing, choosing; followed by deciding; but it will not culminate in action in accordance with the decision taken without the act of willing." It results in motor action. Driving oneself to obey duty is an exercise of the will. "To exercise will is to direct one's mind and one's body to do that which, without such action, the individual would not do." Willing is a planned and premeditated, deeply emotional action, and it evokes counter-emotions. It requires courage, persistence, and determination. It takes will to move from plan to accomplishment.

> *I know of no better concrete illustration of willing than that represented by the action which I am myself performing at this time, roughly between three and four o'clock on the afternoon of January 30, 1960, in writing these lines in my study in Ahmedabad, India. This is the anniversary of the day when Gandhi was killed. For all of India it is a holy day. I was invited by friends to attend services to commemorate the day which began at six o'clock in the morning. To attend the services, I had to get up at four-thirty, nearly two hours before daylight. As a result, I was unable to do the stint of writing which I try to finish every morning; I was unable to get back to my typewriter until the afternoon. The afternoon is hot; I am tired and sleepy; every impulse in mind and body clamours for relaxation and for rest. Yet I am forcing myself to finish the particular work, which I started yesterday, and forcing myself to do it by what has been from time immemorial called an act of will.*

He wanted to write, and he wanted to rest. He chose to write and forced himself to do so. That took willpower.

Can will be educated? Should it be included as part of the curriculum? And what methods are required?

That the will can be educated was once universally accepted. There is a large literature about it. The treatment of mental illness is an exercise of the will: the patient must learn to take responsibility for his or her actions. The therapeutic method is a form of education in willpower. That is true in the pursuit of physical health. Absorption in fad and fashion point to a weak will.

Willing is a conscious process, a faculty of the conscious mind, and the conscious mind can be educated. By definition, consciousness is something we have the ability to control. Will is a habit: the more we do something the easier it becomes to do.

A strong will must be cultivated and that cultivation must be made part of the curriculum. Good students exhibit strong will; weak-willed people are usually poor students. Merely memorizing text does not cultivate the will. Will is action, practice, or in Borsodi's terms praxiology.

In terms of method, Borsodi distinguishes between behavioral conditioning, which dates from Pavlov and his dogs and Watson's behavioral psychology, and the cultivation of deliberate and intentional willpower. It is also a matter of initiative. The pursuit of higher learning can be arduous; it was never, from ancient times and around the world, intended to be easy.

The Organization of the Educational System

"The educational system cannot be thought about in terms of classrooms only." Education begins before schooling and continues throughout life. It includes the influence of other people, newspapers, cinema, radio and television, the family and kin, peers, the church or temple, political parties and social movements. All of these are in need of reform.

Right education is about the whole culture; it involves "the task of family revivification and social renaissance." We must therefore organize education not only in schools but outside of them. Right education seeks to humanize at least the determining minority of society who will lead the reorganization of society along humane lines. The teacher, of course, is a leader who must work both within the school and in the community at large.

Borsodi places high value on tradition. The problem is found in attempting to replace tradition with modern scientific education.

> *The problem cannot arise in a culture where tradition, rather than science, is the determining factor in education. It is also … accelerated with the industrial revolution. Modernism has now swept or is sweeping away traditional culture around the world. The change in culture has been rapid and is accelerating. A vast variety of new institutions have been established; particularly mass culture. There are too many individuals and groups that have 'an axe to grind.'*

He added, "The essence of right-education is truth-seeking – the search for and the presentation of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." This is not the province of modern public schools.

It is not so much a return to tradition and culture as it is a return to humanization as opposed to conditioning, to re-education of society itself. It only takes a handful to lead the way. They may be students as well as teachers. "But if they are to be helped to escape from

being spoiled by the prevailing atmosphere of selfishness and cynicism, they must be equipped with a philosophy of living in which the role they are to play in society is explicitly outlined, and in which the function of membership in a determining elite is not subordinated to self-seeking vocationalism pure and simple."

It also calls for some addition to the existing school system organization in every community. The program is more than just classes; the school should be a community planning, cultural and arts and crafts center. It should sponsor funding drives to provide for libraries, museums and other cultural features, for lectures, concerts, dances, theatre, festivals. And it should not be forgotten that it is a school; its function is education. It should stand apart from particular movements, yet "bring to bear upon them all the resources of unbiased knowledge and wisdom."

Re-education is adult education directed at correcting the errors which abound in both tradition and custom.

Borsodi emphasized two things:

> *First, that if this proposal for a system of education which educates the whole man and so makes possible the humanization of mankind is to be realized, we must not only solve the practical problems with which education is confronted today, we must also have faith and vision.*
>
> *And the second is this, that in all the years I have devoted to the study of higher education in America, the most terrible thing which our colleges and universities do to the young men and women who go to them, is to turn them into an army of disillusioned cynics; into men and women who know all about the seamy-side of those whom they thought great heroes; who think enthusiasm, childish; heroism, silly; sacrifice, stupid; faith, folly; vision, delusion.*

He cautioned:

> *It is part of the tragedy of mankind that it is much easier to evoke self-sacrifice by firing people with hatred than inspiring them with love. It is much more difficult to evoke selfless dedication by appealing to reason and compassion.*

But it can be done.

And it must be done if educators are to find full compensation in their work ….

Borsodi continued to list others who must find satisfaction in the services they render such as doctors who seek healing, lawyers who seek justice, engineers who seek to build a better world, architects who pursue the beautiful, and

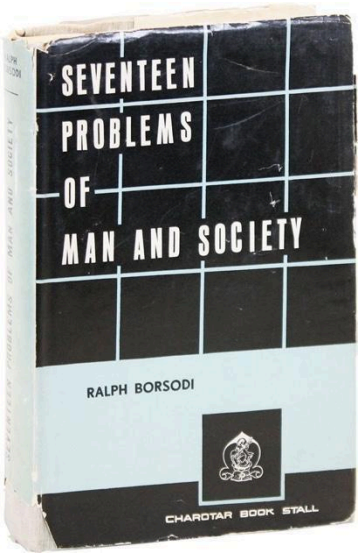
> *…social scientists and philosophically minded leaders [who] devote themselves to creating a more wholesome life both for man and for society. … To inspire the necessary idealism; to maintain the necessary enthusiasm; to instill a life-long dedication to the work to which the educable elite should devote themselves; and to keep them devoted to the task of ennobling the work which the rank of manually gifted must perforce do, it is of the utmost importance that education should rise above specialization and mere technology … creating a better life and building a better social order can be done in only one way, by teaching individuals to incorporate in what they do and in what they build and what they produce from day to day, beauty and harmony, reason and truth, concern and consideration, tolerance and humanism.*

In every nation, said Borsodi, there are men and women who rise to higher standards of living:

The lives of all these … countless men and women whose contributions have received no such worldwide recognition, furnish proof positive that it is possible for a man to get full satisfaction out of a life devoted to the realization of an ideal. They furnish proof positive that it is possible to retain the initial idealism of youth throughout the whole of one's life, and to maintain through all the inevitable discouragements and defeats, the enthusiasm which is essential if ideals are to be realized and translated into action.

If a better life and a better world is realized, it will be because teachers and artists and musicians, economists and sociologists, lawyers and financiers, engineers and architects dedicated their lives to the task of right-education in all that they do.

Seventeen Problems.



The book *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*, published in 1968, was Borsodi's last text on his educational system

Seventeen Problems is a challenging book. It is encyclopedic; literally a detailed, narrative outline of his system. Borsodi's approach, being an economist and accountant by profession, was detailed and analytic. He created a taxonomy of concepts that itself is astonishing. This is just a lot of material; however, as I will demonstrate below, taken one chapter at a time, this book is indeed very manageable.

Seventeen Problems is a seminal book. Borsodi's system is an original contribution to the art and science of true human progress -- the progress not of the material pursuits but of our humanity. It is the work of a brilliant and dedicated mind and the product of decades of not only research and writing but experimentation and organizations. That Borsodi was approaching 80 when he finished it is astonishing. Even then, he was far from done. His mind retained an intensity, an acuity, and a high level of creativity until his death. He would, in fact, make two of his most important contributions following this book: his community land trust model and local currency.

Borsodi understood that the human mind was a problem-solving organism. It is not just a storage container for school subjects, but an awareness that comes alive when confronted by difficulty and mobilizes its unique capacities for memory and imagination, for a sense of past and future, for language and reason, to find solutions, to make life better. He was a pioneer in this understanding and in the pursuit of systems of problem solving that could enable humans to prosper and thrive in an increasingly complex modern life. The times, as he and others clearly understood, require new tools, advances in our capacity to think, to plan and to achieve objectives. Borsodi should be granted the honor of being recognized as a leader in the front ranks of this movement.

Borsodi was devoted to the ideas of individual liberty, of self-reliance, of economic independence. He was a humanist in the old sense that we have a duty to help make society and history better. He believed that there were norms in life just as there are laws in science that must be observed. He drew from ancient wisdom and believed we could learn from the accumulated experience of the human race. He read voraciously, and he

remembered what he read. He sincerely believed that modern, urban-industrial society had gone off track and was degrading us.

The twenty-first century has brought tremendous advances in science and technology, in communication and access to information, but we have to ask whether we have retained the capacity to solve the problems that confront us today. We see pockets of innovative problem solving that demonstrate the power of these tools when appropriately employed; but these examples are the exception rather than the rule. It does not suffice that there is a movement to "save the planet." It only matters that leaders arise and organizations are formed that can affect change, that can remediate issues, and, we might hope, can envision and pursue a better future. It is going to take a lot of work, for which Borsodi gave us some important material to work with.

Borsodi was fully aware of how incomplete his system was and asked that it be developed by those who followed him. For nearly a half-century since his death, few have made any attempt to carry the work to the next level. My purpose is to continue that work and to encourage others to take up his standard for the humanization of humanity. I will end this section with a modest proposal in that direction.

The Seventeen Problems

When Borsodi returned to the US in 1961, he brought home a massive amount of research material he hoped to use to complete a multi-volume work on the problems of living. Mildred Loomis solicited funds to bring a young Indian student to the US to assist him in 1963. Shyam S. Chawla, who I believe was the son of the man by that name who was instrumental in settling Borsodi for a stay in India in 1958, arrived in late July to begin editorial work on Borsodi's papers. Borsodi was still recovering from the serious illness he suffered in India. Since he wasn't up to the task, Mildred and Chawla carted three 2'x3'x4' metal trunks of Borsodi's manuscripts and notes to Lane's End in Ohio where they spent the summer summarizing 6,000 to 8,000 pages of material into 700 pages of typescript.

In May 1964 Mildred published a 40-page summary of the new seventeen-problem framework and circulated it for comment. It became available for 50 cents from the School of Living. In short, it appears she developed and published the first comprehensive introduction to the new seventeen problems framework. In addition to the 700-page manuscript, we learn that she also later prepared typescript for several of the proposed volumes.

Borsodi, once his health recovered, completed the book in 1967. *Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*, nearly 600 pages long, was published the following year by Borsodi's friends in India and sold by the School of Living in the US. It was intended to be the first in the series of books, a volume for each chapter. It is available free for downloading at this link[82].

Structure

The bulk of *Seventeen Problems* consists of a chapter for each of the universal problems. There is a short preface, an introduction that discusses "the most important

[82] Seventeen Problems of Man and Society free download: https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1wQ6T5I3eBVWG1xT2xoZlhRRFU/edit.

problem," a Readers Guide, and, at the end of the book a short *Summa Summarum* and two short indexes of Concepts and Names.

Index of Concepts and Names

I believe the Index of Concepts and Names should be studied first. I should add that some of the terms used in these lists may sound strange to the modern mind, though they were back then familiar. That doesn't make them any less applicable today.

Given the incredible array of ideas explored in *Seventeen Problems*, the brevity of the three-page "Index of Concepts" is instructive. It provides a different, more subject-oriented, perspective on classification. More strikingly, given the extensive bibliography, the Index of Names is less than a page.

These lists prove a point: Today we are relatively poorly informed and lack an understanding in common with a larger community. This, I would add, is precisely the failure of modern culture: There is far too little that we understand in common; that we can talk about. These lists give us those topics.

Introductory Statement

On the first page of *Seventeen Problems* Borsodi stated his objective clearly:

> *The most important problem in the world today is the problem of the philosophy by which men live and the philosophy by which society is animated. This, however, is just another way of saying that the most important problem in the world is the educational problem. For this in practice is the problem with which education deals; it deals with the whole process by which not only the rising generation, but also older generations are imbued with the philosophy all are supposed to practice and which the whole social life of the community is supposed to reflect …. The essential character, sentiment, and disposition of a people, of a community or country, a society or culture; the spirit which animates its manners and customs, its practices and institutions, and which is reflected in its ideals, and especially in its values – in its ethical and esthetic, its economic and teleological [purposes] attitude and practices.*

In *Seventeen Problems*, Borsodi summarized his core methodology, described in far greater detail in *The Education of the Whole Man*, in a single paragraph:

> *The methodology used in making this study slowly evolved over the years and finally boiled down to a combination of four methods: (1) the case method, (2) the classificatory method, (3) analysis of the concepts and generalizations which emerged from the classifications, and (4) the synthesis of what the analysis revealed in terms of its applicability to each problem. Unfortunately, I have found it necessary to make three and not just one synthesis of each problem because of the nature of the mechanism for knowing with which man finds himself burdened, one based upon Supernal evidence, one upon Objective, and one upon Intellectual. I wish I were a Monist; it would all be so much simpler! The Pluralist unfortunately has to accept complexity as inescapable.*

Finally, he cautioned the reader that he has biases:

> *I am a convinced humanist, an agnostic on many questions, a philosophical anarchist, a pluralist, a positivist (not a relativist); a radical (in the sense of going to the root of things), a rationalist (I believe in the ultimate criterion of reason); a decentralist, an agrarian, a distributist, a single-taxer, a money-reformer, a cooperator, a homesteader, a conservative (about many things), a reformer (about many other things), and finally an enthusiast.*
>
> *But there are several things I am not: I am not an apologist for things as they are – not even as they are here in prosperous America. And I am not a proponent of salvation by revolution. I am*

not a reactionary (I am much too tender-minded for the thunder on the right), I am not a liberal (I am much to tough-minded for the thunder on the left). I am much too hard-headed to believe in a golden age, either in the past or in the future. I don't believe there is any virtue in anything either because it is old or because it is new. Virtue, it seems to me, has to do with truth, with goodness, with beauty, and not with what is old or new. I'm neither a perjorist nor an optimist; I'm a meliorist. Things can be made better, but they can be, and to me seem to being made, worse. Whether they will be made better by affluence as everybody seems to believe, or whether they will be made worse (as only Thoreau and I seem to believe), only God knows, and He hasn't confided His views about the matter to me. Come to think of it, He doesn't seem to have confided them to anybody recently. The race of prophets seems to have become extinct.

Summa Summarium

At the end of the book we find *Summa Summarium* (which translates "In total"), written in July 2, 1966, more than a year before *Seventeen Problems* was finished. Borsodi wrote (and I will quote at length):

The holiest temple is not a church but a school. The holiest man is not a priest but a teacher. The holiest book is not a bible but a dictionary. The holiest study is not science, not art, not philosophy, not religion, but the study of the truth about how to live, how to treat your fellow men, and how to use what has been entrusted to us like decent and honest, sensitive, and concerned, cultivated and considerate human beings.

What the study of the truth teaches us – the study of the holiest of all holies – is that Man is holy, the Earth is holy, the Sunshine is holy, the Rain is holy; that all Matter, all Energy, all Nature is holy; that the Procession of the Sun above us and the Seasons here on Earth is holy; that Evolution – beginning with the Evolution of the Rocks and ending with the Evolution of Man – is holy; that the painful History in the course of which Man has lifted himself from primitive bestiality and savagery to civilized life, and from the crude craft and artistry of Aurignacian Man to the artistry and science of Confucius and Aristotle, of Gautama and Plato, of Shakespeare and Newton, of Goethe and Galileo, of Darwin, Freud and Einstein; from the painting of Altamiras to the painting of Mona Lisa's, from the carving of Lingans to the carving of Pietas; from the music of the tom-tom to the music of Eroicas; from the architecture of Stonehenge to the Architecture of Taj Mahals, is the holiest of all Historiography.

What the study of the truth about how to live teaches us is that the Rights of Man are only earned by observing the Obligations of Man; that the four great duties which constitute the Obligations of Man are (1) the obligation of conservation and economy, (2) the obligation of creation and beauty, (3) the obligation of harmony and morality; (4) the obligation to realize Man's highest potentialities. Without unreserved commitment to behavior on the basis of these values, Man can be a human animal but cannot become human in fact.

Without the practice of conservation and economy; without the practice of art and craft, of poetry and beauty; without the practice of what Plato called 'the science of good and evil' and Confucius the 'moral law,' Man seems to be but is not in fact a human being.

Finally, without making the supreme purpose for which we live our lives the enduring satisfactions which are existentially possible for mankind – and not the sensate gratifications of the moment nor the future salvation of our souls in some sort of paradisiac immortality – we shall fail to make ourselves into normal human beings.

Only by rightly educating ourselves can we equip ourselves to honor those who have, in the long history of mankind, bequeathed to us all their art and science and all their painful labors and heroic sacrifices. What has been entrusted to us, we must multiply, and with it endow those who follow after us.

Upon what the thoughtful and concerned men and women of the world do to help those teachers and those institutions dedicated to right-education are dependent not only the young but also the mature for right-direction, right-guidance, right-discipline, right-instruction and right-values.

And this is the beginning and end of right-education.

Wisdom, not novelty; courage, not cupidity; right-feeling, right-reasoning, right-speech, right-action, right purposes.

Of all these products of right-education, neither courage alone nor wisdom alone are quintessential. For without courage, wisdom becomes a sharp tool in hands afraid to use it, and without wisdom, courage[becomes] an equally sharp tool in hands which do not know the use to which it should be put.

Wisdom cherishes only that which makes for the development of the highest potentialities of Man.

And courage, if it cherishes wisdom, shrinks neither from defeat nor from victory.

Only with courage and wisdom can mankind deal with ignorance, with folly, with greed, with violence.

Only with wisdom and courage can mankind be saved.

Bibliography

One of Borsodi's objectives was to access knowledge relevant to understanding and solving each problem. In each chapter, within the commentary, Borsodi provided extensive bibliographic references.

From the beginning, a library has always been associated with the School of Living. Since at least 1940, it had been organized around the universal problems. This structure of classification was a response to the limitations Borsodi (and others) found in the subject classification of curricula and libraries. At Melbourne the library contained over 4,500 volumes. Some years later, Mildred Loomis established a Borsodi Memorial Library of 2,500, mostly books she had accumulated at Lane's End.

A question in the minds of many interested in the universal problems is: What books were in that library? Unfortunately, following Mildred's death the library was dispersed, and we have no list of the books in those collections. The more important corollary is: What would we include in a library today? I think we should also understand that the books often address more than one problem and perhaps a card (or digital equivalent) index would be a more useful way to access these books.

At the present time we have the technology to form a single digital and Boolean searchable database of any number of books, articles, and other publications. This idea has been around since at least 1945, when what we now call hypertexting was envisioned by Vannevar Bush. There is an interesting history about the development of digital libraries since then. This idea was pursued as a Cove Institute project in 2000 working with two pioneering digital educators and the Korzybski integration of human knowledge legacy. The Universal Digital Library was named Polymath, and a tablet device (well before the tablet computer was produced) was proposed, designed to assist users to organize their own material much as Bush had proposed with Memex a half century before. The internet and search engines provide a comparable but, given the objective of augmenting human

intelligence from the early days of personalized computing and the integration of knowledge, has achieved relatively limited capacity to meet our needs.

It took a bit of work, but it made good sense to compile a single bibliography of books listed in *Seventeen Problems*. That was done on a spreadsheet with the books listed according to their appearance in each chapter and also sorted by author.

There are 1,123 citations in *Seventeen Problems*, with 941 unique titles. Borsodi used 182 titles more than once, in different problems. The latest publication date for these books is 1966. Those publication dates proved insightful: 85% of them were published prior to 1960 and two-thirds prior to 1950. However, not a few of the books listed were republications of text that go back to ancient times.

Two things about this list: First, it is seriously out of date; many of the titles are now obscure, most forgotten. Second, it lacks reference to an incredible literature that was produced in the 1960s and 1970s and since. There was a strong surge in books published related to the Human Potential Movement beginning just as *Seventeen Problems* was published. That number steadily increased, year-by-year, until about the time of the end of Borsodi's life (1977). Considerable advances have been made in cosmology, natural sciences and social sciences over the last half-century. Our understanding of the physical world, of life and human life has advanced to an incredible degree. These new insights must be incorporated. Digital media, of course, has given us techniques of access to infor–mation that were just barely dreamed of then, but as suggested, this capacity has been far from optimized.

I should, however, point out, that analog learning, books, notecards, pen and paper, is a viable option, indeed, in many ways primary. Curiously, as the digital world goes to virtual reality, there is a renewed interest in analog systems and an impressive number have been resurrected. This idea is discussed by the author elsewhere. In short, the human brain seems to work best by exteriorizing ideas, what Korzybski called "extra-neural," and through manipulation. Hand-eye coordination is a critical function to learning. Word processing and digital tools are useful in writing and presentation. Thinking and creativity occur in our minds and in our hands.

In short, while it would be of historical value to have the original library, there is little point in trying to replicate it. We must build a new one, and we can readily do so online. Saying that, I would also caution that the number of such texts should be limited. A small community library, and I am proposing a collection of printed books as well, could be very satisfactorily assembled with fewer than 10,000 titles (not including popular fiction) with a searchable index. I personally continue to find that physically organizing a library by subject aids in browsing.

The Problems

The Seventeen Problems are divided into three groups. How these are organized was more fully addressed in *The Education of the Whole Man*. There were three more of them added since *The Education*, some changes in the definitions of the first fourteen, and development in structure. I will briefly summarize the seventeen universal problems by group.

Part I, Noetics: Four Basic Intellectual Problems.

Problem I: Anthropic: The riddle of human nature, the problem of the nature of man's own nature. In short: Who am I?

Problem II: Ontoic: The riddle of the universe, the problem of the nature of the world in which man finds himself. In short: What is life all about?

Problem III: Etiologic: The riddle of historiography, the causes of the events which constitute the history of the world and the individual experiences constituting every biography. In short: What can I learn from the way people have lived down through time?

Problem IV: Epistemic: The riddle of communication, the problem of distinguishing between truth and error and of verifying and validating and communicating what is true. In short, how do I know what is real and true? In the previous fourteen problem list, this was an axiological problem.

Part II, Axiology: Four Basic Problems in Values.

Problem V: Telic values: Convictions and prejudices about ends and means, about the really important purposes of mankind. In short: What are the important things I should do?

Problem VI: Ethical values: The problem of good and evil. In short: What actions are right and wrong?

Problem VII: Esthetic values: The problem of beauty and ugliness. In short: Art: What makes me see things as beautiful or ugly?

Problem VIII: Economic or Utilitarian values: The problem of distinguishing between wealth (and well-being) and Illth (the opposite of wealth and well-being). In short: How do I establish a sound way of living?

Part III, Praxiology: Nine Basic Practical Problems.

Borsodi's objective was action. The Praxiological problems are all about achieving the good life.

Problem IX: Psycho-Physiological Problem: Mental and physical health; realizing highest potentialities.

Problem X: Occupational Problem: How we spend our time.

Problem XI: Possessional Problem: Owning and holding things.

Problem XII: Organizational Problem: The science (principles) of organizing all sorts of enterprises needed to live rationally and humanely.

Problem XIII: Production Problem: The science (principles) of organizing all sorts of production of goods and services needed to support a rational and humane life.

Problem XIV: Distribution Problem: The science (principles) of organizing all sorts of distribution of goods and services needed to support a rational and humane life.

Problem XV: Political Problem: Elimination not of differences of opinion but of force.

Problem XVI: Institutional Problem: Conservation and Reformation. To retain or change institutions.

Problem XVII: Educational Problem: Man cannot rely upon his instincts. We need a new educational model to develop that which is truly human in us.

The Chapters

Each chapter follows the same format. They consist of three parts. First is an introductory statement about the problem; something like a brief encyclopedia article. In it Borsodi outlined a taxonomy of concepts about that problem area. His intent was to tell us pretty much every way of approaching each problem.

The second part consists of a "Commentary" in which he reviews finer details of definition and comparison of key terms. These comments are something on the order of long footnotes. I believe many of them reflect Borsodi's personal values.

The third part is the list of suggested readings, summarized above.

Borsodi's Statement of Problem 1

Seventeen Problems is challenging to the casual reader but not so difficult for those whom Borsodi called the determining minority who are motivated to learn it. Mildred Loomis, a stalwart supporter of this system, did try to simplify the presentation of the system. As noted, she published her own brief summary of the 17 problems in 1964 and promoted and taught this system for some two decades until near the end of her life. This program, somewhat expanded, was printed in a series of five *Green Revolution* issues in 1974.

I believe Borsodi's system can be taught (or learned) in short, clear, and effective segments. Following is an example I've used for the first problem. I start by restating the problem, by translating it into plain English. Then I change the tense from third person (mankind) to first person: What does this mean to me?

The first problem asks: What does it mean to me to be a human being? Why am I in this world? This is a question that has probably been asked since the first of our kind became self-conscious hundreds of thousands of years ago.

I would like to note that Borsodi used the term "Anthropic." It is the study of how human beings live on the Earth. Borsodi may not have heard the term Anthropocene, which means the era of the history of the Earth dominated by human beings. It was first used in the 1960s but didn't become popular until the 2000s. So, he was again ahead of his time. It points to a new class of problems: human impact on the biosphere and on human society. Our understanding of the nature of humankind and our effect on the Earth has undergone a dramatic shift since *Seventeen Problems* was written.

Our impact on the world leads us to Borsodi's second problem, the nature of the world we live in. It brings to the forefront the problems of beliefs and values. Indeed, it "lights up" the entire system. All seventeen problems can and must be brought to bear on addressing this first problem as an integral component of the whole system.

Problem One, in brief: Each of us is a conscious being. We are aware that we are alive. We wonder about what life is all about. It is in our nature that we want to know who and what we are, what is the meaning of life; We have to ask, "Why?"

While each of us is a unique consciousness, it is inescapable that we are each a member of the human race. We know there are certain qualities that define us as part of our species.

One of the fundamental questions about what we are is whether we are merely a body and brain or also have a mind and soul? Are we a mere accident of nature or something more? In short, is there any purpose in life?

Taken to another level, are our lives determined, subject to dogmatic conditioning, or do we have free will? Even science is divided on this question.

We must also ask how human beings differ from other animal species. Animals rely on instinct; something humans have relatively little of. Humans have a mind, consciousness, and a variety of faculties that other animals, as far as we know, do not have. We have the capacity to pass on what one generation learns to the next. We also have the capacity of self-deception.

This leads to the questions of which qualities are inherited and which are acquired?

Borsodi described three qualities of energy that humans share with other animals: Physical energy (which comes out of your physical form), survival energy (the instinct for self-preservation), and genetic energy (the urge to reproduce). Borsodi also referred to the Freudian concept of the unconscious mind from which spring deep-seated impulses.

He identified two additional forms of energy that only humans express: cultural energy, as displayed in man's efforts at self-realization and self-expression; and necrotic energy (something Freud discussed), which is a tendency for self-destruction – it can be expressed in the human sense of alienation. It also applies to harmful acts committed to other humans, other life forms, and the planet. The Anthropocene has this quality.

The conscious mind by and large defines our species. It gives us the power to overcome impulse and animal responses, and, in these actions, we become more fully human. The quality of self-consciousness can be used to integrate the mind and personality.

Whether or not we can extend the qualities of human existence to the supra-conscious level is a matter of debate. Do we have extrasensory abilities? Does conscious life continue beyond the death of the body?

From birth, through the cycle of life, we each develop in our own way. I have noted that the ego of each of us is an essentially random, accidental formation. It is conditioned by parents and by one's immediate social environment. As we mature, education and social experience constantly mold and modify who we are. It is this persona, for better or worse, that distinctly defines each of us.

Borsodi made the point that the key to a person's nature is what he or she values. Values are the second set of problems and must be considered within the context of reason. The bottom line is that we are not inherently good or bad. We have the capacity to

determine which values we will allow to guide our life and to what degree we allow impulse to define our behavior.

That we are the most complex and highly evolved of all organisms is a given fact. The human brain is the product of four billion years of evolution of life on earth. It is designed to solve problems. It gives us qualities other animals do not have. Our consciousness means that we don't simply exist, but that life must have meaning. We are also creative, capable of writing poems, music, books, discovering the laws of nature, creating art and architecture.

We are not all the same. We represent an incredible range of differences and capacities. There is a tremendous plasticity in human nature. Borsodi thus thought egalitarianism made little sense. We must, therefore, embrace a pluralistic view of human nature. It is the diversity in nature that makes it strong. All the parts have an integral role in making the ecosystem resilient. That principle applies equally to the human species. A human community is an ecosystem just as a forest or lake is an ecosystem.

We are each what we are taught. Schools and other institutions have been created for the purpose of developing personality. All cultures have rules for guiding human behavior, standards of right and wrong (values). But man, ideally, is not just a machine that can be programed (conditioned). We each must choose to embrace or oppose the norms of our society and choose how to act. The normal, healthy, person will choose what is in the best interest of their family and community. This is praxiology.

Borsodi lamented the low priority given to the problem of the nature of human nature. We expend thousands of times as much thought, and a vast amount of money, to landing men on the moon than we do to what is more essential. He wrote, "Yet there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that if all the knowledge we already have that is significant for our problem were properly analyzed and synthesized, it would be possible for us to deal with the riddle of human nature rationally and humanely instead of as we are dealing with it now – with indescribable and inexcusable confusion, stupidity and brutality."

A major part of Borsodi's work is his exhaustive investigation of the forms, the doctrines, and the ideologies which have been developed over time. There is an enormous variety to choose from. These are the many different ways how we define what is true. He listed several dozen ways in this chapter in which we describe human nature and grouped them into several major categories. Each has a short description to help readers decide if it is a topic that appeals to them.

In his commentary, we get glimpses of Borsodi's background material. He tells us that this chapter (23 pages) was condensed from 300 pages of manuscript, and these included graphic material which was not possible to include in the introductory volume. That material has unfortunately been lost, but we can reassemble what we need.

Always careful of the definition of terms, Borsodi devoted much of the commentary to why a particular term was used, where it came from, and why it is important. Indeed, he published *The Definition of Definition* in 1967, the year he finished *Seventeen Problems,* as a supporting text. By putting these more technical items in their own section, Borsodi sought to reduce the difficulty of the chapter text.

Many of the books Borsodi listed in his reading list are classics and still readily available, including Freud, Jung, William James, Reinhold Niebuhr, Vinoba Bhave, Aldous Huxley, Nietzsche, Emerson, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Plato, Sartre, Darwin, Korzybski, Krutch, Orwell, and many other names that were in vogue at the time. They illustrate the values of the accumulated wisdom of humankind.

Concluding Assessment

Seventeen Problems is mostly a descriptive what and how. It provides some great philosophical insight, but I believe a study of *The Education of the Whole Man* and *Education and Living* are prerequisites to taking on *Seventeen Problems*. These three books represent the triptych Borsodi proposed when writing *Education and Living*. The case for the problem-centered system - the why - is actually more clearly stated in the first book, *Education and Living.* There was also considerable discussion of these ideals in *The Education of the Whole Man*. Many of those ideals were outlined in *The Pan-Humanist Manifesto*, a keystone text in its own right. At root, however, is the pursuit of an optimum life, a life of economic independence, of freedom from the constraints of industrial civilization – a life Emerson defined as "self-reliance" and Maslow as "self-actualization."

The range and scope of Borsodi's work is astonishing. Taken collectively, the five volumes I include in his education series alone represent 2,221 pages of text (plus 8,000-12,000 pages of unpublished manuscript), and there are many other articles and documents. Borsodi was prodigious, clearly a man of genius. He was highly analytic. He used many details, facts and figures, and exhaustive classifications. His style is challenging but manageable by those motivated to learn. I have attempted to provide a more readable summary of this material and there is still work to be done.

Where do we go from here?

While Mildred made a good effort to translate the material into something more understandable, the system was never offered in a form that could be widely and readily adopted. So, where do we go with this?

I also see two principal needs for development. The first of these is the problem of a coherent statement of the philosophy behind this system, the reason why it should be studied at all. The question is, what were Borsodi and Mildred trying to achieve? I have attempted to address that question in this book, but a more concise and coherent summary is needed.

The second issue is translating this system into something applicable today, an effective program for presentation of the material. The seminar approach is valid. We could use a workbook. We also have digital presentation media that was not available a half century ago. I believe attractive and effective presentations could be produced and made readily available over the internet. Tutoring and webinars could also be made available to guide students.

Could we improve the organization of the list of problems? I've traced how the system evolved over the years. Borsodi was well aware that it would require continued development. I will have a bit more about this below.

I've covered the development of Borsodi's system in the Learning and Living volumes. It is instructive as to method. I found it interesting, for example, that Borsodi moved the economics problem from the practical group to axiology – values - treating economics as a problem of values, a problem of what is right or wrong. There are, of course, two closely related practical problems: production and distribution. Indeed, as he said elsewhere, all the problems are essentially economic.

From the beginning of his work Borsodi clearly considered the modern economy problematic. One of his last efforts was to clarify this with his unpublished book *Wealth and Illth* toward the end of his life, nearly a decade after *Seventeen Problems*. That manuscript was lost, but there are a large number of folders of notes and typescript for that book, which I estimated to be on the order of a thousand pages, in the archives at the University of New Hampshire. I noted that Borsodi touched on evolving issues such as the environment in this work, which is a good example of his work updating the supporting resources for the study of the problems.

Borsodi's objective was clearly an alternative way of a life, an alternative economy, and also an alternative philosophy of life. He not only had the ideas, he had a program for achieving results in life. Mildred made her own practical contributions to this subject in her books, articles, newsletters, workshops and conferences.

I think it is a given that we need a more sustainable and humane economy. The real question is how do we do that? It has been an elusive quest, particularly over the last several hundred years, by a small army of thoughtful men and women. The 2020 pandemic crisis has, I believe, made the question of the type of economy we should have a high priority. Transition Centre and allied groups continue to seek to address that need.

There are also two original problems of the first 13, that were addressed in some detail in *Education and Living,* then numbers 4 and 5, Association and Gregational – how do I associate with groups and how do groups associate with each other – missing from the final list of seventeen. I personally believe these need another look. Part of my rationale is that social dynamics in the US have evolved considerably over the last half century. In short, there are a number of new social styles – ways people employ to achieve the way they live, the values they cherish – that I find have a dramatic and as yet unstated influence on the way modern society is actually working, or not. Current political dynamics in the United States, I believe, mandate further and immediate work in this area.

How do we go about updating Borsodi's system? I would point out that with some attention to presentation, it can be used as it is. But we could, should, and I propose to, create a new "version," if you will, an upgrade. Saying that, what the universal problem structure itself addresses has not changed. The very idea of universality tells us that they remain the same for all people in all times and places and will not change as we move into the future.

To start with, as noted, Borsodi's bibliography ended in the mid-sixties, just as a flood of new literature on the human potential began to appear. An informative and highly relevant literature has continued to reach the bookshelves (and now online). There have also been dramatic advances in technology, in the way we access and present information and in the way we communicate. There is a great deal of this, and it needs to be organized

in some fashion. Borsodi found the subject approach inadequate. His problems framework I consider valid, with some enhancements.

The global economy has also evolved, as has the impact of continued population growth and economic development on the environment. The mass of humanity, as Borsodi cautioned, is conditioned to progress. Their demand for resources steadily rises. One seventh of the world's population consumes nearly two-thirds of its resources. Billions more (perhaps 10 billion people by 2050) are trying to catch up. We are rapidly depleting nonrenewable resources. There are economic and environmental issues today that Borsodi had not addressed at the time he was writing *Seventeen Problems*, although he was, as noted, beginning to look at them later in *Wealth and Illth*. The environmental movement had just gotten underway at that time.

The 2020 Covid pandemic introduced important structural changes in society and the economy, in the way we associate, do business and provide educational services. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention; we can and must adapt. A lot of these trends were already present but became suddenly and dramatically accelerated. The term getting wider use today is "resiliency" – not only adapting but increasing our capacity to do so and to guide our response to the inevitable changes.

Borsodi was a pioneer in the integration of human knowledge. I believe it is clear that we need better knowledge management. We need new methodologies for resolving problems in an increasingly complex, more chaotic, social environment. We need to not only clearly define our problems but have ready access to relevant information. And we need to break out of the specialist straight-jacket and develop a holistic, systems methodology. At base, as Borsodi so clearly observed, achieving the necessary cultural change for a post-industrial world requires education – knowledge, skills and psychological preparation.

Borsodi made it very clear that his system was far from perfect and far from complete. He solicited those of what he hoped would be the educators and leader to come, to further develop the system.

While we have some data that suggest the scale of the problems, we lack a systematic plan for achieving mandated transformation. We may have some idea what needs to be done, but do we know how to do it. This requires a new style of leadership with the requisite knowledge and skills. It requires organization and concrete and practical objectives to improve the well-being of communities.

At the grassroots level we need many more people seeking positive change. But it is leadership that shapes, changes, or thwarts it. Historian Arnold Toynbee called such leadership the "creative minority," who guide the rise of new civilizations and cultures. And when they are gone, civilizations soon follow. The Borsodi School of Living objective was to raise that determining minority of people who have the capacity to shape the dialog, teach and take leadership roles to ensure a just and enduring society.

Cove Institute

A bit more of what I propose. Transformative adaptation is a stated objective of Borsodi's School of Living, of Transition Centre and other related initiatives. Problems

persist and are become more challenging. Resolving them starts with individuals, and that involves them forming communities where they can put the ideals of a post-industrial society into practice. At the center of these communities are educational establishments; "community universities," Borsodi called them. The Cove Institute, defined as a resilient learning community, was an initial formulation of an effective program to address our times before I began reviving the Borsodi legacy.

In 1986, the year Mildred Loomis, I began my own attempt to synthesize the field of knowledge associated with the Human Potential Movement. From about that time, I had the good fortune to work with a series of mentors who were advocates of alternative living achieved through innovative education. Two of them were pioneers in digital education. One mentor was an expert in general systems theory. One was a leader in building alternative communities through education and leadership. Yet another was a founder of the Human Potential Movement. Korzybski's work on cognitive perception and his idea of integral learning were formative. Buckminster Fuller's synergetics and design science played an important role. There were others. We knew nothing about Borsodi or the School of Living until 2009. When I got to Borsodi and began a comprehensive study of his system, one which I frankly found astonishing in scope and depth, I was able to begin to bring several decades of work into a single, more coherent framework.

I had initially set out to study and create a synthesis of the Human Potential Movement. Maslow's idea of self-actualization stood out as a good foundation for this development. In that model he proposed a short list of characteristics of the healthy person. It became clear that a lot of people had worked on that idea, and most had distinctive models in their own right. I begin to make notes on these various characteristics and, like Borsodi's card deck, mine began to grow (albeit not as extensively as his was – only some 350 characteristic statements). Eventually I synthesized this list into 27 unique qualities.

I realized that these seem to have an innate structure, and I was able to develop a framework which I named the Well-Formed Personality™ (WFP. The WFP model readily organized itself into a structure of three bands of three groups of three characteristics each. The first band is about individual development. The second is social. The third is about agency, or leadership. This is, coincidentally, very much the pattern of the seventeen-problems framework.

The product of my integral synthesis, incorporating Borsodi's system, is the first of a series of books, published in 2018: *Self-Reliance: Achieving Personal Resiliency and Independence* (link)[83].

As I compared Borsodi's system with mine, grouping the problems as I had done with the characteristics of the WFP, I came up with a new list of nine universal problems, a structure more aligned with the WFP model and covering everything Borsodi did. Here is a summary of my revised framework of Borsodi's system:

[83] *Self-Reliance: Achieving Personal Resiliency and Independence*: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07J1Q84RZ/ref=sr_1_6?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1538681689&sr=1-6&keywords=sharp+self-reliance.

Transition Centre Revised Problem-Centered Framework

Foundation

Reason Why: A coherent statement of the philosophy behind this system, the **reason why** it should be studied at all.

Educational Model: How does it work?

Presentation: Translating this system into something readily applicable today.

Problems of Knowledge

1. What is the nature of human nature? Who am I? What is my purpose in life?
2. What is the nature of the world? How am I a part of the natural order of things?
3. What is the meaning of history? The accumulated record of human experience. (Integral History).

Problems of Values

4. What is the nature of truth? How do I learn effectively?
5. What acts are right or wrong? What is goodness? Ethics and Morality.
6. What objects are beautiful or ugly?

Problems of Practice

7. Health: How to live a long life with maximum well-being?
8. Occupation: How do I spend my time? How should a human being work and play? How do I earn my living? How do I achieve self-reliance?
9. Organizational/Gregational: How do we organize enterprises, communities, and collaborative efforts?

All of Borsodi's problems, including those, I noted, that had been dropped from earlier versions, are included in this list of nine problems. I have simply grouped some of them into more common categories.

In my *Self-Reliance: Achieving Personal Resiliency and Independence* I have touched on the first six of Borsodi's problems as listed here. In that book, I provided an introduction to the Well-Formed Personality™.

This is the model of the WFP:

SELF *(Band 1)*

1. Self-Awareness *(Group 1)*
    1. First Injunction: Know Thyself *(Characteristics 1)*
    2. Physical Awareness, The Traveler
    3. Mental Quietude, Emotions
2. Self-Identity *(Group 2)*
    4. Triple Nature: Self, Others and Nature
    5. Values, Beliefs, Philosophy
    6. Self-Remembering, Aim, Right Mindedness
3. Integrated Personality (*Group 3)*
    7. Non-duality
    8. Harmonious development of centers/intelligences

9. Mobilization of Energy

SOCIETY *(Band 2)*

4. Awareness (Clarity of Mind, Philosophy) *(Group 4)*
    10. Openness to Experience
    11. Here and Now
    12. Objective observation
5. Reason *(Group 5)*
    13. Personal Level of Experience
    14. Realistic
    15. Frame of Reference (Values, Morals) Critical thinking
6. Relatedness, Non-duality, Integrated (Well-formed) *(Group 6)*
    16. Open and Accepting of others
    17. Relatedness/Belonging
    18. Love, Community, Compassion

AGENCY *(Band 3)*

7. Responsibility, Social awareness *(Group 7)*
    19. Responsibility
    20. Ethical
    21. Commitment, Will
8. Agency/Will *(Group 8)*
    22. Freedom/Autonomy
    23. Courage
    24. Creativity
9. Quality of Life, Eudemonia *(Group 9)*
    25. Self-Realization
    26. Joy
    27. Transcendence

In *Self-Reliance* I briefly addressed Band One, Group One, three characteristics of the WFP, The Self. That is highly congruent with Borsodi's first problem. I should note that my book is a workbook. It includes, in addition to key chapters, narrative and exercises related to working through the characteristics. Each person works through the 27 characteristics time and time again at their own pace. It is a practice. The process takes the form of an expanding spiral. Each pass deepens knowledge, skill, and psychological preparation. It is a lifelong program and fully integral. It starts with the self, but a healthy personality is the foundation for the well-formed community. Achieving this requires individuals capable of agency, purposeful and transformational change.

Borsodi proposed a community university. The curriculum provides a general course of instruction covering the entire scope of the accumulated wisdom of humankind. With the WFP, relevant content, literature, is introduced with each characteristic. The Cove Institute project developed a comprehensive curriculum of general learning. Again, each pass deepens knowledge and understanding.

The program develops the capacity to learn, critical reasoning, a broad and general understanding of the human condition, a sense of the major trends of the modern world, an

ability to express one's thought, to plan, organize and to lead, and the personal readiness to achieve resiliency in all aspects of life.

I must, however, stress that Borsodi's work was not just intellectual. It was intended to give us the knowledge, skills, and psychological preparation to address the problems of life and to achieve what he called "the good life" - a balanced and satisfying existence. His School of Living program addressed teaching personal and family self-reliance – a productive and economically secure household/homestead. He placed great emphasis on manual skills. He understood the role of emotions. These must be included in a community university curriculum. He also placed emphasis on planning and organization, the formation of communal groups and of personal business enterprises. These too must be a part of the community university curriculum.

The community university is not an ivory tower institution. There are no barriers between "town and gown." It is integral, indeed central, to the community itself, formed by the community and governed by them.

Something of a model of this can be found in Borsodi's proposal to develop a self-sufficient community around St. John's College. More recent work with colleagues has proposed an "eco-college," an existing institution reorganized to meet the needs of its local community.

It is my hope that this more condensed version of Borsodi's work will assist those seeking to develop greater resiliency in their communities. Transition Centre and allied groups continue to work to develop this model.

Time is of the essence.

Part Five: Borsodi Memorial

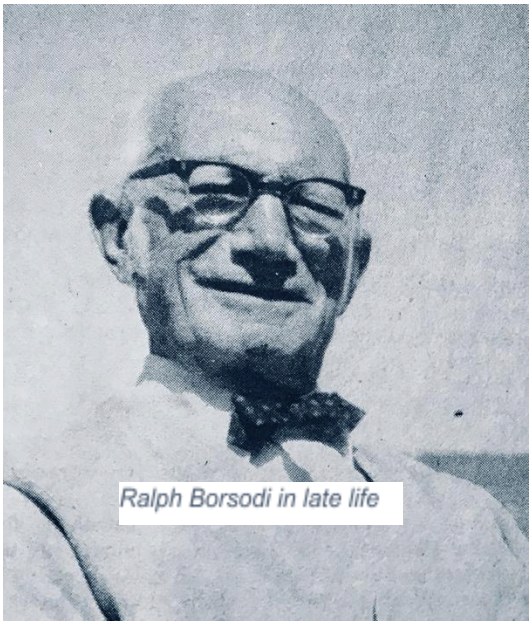
Ralph Borsodi died October 26, 1977, two months short of his 89th birthday. He was reported to have had a fall and died a week later in the hospital. His remains were apparently cremated; there is no gravestone registered. There was a memorial service at Phillips Exeter Academy, but I have found no details on it.

Borsodi was more or less in retirement during his last four or five years after he turned over the helm of the International Foundation for Independence likely around August 1973. This chapter is intended to fill in the blank of those last five years and serve as something of a memorial.

Most of what we know about the last years of Borsodi's life come from a 50th anniversary jubilee celebrating building Dogwoods, and a tour of Dogwoods, Bayard Lane and Van Houten Fields in 1973. At that time Borsodi was presented with a sheaf of testimonials. These and perhaps later items were printed in a small book, *Borsodi As I Knew Him,* as a proof edition with 99 copies in 1986. This was a bequest of Mildred Loomis. I've extracted some material from that publication, which is available as a pdf at this link[84].

Additionally, there is material Mildred published in her biography of Borsodi and other odds and ends I have been able to find, including a bullet list of Borsodi accomplishments, a list of his books, and a chronology that covers his life and includes Mildred's work with their School of Living.

In a eulogy written in 1977, Mildred wrote:


Ralph Borsodi in late life

"Dr. Ralph Borsodi preceded decentralist prophets of the 1970's by half a century and lived his whole adult life working to right the evils that created industrialist centralization."

"Dr. Borsodi has worked at solutions to major problems of living. Not the problems of war and peace, of poverty and hunger, of population and overpopulation. Serious as they are and serious as are economic growth, inflation, unemployment and economic depression, they do not head the list.

"The most important problem in the world today is the philosophy by which men and women should live, and by which both human individuals and society as a whole, should be animated." [Emphasis in original.] To this she added, "The essential character, the disposition – the goal – of a people, Dr. Borsodi maintains, should be the maximum, fully functioning living

[84] *Borsodi as I Knew Him: https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1wQ6T5I3eBVNzNjYWUwMzctMGNkNS00NGIzLThkY2EtMDBjNmM2MWQzODUz/edit?resourcekey=0-IPnCZoDY_5hcgwdKVE1NaQ*

and lifestyles people need, to understand mankind's basic problems, and choose rationally among alternative solutions to them."

"Trifling problems can be dealt with indulgently and even playfully. But the really important problems of mankind – those which affect human beings and the Earth upon which each human is dependent – must not be taken for granted. They must be dealt with only with the greatest wisdom."

"Human beings live not only in the moment, but in anticipation for the future and in recollection of the past. Wisdom dictates that any action which makes for enduring satisfaction, in a sense, is not a sacrifice at all."

"In practical terms, the critical problem now (1977) is mis-education. If man is to survive, if civilization is not to collapse, if man is to live like a man (not a two-legged animal), if he is ever to organize a rational and human society – adults must recognize the educational-philosophical problem as their first, continuous and most important one.

"As these pages delineating Ralph Borsodi's life and work have attempted to show, the educational problem is at least two-fold:

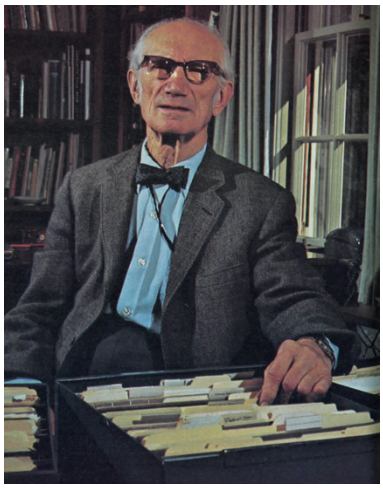
- Determining what is right education; that is applying wisdom to all the basic problem of mankind; and
- Using methods that enable the determining minority of men and women to attain this wisdom.

"All history, biography, drama, literature, science and social science, is replete with both wisdom and folly. These disciplines should all be tested by human norms and needs; they should be approached from a high priority on human values.

"Right solutions – sufficiently right solutions – for each and every one of the basic problems of mankind already exist. But until education is problem-centered instead of subject-centered, the truth, Borsodi believes, will not be recognized. No consensus among thoughtful and concerned men and women about what to do about them will emerge.

"Many people are convinced that the twilight of Industrialism has fallen; that technologists, industrialists and pragmatists are finished. Wisdom dictates that a new way of living be found; and new social institutions be developed.

Jubilee



A 1973 New Year's Eve celebration at Borsodi's house a collection of his friends paid tribute to his work. There was also a celebration of the jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of Borsodi building Dogwoods in Spring 1973. At some point (it could have been either of these times), a sheaf of testimonials was presented to him. There are snippets from these testimonials in Mildred's biography of Borsodi but that was completed several years after his death. I believe the originals (with some editing by Mildred) are published in *Borsodi as I knew Him* (see excerpts below).

But first let's look at this last scene:

Borsodi ended his days at a lovely house in Exeter with his wife Clare, still a very nice neighborhood, a block or so from Phillips Exeter Academy. This is apparently the second house he and Clare owned in Exeter. The first was a two-story farmhouse with 70 acres on the edge of town where he worked in the garden and in his wood-working shop making inlaid furniture. He moved to town in 1964, it was said, to be closer to the libraries. One friend described "his immaculate office with a few valuable books." He walked daily across the Academy campus to town for his copy of the *New York Times* and to chat with the many friends he made there. Borsodi loved Exeter. There were, outlined below, two articles published in the *Green Revolution* which described his experience in what he called Eutopia (the good place – see house photo below).

Borsodi's Final Five Years

I want to briefly summarize Borsodi's last five years, thinking this will help fill in the blanks in Mildred's biography.

SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2Borsodi at his home in Exeter

In April 1973 Borsodi spent three weeks in Europe establishing and organizing the International Foundation for Independence (IFI). This was a major enterprise, more than a man of 84 should be expected to do. In August, he stepped back from directing IFI. The month following his return from Europe was the Jubilee of the founding of Dogwoods and the *Bergen County Record* (NJ) sponsored a tour for Borsodi, Loomis and friends of Bayard Lane and Van Houten Fields. The attached photo is of Borsodi and friends in front of the first house built at Bayard Lane. It illustrates his stance and engagement at age 84. This is one of the rare shots of him not wearing a bow tie. That event was also published in the July – August 1973 issue of *Green Revolution*.



Borsodi and Friends 1973

In that edition of GR was also an interview with Borsodi done just after the School of Living conference over the Labor Day weekend at Conway, NH from which the booklet *Moving Into the Front Ranks of Social Change* was produced (edited by Mildred Loomis), which addressed the issue of why there had been so many failures in building community. Borsodi started by noting that man and community are highly complex subjects. He outlined three types of communities:

1. Religious communities which tend to be more successful and long lasting,
2. The business community built around an economic activity,
3. The idealistic community, which are mostly short-lived.

Borsodi said he developed the problems of living to help people build successful communities. It takes work; there are many things that must be harmonized. It is a whole system, which he was leery of trying to build from scratch. Basic requirements included land, a workable system of exchange; it must be fair, honest, human; it must be able to cope with the influences of the larger social system. This was covered in *Education and Living*.

Addressing questions, Borsodi added the following points. First, a community requires a clear vision, an understanding of what it provides it members, how it is managed, what are the duties and obligations of members. A "plan" is needed, but a community cannot be built from a [static] blueprint. We need to understand its essence, its dynamics, and we learn along the way. All of the problems that need to be addressed are in the book *Seventeen Problems*.

Mildred commented about the young turning against rationality and seeming to disdain plans. Borsodi responded that this comes from laziness – both physical and mental. They can't live "from impulse to impulse"' it takes industry and energy. Humans are good at supplying this. For the most part, we enjoy using reason. His system effectively educates the emotions. The motto of the School of Living when it was first formed was:

Dignifies labor
Justifies suffering
Gives significance to Life.

Sea Change

The next five issues of the *Green Revolution*, late 1973 through 1974, were produced by Richard Fairfield, living in Los Angeles. There was an effort to establish a West Coast School of Living, possibly two. There were active groups in both Los Angeles and the Bay Area. These five issues were devoted to the "Seventeen Problems of Living" and together represent a significant publication in their own right. Richard is the Editor, Mildred and Borsodi are the contributing editors. The content has been reported elsewhere.

The September – October 1973 issue carried two items by Borsodi. The first was about the Green Revolution and the Counterculture. He wrote:

> *The Green Revolution is a social, economic and political movement. Unlike most movements it does not begin with clamoring for new legislation; it begins not with political agitation but with persuading people to themselves live in accordance with a culture fundamentally different from that which is now prevalent. This fact makes it important to distinguish it clearly from most of what is called the counterculture.*
>
> *It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to distinguish between 1) the lunatic counterculture – the hippies, yippies, and zippies; 2) the drug, sex, dress and tramping culture nihilists; 3) the violent revolutionaries; and 4) the fundamentally sane and working counter culturists.*
>
> *This last, like the others, are against the prevailing way of living. They want to get out of the rat-race, they want to get out of this urban and industrial quagmire, and they loathe what the corporate polity and the corporate economy of today are doing and what it represents. But they are also against the zippies, the nihilists and the revolutionists.*
>
> *This part of the counter-culture, however seems to be in urgent need of a program. It needs to articulate both its principles and practices. It needs both an economic and political philosophy.*
>
> *The program of the School of Living has one enormous advantage over all other movements which want a profound change but which only agitate for it. People can put the School's programs into action themselves, directly. They can organize land trusts and anticipate the economic process which the Georgists advocated; they can resort to an alternative currency and end inflation for themselves; they can form cooperatives to escape from the corporate system; and they can build homesteads and avoid at least for themselves the economic and ecological catastrophe toward which this nation is heading.*

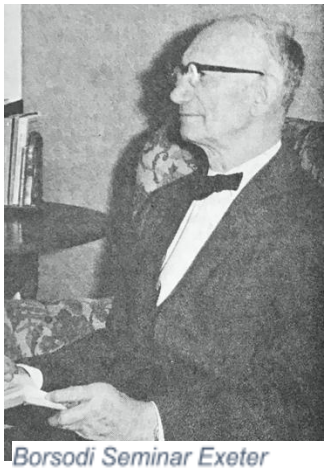
The second was a two-part article about how Borsodi found life in Exeter, "I Live in Eutopia." Eutopia is not the same as Utopia. Utopia translates into "no-place." Eutopia translates into "good-place." Borsodi said that Exeter is a Eutopia.


Borsodi Home in Exeter

Exeter, he continued, "has attractive homes, good neighbors, adequate industry, almost no crimes, moderate taxes, good schools" (Phillips Exeter Academy is a prestigious preparatory school). It is a New England town [meaning iconic small community] and was a center of American independence. It had at the time just under 9,000 people. "Cultural and intellectual life of its citizens is high, led by the community schedule of the Academy which exceeds that of most colleges."

Borsodi went on, "The chief attribute of a Eutopian is his tendency to respond rationally and humanely to the challenges with which they have to deal … Intellectual and logical, yes, but also consistent with feelings, values and the reality situation at hand. … Hence, behavior in my Eutopia permits both diversity and harmony. It's like an orchestra … Here life is meaningful and zestful. … As a result, they live without the 'desperation' which Thoreau said was the lot of most people."

Borsodi wrote of three styles of dealing with the challenges of life. With the third, which he favored, the "group responds philosophically to challenges of living … the leading and determining number of persons in Exeter tend to this third approach to change. Few of them are swept off their feet by mere fervor. None of them are fanatics. None believes in resorting to violence in order to achieve what they believe should be done."


Borsodi Seminar Exeter

The following issue of GR included Borsodi's comments about the counterculture on the back of the cover and continue his thoughts about Exeter. It carried the title "Flaws in Eutopia." So, okay, it isn't perfect. High on the list was Exeter's vulnerability to forces outside the community, to growth, industry, government and corporate control. These trends, unless reversed, could destroy Eutopia itself. A good School of Living is needed to preserve the best of it. There was a local School of Living Study-Action Group which he directed (photo) which was studying the problems of living (he went into the program in some detail).

In the following, February – Mar 1974, issue, there are two articles by Borsodi: "The Task to Decentralize" and a "New Declaration of Independence."

In the former, Borsodi gave six objectives to pursue to end increasing centralization:

1. A just system of land tenure; a land trust,

2. Develop local resources and industries through locally owned and operated independent enterprise, cooperatives and credit unions,
3. Repeal of special privileges that favor big business at the expense of small concerns,
4. A local credit system,
5. Instruct farmers on how to live on the land rather than exhaust it to produce cash crops,
6. Re-education of all people in the abiding values of human and vitalized life.

In the second article, Borsodi started with "this is a time of crisis. The social order which the Western world has accepted during the past century and a half is collapsing." There was news about the difficulties of life for people those days with much social unrest and government programs to attempt to deal with them.

The alternative: "The full development al all our faculties and attributes, intellectual as well as physical, make us truly human." He gave a list of issues which needed attention:

- Humanity and Society: Community
- Duties and Obligations to family and support of needed social institutions
- Rights and liberties
- Conservation
- Government – at a minimum
- Liberty and property
- Jobs versus work – and that means access to land

In the following issue Borsodi wrote a short outline of "Five Influential Beliefs" (which I interpret as a continuation of the previous) which are beliefs with negative influence: Commercialism, Finance Capitalism (exploitive practices), Mechanism, Over-industrialism, and Socialism.

In the fifth issue of this series, he added six more "Ogres of the Economy:" Classical vs. Corporate Capitalism, Enterprise vs. Exploitation, Property vs. Trusterty, Imputed vs. Realized Income, and Property vs. Privilege.

With the January 1975 issue, *Green Revolution* was back at Heathcote. Fairfield had gone back to graduate school. It was about this time that Willis Hunting, as president of the School of Living, took over Heathcote and attempted to organize its programs.

In that issue it was briefly reported that Mildred had visited Borsodi in November and reported that Borsodi had several engagements a month with Universities and other groups, talking with concerned seekers, and counseling with School of Living staff as well as officers of the International Independence Institute (III) and the International Foundation of Independence (IFI). These three represent agencies sponsoring three 'revolutions'" which Borsodi hoped to contribute to during his lifetime, being a "revolution" in education, stressing human solutions to universal problems of living; a "revolution" in land tenure, i.e., the land trust; and a "revolution" in money exchange, i.e. constant currency.

In the April 1975 issue of GR is a short article by Borsodi: "1776! 1876! 1976 2076?" In it, he noted that the fist Centennial was celebrated with "pride in the Republic and faith in the future." But what went wrong? Five things:

1. Nothing was done to end speculation in land.
2. Nothing was done to end the inflation of the currency.
3. Nothing was done to end Wall Street's stranglehold on the economy.
4. Nothing was done to save the backbone of the republic – the family farm and small communities these millions of farms supported.
5. Nothing was done to stop the centralization of industry, population and of government.

He added that the Republic might be saved if enough people acted in time, reiterating, constructive action would include:

- A new land tenure; land trusts
- A non-inflationary currency; the Constants
- Laws removing privileges to corporations
- Widespread adult education in universal major problems of living.

A "Completing the American Revolution" conference was scheduled for July 5–11, at Heathcote. The May 1975 issue was mostly devoted to this theme and a full page (11x17) was devoted to the program, opening with Tom Paine and then "The Three Documents" –the Declaration of Independence, U. S. Constitution and Bill of Rights and what they mean, presented by a representative of the Peoples' Bicentennial. There were five other sessions outlined, each addressing a major problem of living and an impressive reading list – enough to keep a good reader going for a year. Borsodi attended, accompanied by his friend Gordon Lameyer, and contributed to almost every session. His comments focused on the Community Land Trust and Commodity Constant Currency.

The following month there was a note from C. S. Dawson about how he enjoyed hearing Borsodi at the conference with "his unusual ability to state the 'problem' and quickly define it." He said he then visited Borsodi in Exeter and taped his responses to questions about "Nine Queries for Nine Decades."

Borsodi was conspicuously absent from the *Green Revolution* in 1976 and 1977 except for the December issue of each year. The December 1976 lead article was "The School of Living: The First 40 Years" by Mildred telling her story through the Dayton experiment. She credited Borsodi with organizing the School of Living in 1936, although it was, in fact, chartered in 1934. What happened in 1936 was the completion of the School of Living building at the center of the Bayard Lane community. The bulk of the issue consisted of articles about the then four affiliated School of Living Communities: Deep Run Farm, Downhill Farm, Heathcote, and Sonnewald Homestead. There was nothing new from or about Borsodi.

I would note that there were several land trust articles by Bob Swann in the 1976 GRs, a number of articles by Mildred (possibly from files) and support for coal miners and for natural gas as an alternative energy form. The December 1976 issue was the last produced at Heathcote.

The January 1977 issue of GR was from Deep Run Farm where Mildred had moved in 1975 and took the School of Living organization with her. The 1977 issues carried a good mix of homesteading articles. Borsodi died in October 1977 and the theme for the

December 1977 issue was "A Man for All Season: Life and Work of Ralph Borsodi." In "A Testimonial," the lead article by Mildred, she opened:

> *Looking back along the corridors of time, scanning mankind's slow ascent, appreciation comes for the seers and wise ones whom we know as social critics and crusaders for a better world. Every age has known them. If a line were drawn representing the upward climb, steps and bulges would appear, resulting from the impact of heroes, sages, and doers. Because of Confucius, Buddha, Aknanton, Plato, Ruskin, Krishnamuti[85], Edison, human life has improved. Most of them have worked quietly and struggled patiently, their contributions not known nor accepted until long after their life and death.*
>
> *"Dr. Ralph Borsodi belongs on that list. He was one of the quiet, singularly revolutionary philosophers and achievers of the modern world.*

She added other names in the article: Gandhi, Eric Gill, William Morris, Thoreau, Sir Albert Howard, Coomaraswamy and others, including a number whom Borsodi had drawn on. She went on to write about Borsodi as "Pluralist, Wholist, Activist." She said that he had made an *unquiet* place for himself for at least three reasons:

1. His emphases were many; his contribution is not single. He was a pluralist, encompassing the many concerns of living a good life. He created the universal problem structure.
2. As a wholist, Borsodi integrated activity around normal, fully functional living. His sweep of knowledge embraced the accumulated wisdom of humankind, past and present, East and West. As I have observed, Borsodi was clearly a pioneer in systems, or perhaps more accurately ecological, thinking.
3. "And he did things. He wasn't just a thinker and writer." [I will get to my own list of those things below.]

He was, in short, "a forerunner and prophet." To this line of thinking, Walter Chase, a friend of Borsodi's during the last five years of his life, wrote, "Perhaps, if our present world civilization survives another 50 years without a major disaster, perhaps then Borsodi will become known as 'a contemporary philosopher' and his ideas will become widely popular and 'accepted'."

There were articles by him included his last personal presentation, in October 1976 in St. Louis, "The Moral Law By-Passed" in which he made a moral indictment of the course and effect of industrialism. That issue of *Green Revolution* can be found at this link[86].

Following his death, Mildred accelerated her work to preserve Borsodi's legacy. She tried to make a School of Living holiday of his birthday, apparently believing that he was a prophet whose time would come. In 1980 she published a book on decentralism that was revised and issued as *Alternative Americas* in 1982. With it she not only highlighted his legacy but provided a strategic vision, something she would personally continue to advance during the last few years of her life. She also completed the manuscript for her biography, *Ralph Borsodi: Reshaping Modern Culture*, which was published after her death. She set up a Borsodi Memorial Library, which was, unfortunately dismantled and dispersed immediately after her death.

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[85] Krishnamurti was a then popular figure living in California in whom Mildred was interested.
[86] Borsodi Green Revolution memorial issue: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B1wQ6T5I3eBVSDZiaTJ6T3Nickk

I should point out that as of this writing, Borsodi has been gone almost 44 years. Civilization is still here, and the challenges are even more pressing. The Borsodi legacy nearly vanished. My two volumes, which this chapter concludes on the 102nd anniversary of the founding of the Borsodi Homestead, April 1, 1920, it is hoped, will inform those who have the capacity to affect transformative change.

Testimonials

I mentioned the short publication *Borsodi as I Knew Him* above and gave the link (above). It is just over 80 pages and worth the read. It represents what Borsodi's friends thought of him. I would, however, like to highlight some key thoughts that spoke not so much to Borsodi's work as to his character. I am parsing these comments about Borsodi into three categories:

1. Physical and personality
2. Influence on others
3. Thinking style

Physical Appearance and Personality

Slender, nearly six feet at 80. He always wore a coat and hat, a bow tie or bolo tie. He had a strong handshake to the last week of his life. Photos above demonstrate this.

His eyesight always seems to have troubled him and made it difficult for him to walk, which gave him an odd gait. When he returned from India in 1961 he appeared frail and old, and one lens of his glasses was opaque because of a cataract operation. He recovered his health, became active in local affairs, and went back to work, though his health would be up and down for the rest of his life.

He always maintained a disciplined schedule. He got up in the middle of the night and typed until dawn. Then he followed a regimen of cold showers, stretching exercises and health foods. He fasted when he was sick. Following downturns in his health he often made, as one person said, "a remarkable physical renaissance." He ate healthily to the end, sparsely, treating a meal as a ceremony. He was not a vegetarian but rather believed humans were made for "sensible" amounts of animal protein.

He had a quick intellect and eloquence, and, with a deep, gravelly voice, he was a master of conversation and mutual exchange of ideas and information. He could talk extemporaneously on any subject and responded to questions cheerfully. He liked the give and take of good conversation and did not wish people to be deferential to him.

People enjoyed conversing with him, as he usually gave more information than he received. His tone was kind, never becoming verbally inflamed or noisy in any way. He laughed easily. He had an uncanny humor, chuckled often at things that amused him, twinkling eyes, never sour or dour. He was sentimental and reminisced a lot.

In his 80s he could speed-read a stack of books in a day. He liked to read to his grandchildren and instructed them on the Declaration of Independence.

Influence on Others

Testimonials from Borsodi As I Knew Him includes a long list of those who had been influenced by him. Here are some of those. "A skillful teacher. He could excite and stimulate an audience even in advanced age."

"An excellent teacher, vast knowledge, sensitivity to the attitudes and opinions of others, quick mind and ready supply of illustrative data, a sense of humor. He enjoyed working with undergraduates, graduate students, and professional academicians. He was good with questions. He held his audience's attention and had the capacity to excite and stimulate them. He could make history come alive through personal accounts of events and persons."

Borsodi taught us to be the "masters of our own fate."

"One of the greatest influences on my long life."

The Templins and Keenes were missionaries in India and had worked with Gandhi. They found Borsodi's School of Living at Suffern the closest thing to Gandhi in the US. Ralph Templin wrote, "At the new year in 1941, we and the Keenes became students of the Borsodis at their School of Living. We experienced re-education as Borsodi saw it and understood his vision of revitalizing all of America and the whole of humanity. We canvassed the whole range of Borsodi's major, universal problems of living; we aimed at the distribution of ownership and control among the people. We agreed with the need for self-development, personal integrity, conviction of consensus, intelligent possession of natural resources, and sharing in community development. The similarity of Borsodi's concepts and programs with Gandhi's was striking.

At Bayard Lane, School of Living, Ralph Borsodi was director and chief lecturer, Myrtle Mae in charge of nutrition and meals, an assistant directed gardening and care of animals, Bill Borsodi supervised the Guilds, and Ed Borsodi was office manager and accountant. The guilds included: carpenter, mason, finisher, etc.; they planned and built homes. Around the school building lived sixteen families with 2-3-acre homesteads. The Bayard Lane Homestead Association was the first cooperative agency to implement community land tenure which Borsodi had implemented at Dayton.

Henry Winthrop wrote, "From my very first meeting with Ralph Borsodi [1958], it was clear that he was an 'original.' His ideas stemmed more from his experiences and research than from books, more from his own deep examination of issues than from wooden borrowing of other men's thoughts on matters that interested him. … Borsodi is a deeply creative thinker and a man of action whose innovations were always a product of his deep commitment to think for himself. His general conservatism always appealed to me, and I believe that this conservatism was fed to some degree by his recognition of the general social complexity of our time. … Borsodi was an unusually gifted man and displayed a very rare, three-forked lifestyle. He was interested in general ideas; he could immerse himself in analytic and/or empirical detail, and he was quick to translate the former two concerns into some concrete form. In this sense, Borsodi was a whole main in an age in which the single-channeled, particularistic viewpoint held sway. It was this strong, holistic bent that appealed to many influential intellectuals who paid him tribute. …

He has been a milestone on the road to the intellectual development of the West. In the drastic reconstruction of society which will be a great part of the social agenda of the decades to come, his thinking is sure to play a major role. His ideas concerning the achievement of an organic sense of community and his ideas concerning the proper ways for achieving personal development, self-realization and the construction of a civilized way of life in a word growing increasingly complex socially, will all, I am sure, have a decisive influence in the future.

Finally, wrote Winthrop: "RB's[874] confidence was in re-education. … no such changes are possible without the re-education and humanization of at least a determining number of men and women in the world. If humankind is to be saved from a mechanical and materialistic barbarism, the educators of mankind must furnish the leadership which the crisis calls for. They will consecrate themselves to what is true, what is good, and what is beautyful. They will motivate those whom they influence to live on a high moral, intellectual, and cultural level."

Wintrop's *Ventures in Social Interpretation* reflects the 17 problems as he used them in his classes.

Dorien Freve wrote about a meeting in 1948: He said that Borsodi rejected moral relativism. "The school fulfills or fails to fulfill its role in society in proportion to the extent to which it passes on from generation to generation the eternal verities, instead of merely passing on the culture in which it exists. Certain truths are eternal."

He was interested in the entire spectrum of human affairs. He "studied man from A to Z."

In *This Ugly Civilization* he said that of 1,000 people, 997 were herd minded, 2 will be quantity minded and one in a thousand quality minded "men." Borsodi wrote for the latter. He believed that the quality minded must lead by example. "Relatively few people enjoy thinking. Thinking is quality minded man's greatest departure from the mass."

Borsodi's basic thesis was: "The most important problem in the world today is the philosophy by which human beings live, and the philosophy by which society is animated. And this is just another way of saying the philosophy of living is the most important problem with which education deals."

Each of his books questioned things as they are and suggested alternatives.

Just three ways he guided us:

1. He was advocating decentralization when everyone … was screaming for more centralization.
2. He told us that small-scale production was more efficient and better when everyone else was saying "the bigger the better."
3. He understood how inefficient and inhuman large centralized systems are.

Borsodi dared to be different and has since been vindicated because he never lost sight of right and wrong, truth and falsity.

[874] Borsodi was known as RB by his friends and signed his letters with those initials.

He called for us to reexamine the philosophy by which we live, to be certain our own lives are in accord with the principles of Normal Living, with acting rationally and morally. A re-dedication to Normal Living will, for most of us, mean changes in our lives we have been avoiding. He never said it would be easy. But if quality-minded people are to have a quality world to live in, then they should lead the way and educate people by example. If the quality-minded do not simplify their lives – if they refuse to lead and provide an example – then they might not even have a world to live in.

The ideas of Ralph Borsodi, and his name, will become household concerns soon, or we will have no household, no society, no world. Borsodi's commitment to truth must be vindicated or there will be strife, chaos, pollution, and perhaps even total destruction.

Don Werkheiser met Borsodi about 1940. He remembered dinners at Lane's End with him and came away with this impression:

"In a deep sense, RB spent most of his life as an intellectual knight-errant, doing battle for justice and freedom. Always he was original, often first – or among the first – to perceive the error of established ways. His generalization about modern factory practice, known as the Borsodi Law, stated that as the unit cost of mass production decreases, the unit costs of distribution increases. Much current business is [thus] uneconomical.

"To his final day, he was a learner and a great teacher. He first taught himself, then others. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment is his global vision, an approach that only recently has emerged into explicit formulation in our culture. That came out of his understanding of the common experiences and problems of people everywhere."

He pondered this problem endlessly. He gathered people to probe and discuss them.

He set up the School of Living in 1934 to express his vision, assist in research and publish his findings. In seminars and workshops, the nature of universal problems was analyzed, Borsodi's definitions assessed and various historical and modern "solutions" were considered and compared. Students thereby *tested* their knowledge, values and daily life cycles.

Borsodi added two unusual "techniques" to the exploration of ideas. He not only defined and classified the problems, but deliberately examined, classified, and tested the various "answers" which people throughout history have lived by. Moreover, he integrated the answers – the solutions, or actions – into his ideological system.

Borsodi continually asked, "Are these norms or standards among the various solutions to guide our practice? If so, what are they? Can they be used to humanize life?"

With the praxiology (practical) problems, he redefined some accepted disciplines into nine universal problems of action. For these problems, Borsodi sought "norms" for solution.

For him liberty meant the opportunity for deliberate choice of one's own action – "an attribute or prescription for action which …permits the fulfillment of all the other functions of a human being."

He was ahead once again of a new science - general systems theory - being developed to synthesize 200 years of scientific analysis. This has not been attempted in the social sciences.

David Stry knew Borsodi at Melbourne village. He wrote: "We learned from him the basic principles of simple living, how to be self-sufficient, but also how to further social change for security and independence.

"RB was a great student, a good writer, and a tireless worker. He was busy and at and at home in his garden or his shop as in his library or at his desk. He liked to quote that "one's character is better formed in one's work than in one's leisure."

"He was persistent in searching for truth. How do you know what is right or wrong? How do you validate your actions?

"He was never dogmatic.

"I loved Borsodi both as a person and a brilliant teacher. He educated for 'maximum living' – not for commercial, job-inspired conventional existence.

"In my mind, Borsodi ranks with Tolstoy, Plato, Gandhi, Goethe and other world philosophers. He devoted his whole life to examining western civilization, pointing out what was wrong (inhuman), setting up standards, working and demonstrating what was better.

Outstanding in his work is the challenge to clarify and formulate 'the moral law.' His final speech, given October 1976, before the Fellowship for Religious Humanist at St. Louse, Missouri was titled, "The Moral Law By-Passed" (see memorial GR link below).

"He devoted his whole life to examining western civilization, pointing out what was wrong (i.e., inhuman) setting up standards, working and demonstrating what was better."

He de-educated and re-educated thousands of people.

Mildred Loomis had this to say:

"I knew Ralph Borsodi as an inner-directed person, a brilliant mind, sensitive and responsive to simple, beautiful things, but always disciplined and committed to acting on clear, ethical principles. I have seen him impatient and occasional blunt, but predominately quiet, considerate and compassionate. We who know him well marveled at his energy on so many levels. While many know him only as writer and author, I am a reporter of his activities and experiments in progress.

"I knew Ralph Borsodi as an inveterate seeker, committed to human 'norms' (for which he said records of life for thousands of centuries had left adequate guides). As an indefatigable worker, he achieved on many levels. He was always ready to move on, leaving behind, if need be, those who chose not to understand, or who preferred a different standard.

In terms of moving on, she gave as an example the failure of Dayton project, where she first worked with him. After which, "Borsodi said to his family and Suffern friends, 'If American people are to develop wisdom about their lives and their problems – what do to

use government for, where to live, how to be healthy – a new education is needed. Let us build a School of Living for this."

He did not know how to retire. He continued to learn and inspire. A friend said: "He was a teacher in the highest sense of the word."

Thinking Style

He is a conscientious student and teacher of *living*.

He had penetrating insights into academic subjects, not abstractions, not symptoms, but the way things work. It was never about the quick fix.

A walking encyclopedia. He had a profound knowledge of many things. Soil was one of them. Dirt was life. He loved working the soil, making compost. He knew the science, the biology, of soil, of composting. It was the vital elements of life.

I also caught a glimpse of the depth, scope, and persistence of his goals for a human, 'normal' society of freedom and security.

He said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Most, he said, lived lives of quiet desperation as Thoreau had observed.

It takes time for study and reflection (and writing).

He was willing to experiment, to try and fail and try again.

In the *Pan-Humanist Manifesto*, 1958, in India, he advised scrapping the old world, building a new one. It "ranks among the greatest revolutionary pieces of the world – a magnificent dream by a practical man. "

RB's social philosophy was grassroots: Jeffersonian, family and local community. It was to be learned through schools of living centered in each locality, working on real-life problems.

"Ralph Borsodi, a complex and fervently dedicated innovator, has been challenger and "model" for many of us on many levels. Few of us, in the early days, knew how revolutionary he was. Some agree he was a 'voice crying in the wilderness.' Now in the '80s, we hope his contributions can be better understood and practiced, that the revolution can be the quiet one of re-education which Borsodi began." … "Profound 'revolution' in a strict sense is always basically education."… "I think of Ralph Borsodi as an American Gandhi, a guide toward the human mastery of human destiny, grounded within one's self, moving outward to the pursuit of truth, and finally to human freedom."

Gordon Lameyer, a close friend for many years wrote: He was an outstanding intellectual, had a deep concern for life on the land, crusaded for justice. He was not a static thinker. He had a flare for exacting definition of problems. He traveled, conducted research and experiments.

He was more a sociologist than a philosopher. He liked radical sociologist C. Wright Mills[88]. But he had his own terminology: our vocabulary must be improved, he insisted.

[88] Mills had his own methodology for penetrating to a "lucid summation" which provided the energy for action.

Borsodi saw that we could not solve social ills, including mental illness and crime, without changes in the social structure. That meant leaving the cities.

There was a mass tribute to Borsodi in California. Gordon then wrote:

"Ralph Borsodi is the Socrates of New Hampshire, the Sam Johnson of the North, the Gandhi of America, the Free World's answer to Karl Marx, the Aristotle of Classification of the Social Sciences, and the best teacher I ever had.

The answer to problems depends on how you frame the questions. In discussion he had a probing mind. He knew what he meant by the words he used.

RB loaned Lameyer a book from his friend Stringfellow Barr about emulating Socrates (it may have been one written by St. John's cofounder Scott Buchanan). St. John's uses the Socratic method in its seminars (no lectures).

He knew what questions to ask, and his integrity led him often to unpopular answers.

Borsodi sought to sort out the "fog of jargons" of many disciplines and set up a new Interdisciplinary Vocabulary Project. Words need to have a single meaning. RB sought a new interdisciplinary vocabulary. This came out as his *Definition of Definition*.

"Ralph Borsodi was a thinker and a doer with courage. He was one of a rare breed who used what Mahatma Gandhi called 'truth force' to do what Fritz Schumacher called 'good work."

In the last year of his life RB met and had a discussion (and a difference of opinion) with E. F. Schumacher (who died a few months before Borsodi did) about a renaissance of rural life. Schumacher focused on appropriate technology, RB on land tenure and money[89].

Borsodi was committed to decentralization and rural revival, as was Gandhi. Fostering small communities.

Borsodi was working on revising *Seventeen Problems* under the title *Quest for Wisdom*. The Possessional Problem, he believed, is the most difficult for Americans[90].

RB intensely disliked communism.

Ralph Templin (above) spent 15 years as Methodist missionaries in India, managing a boy's school, with the Keene's. They knew and worked with Gandhi.

The Keene's, moving to Suffern and studying with Borsodi, said it was: "the closest thing in America to Gandhi's three-part program:

- Swadeshism – self-education, self-development, using personal authority to manage and control society
- Satyagraha signifies the inner spirit – the integrity of conscientious assertion of human power
- Sarvodaya, the extension of the human community and the general welfare.

[89] Borsodi was 50 years ahead of Schumacher in the development of appropriate technology.
[90] This was the subject of Borsodi's last book, *Wealth and Illth*; the manuscript of which was lost.

Templin wrote that the seventeen problems volume is “enough to keep mankind working for a thousand years.”

Borsodi was a wise and erudite man. His intellect was still growing, and he attracted others who were still growing.

He was certain that his ideas were sound, having rigorously tested them. He could be assertive but was solidly grounded in his views. He engaged in searching interchanges of the Socratic style, constantly rethinking. Often with a grin on his face. If you challenged him, you had to be ready to argue your point

Borsodi Associates, Inc. was established in the 1960s to typeset Borsodi’s books in India and print them in America. The only book so produced was *Definition of Definition*. He made a trip to India to set this up and apparently had a conversation with J. Narayan then – leading to the International Foundation for Independence, along with the Institute of Independence.

Borsodi’s life was full of building – ideas and material. Building his homestead at Dogwoods, RB was a “No. 1 do-it-yourself man.”

Mail flooded into Dogwoods from early on, and so did people. it was already a school in the 1920s. RB said [early] that for a decentralist movement to occur we will need a new education: The School of Living. An alternative education for adults. A life study of the “universal problems of living.”

The following contributions made by Borsodi were recorded at the 1973 Jubilee session by Mildred:

- Diet and food reform,
- Organic agriculture
- Composting,
- Homesteading,
- Community.”
- Extended family,
- Family planning,
- Natural childbirth and breast feeding
- A precursor to today’s ecological and environmental concerns
- The changing attitude in medicine towards understanding minds and bodies instead of emphasis on pills and drugs.”
- Grassroots, anti-government movements.
- But the most important, they agreed was his work on adult education.
- Including work in classifying the world’s wisdom around problems of living.
- Clarified free market economics and set real reforms in motion.
- Championed and practiced home and small-scale technology

My own list, my Borsodi Resume is as follows:

Ralph Borsodi was one of the leading figures of the twentieth century whose work defined much of what we now call sustainability. A detailed chronology of the School of Living is included below.

Borsodi's list of accomplishments is astonishing:

- About 1903, Borsodi became active in the Henry George movement, gave speeches, edited the newsletter and taught classes. In 1919 he was the Chair of the state association.
- In 1920 he relocated his family to an independent homestead outside of New York City where he achieved, and documented, personal financial independence.
- During the 1920s he wrote three books critical of the American economy, including *This Ugly Civilization* (1929) which anticipated the Great Depression.
- *This Ugly Civilization* was serialized in a major national magazine, drew the attention of Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband Franklin who was then governor of New York. The book inspired a back-to-the-land movement, including Scott and Helen Nearing who over the coming years popularized "the good life." With it Borsodi established the basic, three-part, outline of the work that would occupy him throughout his life.
- In 1933 he published his popular *Flight From the City*, a homesteader's handbook, which documented the economic advantages of homesteading.
- In 1933 he was called to advise on the Dayton Homestead Project. There he expanded his vision from personal homesteading to community. He left as the new Deal Homesteading Division took over (and failed).
- In 1934 Borsodi established his School of Living with a mission to provide practical and philosophical foundations of the good life.
- In the second (1935) edition of *Flight From the City* he described The School of Living association and a life-long, adult educational model for the improvement of our understanding and achievement of the good life.
- In 1935, Borsodi formed an Independence Institute to fund homesteading land trust.
- He formed the first of two homesteading communities in Rockland County, New York in 1935. This project inspired the formation of many other land trust communities.
- 1938 – 1939, he and his wife produced a series of Homesteading Bulletins (booklets) entitled "How To Economize" to demonstrate the productive economics of household tasks. These sold well at a quarter per copy.
- Borsodi organized a variety of craft guides and production units. I know the School of Living made looms.
- Borsodi and friends launched a Decentralist movement to promote localized and self-sufficient economic production. This included a journal, *Free America*, started in 1937. Borsodi became a leader of the decentralist movement.
- In 1938 Borsodi published *Prosperity and Security. A Study in Realistic Economics*, in which he established a comprehensive economic framework for his homestead community model.
- In 1939 he coauthored *Agriculture in Modern Life* with two senior US Department of Agriculture staff, where he further elaborated his economic model.
- During the World War II years, he developed a peace plan that anticipated the United Nations.

- In 1943 Borsodi published *Inflation is Coming and What to Do About It*. This book was revised in the 1970s, during a period of troublesome inflation. It went through a number of editions and sold some 500,000 copies.
- Towards the end of the war, he was giving well-attended seminars on the universal problems, both theory and practical application.
- In 1945, Borsodi closed the School of Living at Suffern and transferred the headquarters to Ohio under the directorship of Mildred Loomis. Mildred would continue to lead that branch of the School of Living for four decades. Borsodi would increasingly focus on his education model.
- Following World War II, he articulated his educational principles in *Education and Living*, two volumes published in 1948. In this book he described optimal living at the personal, family and community levels.
- In *Education and Living* he also established the framework of the universal problems of living which defined the following three decades of his lifework.
- In 1950 Borsodi sold Dogwoods, moved to Melbourne, Florida and opened a new School of Living program.
- In 1952 Borsodi and wife traveled to Asia (an around the world cruise) on an extensive fact-finding mission and he later published *The Challenge of Asia* in which he examined the impact of global industrial development with particular emphasis on India. He first made friends in India at that time with home he kept in touch.
- In 1954 Borsodi launched the Melbourne University experiment. He developed a graduate level curriculum for the problem-centered system. It offered both a masters' and doctorate degree.
- 1955 – 1957, Borsodi published *The Journal of Praxiology* in which he promoted problem-centered education.
- In 1958 Borsodi returned to India for a two year stay during which he worked closely with Gandhian agriculturalist.
- In 1958 Borsodi also published, at the request of Indian colleagues, his *The Pan Humanist Manifesto* in which he outlined his decentralists views (renamed *The Decentralist Manifesto*).
- In 1961 Borsodi returned to the US and settled in Exeter.
- In 1963 Borsodi published *The Education of the Whole Man*; a book written while working in India. In it he systemized his problem centered framework and provide curriculum material for university level education.
- In 1967 Borsodi incorporated the International Independence Institute (III) to support the idea of land trust. With friends he developed an organization. From this emerged the Community Land Trust, which is one of his enduring legacies.
- In 1968 Borsodi (age 79) published his monumental *Seventeen Problem of Man and Society*. With this book he provided a textbook, a taxonomy of approaches people had throughout history used to solve the problems of living, and elaborated on his rationale and philosophy.
- In 1972, Borsodi incorporated Independent Arbitrage International which issue the Constant, an inflation-proof local currency.

- In 1973 he incorporated the International Foundation for Independence in Luxembourg and established an international banking system to support an alternative, inflation-proof currency, worldwide.

In Summary:

Borsodi lived nearly 89 active years. He wrote 15 books and over 100 articles. He was granted a Master's degree by St. John's College (a prestigious private college) and a doctorate by the University of New Hampshire. He founded, or cofounded, perhaps a dozen corporations. He founded or cofounded, and edited, several popular journals. He delivered uncounted lectures and seminars. He had a long list of distinguished friends in the US and in India.

The list of his major works by Ralph Borsodi includes:

1. The New Accounting, 1922
2. National Advertising Versus Prosperity 1923
3. The Distribution Age, 1927
4. This Ugly Civilization, 1929
5. Flight From the City, 1933
6. Prosperity and Security. A Study in Realistic Economics, 1938
7. Agriculture in Modern Life, 1939
8. Inflation is Coming and What to Do About It, 1945
9. Education and Living 1948, Volume 1
10. Education and Living 1948, Volume 2
11. The Challenge of Asia: A Study of Conflicting Ideas and Ideals, 1956
12. The Education of the Whole Man, 1963
13. The Definition of Definition 1967
14. Seventeen Problems of Man and Society, 1968
15. *Inflation and the Coming Keynesian Catastrophe*, Published posthumously by the E. F. Schumacher Society 1989.

Some of these books are available digitally at this link[91].

Borsodi Chronology

20 Dec 1888	Borsodi born, Vienna, Austria[92]	
1891	RB's mother died; RB arrived in New York where his father had a business	
4 Aug 1896	William Borsodi (father) naturalized.	
1900	Borsodi at Gerlach Academy, a prep school.	12
1900, January 5	Mildred born, Blair, Nebraska	
1903	RB moved into own apartment, working for father, speaker and newsletter editor for the Georgist movement. Voracious reader.	15
1908	Rice, Texas, land management and newspaper editor	19
18 Aug 1911	Married Myrtle Mae Simpson	
1918 or 1919	Chair New York Single Tax organization	
1918	Stops using processed foods.	
1 Apr 1920	Moved to Seven Acres homestead, Rockland County, NY	31

[91] Borsodi Digital books: https://www.schoolofliving.org/borsodi
[92] World War I Draft Registration, Jun 1917 5'10" 150 lbs Brown hair, brown eyes. No disabilities. Date and place of birth

1921	Purchased 16 Acres, Ramapo Hill. Built Dogwoods in 1923	
1922	*The New Accounting*	
1923	*National Advertising Versus Prosperity*	
1927	*The Distribution Age*	
Summer 1929	*New Republic* printed *This Ugly Civilization* in three installments.	
1929	*This Ugly Civilization*	40
1930	NY Census, Tallman, Ramapo Twp., Rockland Co., Nyack Turnpike[93]	
1933	*Flight From the City*	
1933	Started *Homestead Notes*.	
Spring 1933	Dayton, Liberty Homestead Project	
19 July 1934	RB left Dayton in disgust and returned to Dogwoods	
September 3,1934	School of Living founded, Suffern, NY	46
1935	Independence Institute, First land trust corporation	
1936	Bayard Lane School of Living opened.	
1937-40	*Homestead Bulletin-How to Economize*. At least 34 Bulletins were produced	
Jan 1937	Borsodi, Stillman and Agar start *Free America*	
1938	*Prosperity and Security. A Study in Realistic Economics*	
1939	*Agriculture in Modern Life*	
1939 - 1940	Mildred's year at School of Living Suffern	
1940	Mildred married John Loomis, settled at Lane's End homestead, Ohio	
1940	Oberlin College problems of living seminar. Seventh 1948. See 8th, 1954	
1940 - 1945	The School's publication was named *The Decentralist*.	
1942	Borsodi awarded master's degree for thesis by St. John's College	
1945	School of Living building sold. Headquarters moved to Lane's End, Ohio	
Jan 1945	School of Living Institute Chartered in Chicago (Headquarters Ohio)	
Jan 1945	Mildred starts *The Interpreter*	
1945/1948	*Inflation is Coming and What to Do About It.* Sold a half-million copies	
1948	*Education and Living*, Two Volumes	
1949	Established a new School of Living at Melbourne	
Dec 1949	Myrtle Mae died	61
1950	Met and married Clare Kittredge. Built new house at Melbourne	
1952	Chartered School of Living of America	
May 1952	Cruise to Asia, and around the world	
1954	Borsodi and friends began organizing University of Melbourne	
1954	Borsodi eighth seminar on problems of living (see 1940)	
1954	Mildred incorporated School of Living in Ohio	
Mar 1955	Journal of Praxiology appeared	
1956	*The Challenge of Asia: A Study of Conflicting Ideas and ideals*	
4 Jan 1956	Melbourne University formally opened	67
1957	Mildred proposed *Green Revolution* book	
Jan 1958	*Balanced Living* replaced *The Interpreter*. Ran until *A Way Out* in 1962	
Spring 1958	Melbourne University closed	
1958	Borsodi to India. Arrived August 1958. Stayed two years	
1958	*Pan-Humanist Manifesto*	
1958 – 1960	Worked on manuscript that became *The Education of the Whole Man*	
1960	Borsodi health breakdown, nearly died. Long convalescence in India	72
1961	Clare bought homestead at Exeter, NH late in year. Borsodi returns to US	
July 1962	Begin publishing *A Way Out*. Ran until 1967	
January 1963	Mildred Launches *Green Revolution*	

[93] $30,000, Has radio, M/W/42, Economist, Publisher

1963	*The Education of the Whole Man* published	74
1965	Mildred Loomis, *Go Ahead and Live*	
1966	Borsodi 4th; (?) trip to India	
January 1, 1967	Heathcote Dedicated	
1967	International Independence Institute (III) Land Trust. In Exeter	
1967	*The Definition of Definition*	
1968	Borsodi fifth trip to India	
1968	*Seventeen Problems of Man and Society*	79
1968	John Loomis died; Mildred moved to Heathcote	
May 1969	Borsodi award honorary doctorate at University of New Hampshire	
1972	Independent Arbitrage International (IAI) Local Currency, The Constant	83
1973	International Foundation for Independence (IFI), Luxembourg	
1974	Mildred Loomis, Ed., *Moving into the Front. Ranks of Social Change*	
1975	Mildred took School of Living to Deep Run Farm near York, PA	
26 Oct 1977	Borsodi died, Exeter, New Hampshire	88
1980	Mildred Loomis, *Decentralism: Where It Came From, Where is it Going?*	
1982	Mildred Loomis, *Alternative Americans* – A second edition of *Decentralism*	
1982	Mildred dedicated Borsodi Memorial Library	
1986	Mildred Loomis, Ed., *Borsodi as I Knew Him.* 99 copies	
1986	Mildred completed *Ralph Borsodi: Reshaping Modern Culture.* 300 copies	
18 Sept 1986	Mildred Loomis died at York, PA. Age 86	
1986	Borsodi library closed, books disbursed, and records lost	
1989	Ralph Borsodi, *Inflation and The Coming Keynesian Catastrophe*	
December 2018	Last issue of *Green Revolution*	
September 2019	*This Ugly Civilization*, 90th anniversary edition, forward by Bill Sharp	
April 1, 2020	Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future Blog, and centenary.	
January 24, 2021	Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: Learning and Living	
April 1, 2021	Ralph Borsodi, A Confident Future: The Green Revolution	



Bill is co-founder and Director of Transition Centre (www.transitioncentre.org), a Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation. The mission of TC is to promote and develop an integral model for local, self-reliant and sustainable economies and communities. Transition Centre is founded on the works of Ralph Borsodi and the early UK Transition Towns community development model.

Bill spent a career as a planner and project manager with experience in government, business, higher education (college professor and academic administrator), and nonprofits (several startups). His main focus has been community and economic development, specifically strategic human resource development. He is a United States Air Force veteran.

Currently, Spring Creek Watershed Association, Vice-chair of the College Township Industrial Authority and member of the College Township Planning Commission. Formerly College Township Council member and member of the Centre Regional Council of Governments General Forum and founding board member of Pennsylvania Interfaith and Light.

B.Sc. in Public Management (*summa cum laude*), with a two-year pre-engineering program and a minor in History. M.A. in sociology with a focus on community leadership development and additional graduate work in community development and business management.

Finding the legacy of Ralph Borsodi lamentably fading, its restoration was clearly mandated by the course of events in this twenty-first century. Two volumes of research manuscripts detailing Borsodi's life and work have been posted to Internet Achieve and available at no cost for study and download.

The Essential Ralph Borsodi summarizes Borsodi's major works, principles and practices. It serves as a foundation for Rural Resilient Hub (see Transition Centre website).