

Epicurus. (1963). *Letters, doctrines, and parallel passage from Lucretius*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

Holbach, P. A. (1963). *Selected works*. Moscow: Progress.

Rosenblueth, A., Wiener, N., & Bigelow, J. (1943). Behavior, purpose & teleology. *Philosophy of Science*, 10, 18-24.

Wiener, N. (1961). *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and the machine*. New York: London: The MIT Press and John Wiley & Sons.

Bibliographic Remarks

For a more detailed look at different aspects of the systems approach described in the chapter, the reader is referred to the following publications.

Ackoff, R. L., & Emery F. E. (1972). *On purposeful systems*. Chicago and New York: Aldine, Atterton.

von Bertalanffy, L. (1969). *General system theory, foundations, development, applications*. New York: Braziller.

Wiener, N. (1961). *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and the machine*. New York: London: The MIT Press and John Wiley & Sons.

2

Vital Activities and Needs

2.1

Introduction

Every living thing strives to survive. Humans are not an exception to this rule. All of our actions and our conscious behaviors determine a historically developed and constantly self-renewing strive for self-preservation, for improving the conditions of our existence. It is customary to assume that prolongation of life—survival—is the goal of a person's activity, one's life's work. This work itself is determined by needs—that is, our reaction to our own needs. These needs constantly prompt us about what is concretely necessary for us to do to ensure successful survival. Thus, throughout the course of human history, our constant concern has been the satisfaction of our own needs.

The need for information is among the most important of life's needs. It is information that permits one to successfully adapt to the external conditions of existence—the environmental conditions. The intellect, whose food is information, permits humankind to realize this adaptation by making the environmental conditions not only part of the intellect's personal "I" but also part of the social "we." The latter flows from the social nature of people—one of the most important factors for human survival. To us, society is not only a part of the environment to which we must adapt. Much of what is vitally important to people is provided only with the help of society. For example, to satisfy an information need (IN) we use information obtained by others, with the help of means and materials created by others. This is why the strive to survive is often transformed into a strive to preserve society, to protect it.

The development of society, its progress, and its economic well-being depend in many respects on the intellectual productivity of the creative layer of society. This productivity can be intensified by increasing the quality of the information service for each producing intellect. In other words, if we want to receive from each intellect according to his or her ability, we must provide information according to his or her needs. For the high-quality satisfaction of an information need, it is necessary to know and take into account the properties