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THE IMPOTENT STATE AND AN ALTERNATIVE

[This article by Colin Graham first appeared in longer form in the Winter 1988 *Trumpeter,* a Canadian journal of ecology published in Victoria, B.C.]

EVERY nation ridicules other nations, and all are right." Schopenhauer's cynical remark applies no less to our time than his. What, one wonders, would he have thought of the spectacle of Britain and Argentina fighting ferociously over a few remote rocks; or of France blowing up a Greenpeace vessel which threatened embarrassment over France's bomb-testing on a Pacific atoll?

There are at least two differences between Schopenhauer's time and ours. Wars and skirmishes in the nineteenth century were damaging but not globally lethal. In our time, they have reached a point where, by 1986, the annual expenditure on arms by all the world's states was greater than the total income of the poorer half of humanity. War being basically a male activity, we have here the ultimate bankruptcy of the patriarchal, macho world-outlook, with its hostility-begetting power drive, its lust to dominate.

Is there even a remote possibility of getting rid of nation-states and replacing them with something better?

There are, it seems to me, several factors which have emerged in recent years, suggesting that the larger states might succumb to various internal and external pressures. All large-scale human organizations appear to carry within themselves the seeds of their own decline. Today's technologies are watering those seeds.

In the United States the huge federal bureaucracy has become in many respects so ponderous and self-defeating that it is leading to decentralization. The futurist John Naisbitt and his research group have come to the conclusion that "centralized structures are crumbling all across America. . . . the decentralization of America has transformed politics, business, our very culture. . . . state and local governments are the most important political entities in America." (*Megatrends,* p. 97.)

In *Human Scale,* Kirkpatrick Sale has documented the ills which beset states which grow beyond that scale. Gigantism is certainly one of the factors giving rise to the signs of U.S. decline which have been multiplying over the last five or so years. Economic decline is perhaps the most visible of those signs. As *Business Week* recently put it, "There is overwhelming evidence that the U.S. standard of living is slipping for many people and may drop even more unless the U.S. can reverse its productivity decline." (Cited by Peter Newman in *Maclean's,* May 18, 1987.) Products that are uncompetitive on the world market, an annual foreign trade deficit of around $150 billion, and a share of the world market which was 50% in 1954 but is projected to be only about 16% by 1990 these figures tell the story vividly enough. Adding to the bleakness of this picture is the news that in five or six years America will have exhausted its known reserves of indigenous oil, making it increasingly dependent on the Middle East.

Meanwhile there is evidence of looming crises in the physical and mental health of Americans. In May 1987 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that researchers have found growing evidence that among people born since the war, the incidence of common psychiatric disorders such as depression is far more widespread than it was in previous generations. And from the *Utne Reader* (October/November, 1986) we learn that, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, twelve out of every hundred babies born

in the United States have a "serious mental or physical health disorder," which is double the rate which obtained in the late 1950s.

Once the full import of this daunting catalogue of troubles has been grasped by the American public, there will be the stunned realization that those aspects of the American dream which are based on the expectation of boundless technological affluence have turned into a nightmare. As put by a Minnesota politician, David Lebedoff: "Now nothing seems to work very well. . . . people seem to be losing faith in all our institutions, and their sense of kinship with each other. . . . Everyone knows something is wrong." (*The New Elite*, p. 65.)

If America is faced with mounting crises, those being experienced by the Soviets seem both worse and more dangerous. The relatively simple command economy which worked tolerably well under Stalin has now become too complex for central planners to handle. Along with tile stagnation which became evident in the Brezhnev years came the Soviet's discovery that their society, too, can be a heavily toxic one. Pollution problems have until recently been largely hidden by press censorship, but information recently leaked to the West leaves no doubt about the seriousness of environmental degradation both in tile USSR and its eastern European satellites. (Christopher Plant, *New Internationalist*, November, 1985, p. 19.)

The Soviets have economic and demographic problems, too. The once copious raw materials in the Soviet west are being used up and the government must now depend upon the resources in Siberia, which are both expensive and hard to get. Soviet oil is expected to decline around the year 2000, making it difficult or impossible to continue to supply the satellite states in eastern Europe. Moreover, the Great Russians with their low birth rate are losing ground to the fecund moslems in the south.

The world's two leading megastates, then, appear to be heading into very rough waters, their internal coherence threatened from many sides.

Where shall we look for a solution? Is Bioregionalism the answer? Bioregionalism calls for the reduction of nation-states into smaller units communitarian in spirit. Each unit is defined by a specific ecological region such as a watershed, a mountain chain, or coastal area, and each committed to living on a sustainable basis with the surrounding biota. Could the creation of such independent and more or less self-sustaining communities provide a solution to the many problems discussed here? Theoretically, the answer is yes. Following are some of the reasons.

One of the prime conditions for mental health is that men and women should grow up having strong bonds with their family and neighborhood. Fossil fuels and the technologies which exploit them have progressively weakened such community ties. Surely this is one of the major causes of the mental pathologies uncovered by the U.S. National Institutes of Mental Health in a country where people tend to shift from neighborhood to neighborhood and from city to city without forming lasting human bonds.

Bioregionalism stresses the absolute need for the inhabitants of a bioregion to become deeply attached to their area through a thorough knowledge of its geology, flora, fauna, resources, and history. The achievement of such an aim will doubtless become less and less difficult as the age of fossil fuels gradually passes into history and it becomes increasingly expensive to move people and goods.

No organism can long survive in an environment of its own waste. This truism of the biologist as applied by the bioregionalists to the present human condition reminds us that the world cannot in the long run survive the endless piling up of toxic wastes. What has been accumulated over the last fifty years in the industrialized countries should be enough to convince most people that the process extended

over another fifty years could result in large parts of our planet becoming barely livable. Clearly, hard decisions will have to be made, and made fairly soon, as to which technologies can safely and beneficially be lived with and which ones must be jettisoned. Whereas in medium-sized countries such as Canada, there seem genuine prospects of industrialists working with governments to control toxics, larger governments seem subject to enormous anti-conservation pressures, as indicated by Washington's difficulty in doing anything about acid rain.

A bioregion, on the other hand, would naturally make the right decision since the whole body of its thinking moves in that direction. The bioregionalists, before anything else, have decided to live in non-disruptive harmony with the land, the water, and the air.

It is encouraging that more and more people recognize that the exploitive, ransack-the-earth outlook which is making a shambles of the planet has some historical roots in patriarchy. The aggressive male energies which exploited women and assigned them a secondary role in the scheme of things sprang from the same men who were the crusaders and the Spanish conquistadores, later becoming the entrepreneurs who organized and directed environmentally exploitive industries. The rape of the environment, in other words, is one of the offshoots of western-style patriarchy. As Judith Plant pointed out in the 1986 (second) North American Bioregional Congress, "Our language says it all: a 'virgin' forest is one awaiting exploitation, as yet untouched by the hand of man."

It is now clear that the world can no longer tolerate either kind of exploitation. It is one of the assets of bioregionalism that it understands this and insists on creating a culture evenly balanced between male and female. Indeed, it also insists on an attitude of nurturing toward the environment—more of a feminine than a male approach.

Splitting the world into more or less self-contained bioregions would obviously spell the end of the nation-state. Since the bioregional successors would be wholly disinclined and too small to create world-threatening nuclear arsenals, the world would have naturally gravitated away from the nightmare of nuclear extinction. Already we see that the small states—such as Norway, Belgium, Sweden—have little inclination to wars of aggression, and such wars would become elements of the past.

By contrast, it is characteristic of megastates that their military planners think casually in terms of megadeaths, implying that the individual is of little or no account. The civilian bureaucracies of such states are obliged to calculate in hundreds of thousands or even millions of human beings, again with the feeling that it is masses rather than individuals which count. No wonder the average citizen begins to mistrust the government, feeling little or no connection with what is going on and that one's private opinion hardly matters at all.

The obvious remedy for such malaise is to pare down the size of the state to the point where the individual is fully recognized and given a sense of belonging, although in any naturally developed bioregion he will already have achieved this role by responsibilities undertaken.

The bioregional movement is growing rapidly. Already there are some seventy regional groups covering most of North America. The movement recently held its second Congress in North America and has the benefit of some of the most searching minds on the continent. While it as yet has had little impact on ordinary folk, the next couple of decades seem bound to produce quite enough traumas to stir everyone up, as carcinogens and mutagens, along with microwave and low-level ionizing radiation, make their delayed effect on health statistics and as the Greenhouse effect becomes more pronounced.

But North Americans will probably not have to wait very long to find out where their unchecked technologies are leading them. We

have advance notice in the situation of Poland today. As if the unhappy Poles had not already suffered enough, Poland now seems slated to become bell-weather of environmental decline among the industrial states. The Polish drive to industrialize at all costs has created in Silesia devastating ecological decline leading to equally devastating human illnesses. By 1985 over 60% of the rivers and creeks were no longer usable, even for industrial purposes. In addition to the inevitable forest die-offs from acid rain, there are large sections of agricultural land saturated with heavy metals from smokestack effluents. The human cost is staggering. One woman in four suffers from some pathology, while Polish men have the shortest lives of any in Europe. Much of the ground water is poisoned and this may have something to do with a 1985 report from the Polish Academy of Sciences which speaks of "an appalling increase in the number of retarded school-age children." (*Environment*, November, 1986.)

When North Americans eventually realize that their future may take the form of a version of what has happened in Silesia, when they begin to despair of Washington's ability or willingness to apply more than bandaid solutions, it is at least possible that bioregionalism may appeal to them as a way of putting an end to pollution and at the same time recovering their lost sense of community.

A growing sense that the American empire is now in serious decline may well reinforce the willingness to look for alternatives. In 1986 the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress consulted with Harvard and Princeton scholars who have studied the decline of earlier empires. The Committee discovered what the scholars declared to be the chief cause—too large commitments combined with declining strength. The diagnosis fits precisely the present U.S. predicament. It also fits the condition of the Soviet Union. This analysis reached a wider audience in the *Atlantic* for August, 1987, which carried an article by Paul Kennedy on "The Decline of America."

Putting bioregional precepts into practice in a nonviolent manner—to which bioregionalists are committed—presupposes an educated electorate drawing on sophisticated democratic traditions. This is another way of saying that the most likely candidates for success are Europeans and North Americans.

It happens that in the Europe of today there are twenty-nine groups pressing for autonomy with varying degrees of vigor. In Britain the separatists include Northumbrians, Scots, and Welsh, while in France there are the Bretons, the Savoyards, and the Occitanians. In Spain there are the Basques, Galicians, and Andalusians, while in Sweden there are advocates of a separate Skaaneland.

The same kind of unrest is seething under the surface of the Soviet Union, which is after all a union of various nationalities. One result of Gorbachev's relaxation of controls has been an outbreak of street demonstrations in Latvia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Moldavia and three other republics. Taken with earlier riots in Georgia and Kazakhstan, these events add strength to a statement made several years ago by Helen d'Encause, who said the "Nationality crises erupt sporadically from one end of the Soviet Union to the other."

It remains to be seen whether the attractiveness and ecological common sense of the bioregional order will be able to redirect these scattered energies in a direction toward which many of us look with longing and hope.

COLIN GRAHAM

REVIEW
THE PATH OF GANDHI

THE monthly journal, *Gandhi Marg,* organ of the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, founded ten years ago, has through the years provided a means of expression to writers in both India and the West who wish to keep alive and current the ideas of India's great man of the twentieth century. While some of the papers published seem unnecessarily "academic" and scholarly, there is always, in every issue, a continuing thread of unqualified devotion to authentic Gandhian conceptions, making the journal unique in this respect. We have at hand the July 1987 issue in which a contributor, K. Muniandi, begins his discussion of Gandhi by saying:

> Mahatma Gandhi is usually taken to be the Father of the Indian Nation. In fact, he is more than that, as he represents the distressed, repressed and oppressed people of the world. He also stands for all the right-thinking humans of the globe, always suggesting a way out for the intricate problems created by themselves through their ignorant handling of the situations at hand. He proved himself a pragmatic philosopher, par excellence, in all walks of life. . . .
>
> Thus came forth his utterance: "I seek neither kingdom, nor paradise, nor even salvation. I seek the deliverance of the afflicted from affliction." When an American correspondent asked him of his goal in life, he further simplified it in words as "to wipe every tear from every eye." In order to achieve this aim, he plunged into politics so that he could mix freely with all strata of society and help the needy recover from their shortcomings. This made him invent Satyagraha and offer Constructive Programme for the uplift of the masses and classes. His entry into Indian politics is the golden era of the world, as he purified it to such an extent that many righteous and able persons came forward without any mental reservation to work for the freedom of the country, forgoing their conveniences, power and pelf. An honest and forthright man like him always compels his so-called adversary to think and act. Hence the inability of the mighty British Empire to contain him in his attempt to free the Indian nationals from its yoke. . . .
>
> The British had 200-year-long innings of rule over us through their calculated and wanton destruction of our village economy. They came here enamoured of our Dacca Muslin, exploited our cotton through their newly-found transport system, dumped their finished products through the same in the nooks and corners of India, enticing the people with their so-called cheapness and attraction and thus made the life of the indigenous artisans miserable by forcing them to leave their hearth and home in search of employment in towns and cities. Having found out the secret of their continued existence in India, Gandhi introduced the Khadi Program followed by village industries to provide a sound economic base in our rural areas, making them self-reliant and self-sufficient among the villagers, making them politically conscious of their rights and it was no wonder that they came in thousands in support of his freedom movement The irony of fate is that Gandhi used the cloth (Khadi) to make the British quit this country once and for all for the benefit of both. Is it not high time that we in free India should adopt the Khadi spirit as our Swadeshi Dharma and solve all our prevalent ills through resorting to Khadi and village industries throughout the country?

Another contributor to the issue of *Gandhi Marg* we have been quoting is Sunderlal Bahuguna, a leader of the Chipko movement, the well-known effort in northern India to save the trees growing on the Himalayan slopes. Bahuguna writes:

> In India we have a very old tradition of voluntary services. Those who offered themselves for voluntary work kept away from governments, because they aspired for something nobler than governments strive for. One of such persons was a prince—Siddhartha, who was later known as Gautama Buddha. Though he was the son of a king and was shortly going to be enthroned, yet he felt that he could not alleviate the miseries by issuing orders from the Royal Palace. So he left the palace, became a common man, voluntarily subjected himself to all hardships, including fasting for 40 days, and finally after all these experiences light dawned on him. He became Buddha, the Enlightened One, who showed the practical way to peace, happiness and fulfillment to humankind. In our time Mahatma Gandhi was the living example of this tradition—a voluntary worker and the founder of a number of voluntary organizations. . . . Buddha and Gandhi still influence the lives of millions, though they were never in the government and they never formed non-governmental

organizations. They were the influence-leaders of society.

Turning to the present, Bahuguna says:

> The triple problems of war, pollution, and poverty are the gifts of materialistic civilization. This civilization has made development synonymous with affluence and turned man into an economic animal. In order to achieve the goal of material prosperity, human behavior with Nature has become like that of a butcher with an animal. . . .
>
> Development should be redefined. It should not be limited to material prosperity but should also take the other aspects of life into consideration. Buddha could see the root cause of misery in ever-increasing desires (Trishna). He defined development as a state in the life of the individual and society in which peace, happiness, and fulfillment are achieved. This is possible only if the unlimited desires are curtailed (Trishna Kehhaya). He differentiated between needs and desires. Needs should be fulfilled, but we should not run after desires. Gandhi expressed this when he said: "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not for anybody's greed."

He now offers positive suggestions:

> Sustainable development can be achieved and maintained in a society which depends mostly upon renewable resources. The forest and mountain people, the Eskimos and all those communities who have not yet adopted the destructive and wasteful lifestyle of so-called civilized people, sustain themselves with whatever they get from their surroundings. They do not exploit Nature, but maintain child-mother relationships with Nature. They are self-sufficient in their basic needs. This is what the complex industrialized societies have to learn from them. The centralized system of production is based upon exploitation of nature and is responsible for the concentration of population in big cities with slums. This system creates an army of unproductive professions—managers, bankers, brokers, advertisers, and transporters. The decentralized system of production will solve the problems of pollution, concentration of populations, and unemployment. . . .
>
> Water scarcity is going to be the crucial problem. We are already facing it in India. Besides population explosion, the other causes of water scarcity are: too much use of water in agriculture, industry and by the cities. The only permanent solution to the water problem is protection of the remaining natural forests and the conversion of monoculture forests into mixed forests. Forests are the mothers of rivers. Water should be declared as the main product of the forests.

Sunderlal Bahuguna calls for a "Blueprint for the Survival of our Planet" providing clear-cut guidelines for a new social and economic order, in which "authority is replaced by service, wealth by austerity, arms by peace, and ideology by good behavior."

> This is possible if science is guided by Vedanta. Vedanta is neither a sect nor a particular religion, but a universal religion including the essence of all religions. It believes in the oneness of life. We have too much knowledge today but no wisdom. Wisdom is the collection of experiences of the common people. Wisdom should play an important role in shaping the future of our planet. . . .
>
> We, in the Chipko Movement, have experienced that if humanitarian scientists, social activists and compassionate literary men, artists, and journalists come together in small groups, they can do wonderful work to bring about a change. Such experiments can easily be multiplied all over the world. This is a combination of knowledge (gyan), action (karma), and devotion (bhakti), which is the first requirement of a noble work.

This writer concludes:

> Environment is not anti-development, nor uneconomic. As a matter of fact, ecology is permanent economy. The real development is culture and when human beings sublimate nature for the welfare of all living beings, that is culture but when human beings exploit nature for their selfish ends to satisfy their greed, they create perversion. We are living in a state of perversion because we are facing war, pollution and poverty. Our goal is peace, environment, and prosperity.

Since 1982 *Gandhi Marg* has regularly published news of developments in various parts of the world which "indicate a growing interest in nonmaterialistic nonviolent alternatives" to the common practice. Sometimes these developments are Gandhian in origin, sometimes not. In the issue we have been quoting there is this report:

> One of the most exciting developments in recent years from the Gandhian angle has been the

> emergence of "natural farming". . . a method of interacting with Mother Earth that respects her ecology and allows her to supply us our needs by as nonviolent a method as possible, with even tilling and weeding being avoided. This method has been pioneered by Masanobu Fukuoka in Japan, who has been successfully producing bountiful crops and grains and fruits this way for almost 50 years now. In India, the Friends Rural Center at Rasulia has been experimenting on this method for nine years, and has published an Indian edition of Fukuoka's book *One Straw Revolution.* The book has proved very popular, and has prompted several farmers to try out its recommendations. Some have documented the results obtained, as for example Shoor Vir Singh of Mohanpur, U.P. and Krishna Kumar of Rasulia. Recently, the Malayalam edition of the book has been released, and several farmers in Kerala have reported the start of their individual experiments.

This is followed by ten pages giving the details of Fukuoka's methods.

COMMENTARY
A USEFUL BOOK

RECENTLY a book came in for review that at the beginning didn't seem of much importance—being on how to invest one's money, however little, to generally constructive effect—but then, reading along, we found that the writer, too, had exactly the same feeling when she started out. Her book is titled *Economics as If the Earth Really Mattered.* The author is Susan Meeker-Lowry, the publisher New Society Publishers, and the price in paperback is $9.95.

After some autobiographical material the writer says:

> Finally, in the early 1970s, I met Peter and we moved to Vermont to get away from the "establishment" and "back to the land." Our romantic visions of homesteading were soon shattered by the realities of gardening in clay soil and by a harsh Vermont winter. But somehow, we managed. With lots of hard work, manure, and love, we created a wonderful garden, including all sorts of my favorite herbs. We grew vegetables and poultry, we ground our own grain and baked our own bread, I birthed our first two boys at home and we made some lifelong friendships.
>
> And then, suddenly, the talk around the dinner table was of investing, of corporations and their activities, and of other people working on "social investing."
>
> In some ways this was hard to stomach. To me, corporations of any size were synonymous with the "establishment," with all that was painful and wrong in our world. They exploited people, they paid off politicians, they made weapons, they tried to make us want things we didn't need, and they turned my New Hampshire mountains into so many "parcels" to be sold to the highest bidder.

Yet discussion with her husband and his father helped her to see that some corporations were better than others. For example, firms that make sound construction materials are better than companies that produce lipstick or hard liquor. So there were questions to be answered about corporations.

> What does the corporation make? How do they make it? How do they treat their workers? How do they affect the environment? And so on. This wouldn't result in any overnight revolutionary changes, but it would help us begin to clean up the system, share information and skills with others, and perhaps organize a group that would be a more powerful instrument for change than any one of us alone.

So she decided to do a column along these lines which appeared in *Good Money* which her husband and his father published. The column was called "Investing in Social Changes." From this activity she began to learn a great deal.

> I began to see how we can use money as a tool to make things happen. Money can be an extension of ourselves, and what we do with it can be a very personal expression of who we are and what we believe in.
>
> To invest according to our values, we must know about the social and environmental activities of the companies in our portfolios. To support the development of the innovative enterprises and new systems, we must know about the best, most promising work being done. And businesses and organizations need to know that supporters exist, as well as how to meet the needs of investors.

After doing this column for a year she started publishing *Catalyst,* a journal which expanded the perspective of the column. She made the discovery that—

> "Once people start making investment decisions based on their social concerns, they begin to open their hearts." A single choice based on our beliefs, successfully made and supported by others, leads us to make other choices in the same way.

And she found that there are limitations on most people's activities:

> Living in Vermont, I cannot do much to make things better in the inner city, at least not directly. I can be most effective here, in my own community. This does not absolve me from my responsibility to work for justice in the wider world, but it does constrain my choices: I need to examine my options and see where my energies will have the most effect. . . .
>
> It is tempting to sit around analyzing theories and waiting for the one idea that will save us or what we love. But as long as we wait for the definitive

> solution, nothing will change, or rather, we will have no say in the changes. . . .
>
> By developing strong local economies and using local resources as much as possible, I think we can have more far-reaching positive effects. While a cooperative business in New England may not save the rain forest in any direct way, it can help reduce the demand for exotic rain forest hardwoods by supporting local craftspeople using local timber. And if the local forests are managed responsibly, with attention paid to the local ecology and long-term sustainability, the community that relies on the forest is strengthened as well.

Susan Meeker-Lowry's book is filled with information about the wise and constructive use of funds. There are many, many useful activities going on that the average person knows little about or has not even heard of. The book is in this sense a practical education on how to use one's resources in ways that give one a sense of satisfaction instead of some embarrassment. There is also extensive information on groups that are doing good things, such as Amory Lovins's Rocky Mountain Institute in Colorado. As Kirkpatric Sale puts it, the book "has all the nuts and bolts—in fact the whole *machine*—of the alternative economy of America."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A SCHOOL MADE BY PARENTS

WE haven't said anything here about the School in Rose Valley for a long time, which makes a good reason for taking note of material in the School's *Parents' Bulletin* for last fall. This school first got going in 1929, starting with twenty-nine children whose parents were convinced they could generate an environment for children that would actually meet their needs. As a writer of that time said:

> This is the kind of school in which learning becomes so enjoyable that a child cried if he had to miss a day, a school he wept to leave when his age required departure. It is a school where he absorbed pleasurably so much real knowledge that he could go on to superior accomplishments in the routinized lock-stepped schools that are so typical of today's educational system.

The hard times of the early thirties didn't hurt the school at all. The parents and teachers had to learn how to make their own equipment, the school stayed small, and at least half the teachers were mothers, a number of them professionally equipped. When, after five years, the premises they were renting were sold, they raised a little money, "borrowed" three acres of land, got plans from architect parents, everybody pitched in and they built their own school house in Rose Valley in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, not far from Philadelphia. As Grace Rotzel, the first principal, tells the story:

> Only a small percentage of fathers were technically equipped—professors of Sanskrit, literature, finance, artists, lawyers; researchers—they all wheeled barrows of cement, laid foundation blocks, nailed on roof and siding; their wives and older children helped. No labor was hired except for the basement. The plumbing was installed by one whose regular job was designing medical instruments for the Johnson Foundation, the building was wired by fathers who worked for the Philadelphia Electric Company; and a heating system was put in by a father in the furnace business. . . . By June 1935, we were on the way. The budget was encouraging; there was a small manageable deficit. We were living under our own roof, which meant continuity for at least five or ten years. We could start some of the projects for which we had been waiting.

Grace Rotzel, a veritable genius of a teacher, says in her book, *The School in Rose Valley:*

> Another thing I learned was that self-discipline was the backbone of the educational process. When that was strong, everything else fell into place. I learned to recognize the humming sound of children at work on their own initiative and I knew it for a sign that all was well. . . . We found it made a great difference in our thinking if we ourselves were going through the same sort of process we were offering the children. So we had classes for adults in clay, painting, or woodwork, and urged parents and teachers to explore something they knew nothing about—learning Russian, or how to manage a garden. Then they could see for themselves how learning disciplined and how it led on to confidence and joy in work. They could understand the stupidity of using gold stars, marks, blue ribbons, or punishments as incentives, and they could agree that offering such incentives was even immoral, because they were ulterior motives that denied the reward in work for work's sake.

Turning to the *Parents' Bulletin* for last fall, we find it is a composite report from teachers, alumni, and parents. One faculty member has for years been collecting reports from alumni, and in the current report presents what former Rose Valley students have to say about their experience there. One man, who attended Rose Valley from five to eleven years of age, and is now an architect, recalls memorable activities at the school:

> Building a fort from piano crates with Bernie, tagging and studying mice with Grace Rotzel, setting up a football team and playing (acting in) *Macbeth*, building a barometer, singing every morning, studying French, Saturday work days, making candles, making a sphinx, hauling a boulder from down at the creek, egg drop contest, free/creative writing, and *much more!*

On transferring to another school:

> Going to public junior high was tough. SRV had been so intimate and personal that the large impersonal junior high was very intimidating. My

grammar and history (I think) were weak, but I think my ability to think was much greater. The emphasis on creativity and balanced curriculum/learning proved very helpful in high school and college.

I've always felt that the freedom to learn and create; to celebrate curiosity, were things that SRV gave me that serve me daily today. As an architect I need to be both artist and intellectual. SRV gave me the foundation to be both.

A woman who is now an administrator with the Pennsylvania Opera Theater remembers in particular—

Being assigned my own tree (a dogwood) in the first grade . . . Bird walks with Grace Rotzel . . . Rosie and Mathilda (a sheep and a goat) . . . singing in the assembly . . . doing plays, particularly *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in sixth grade . . . writing my first term paper in fifth grade . . . making skirts for the maypole . . . doing the sword dance.

On the transition to another school:

Emotionally the transition to public junior high was excruciating. I didn't *fit in!* I didn't wear dresses. I didn't care about boys. I liked to play softball and soccer. I was openly physical with friends. I didn't like calling teachers by their last names.

Academically, it was extremely easy. I learned very quickly *not* to think. I learned to memorize instead of create, to regurgitate instead of invent. Consequently, I received good grades and was considered bright.

In the ninth grade I returned to private school (Providence Friends) and had a difficult time adjusting academically. Once more I had to think, analyze, and evaluate. It took more than a year to bring back into practice the skills for learning and thinking I had acquired at Rose Valley

SRV was the single most important positive influence on my life. This is not an exaggeration. Virtually all my positive traits—my independence, creativity, ability to learn quickly, willingness (and preference) to take chances, general method of getting emotionally and physically involved in a project—I trace back to. SRV. The school trained me to use my head and my heart. It gave me nine formative years of positive experiences, challenging and fair role models, and a strong sense that your life is what you make it, and that you will make it great. I feel that I grew up in SRV, the way that most people look back on growing up in their family. I was molded by its ideology, an ideology that was reflected in my family. I believe I share these feelings with my three siblings. Each of us was fortunate to attend in an era when there was a consistent excellence in the faculty. The older we get, the more we discover what was given to us there, and what a strong creative, academic and emotional foundation we were able to build.

Of particular interest is one father's explanation of why he and his wife chose the School in Rose Valley for their son. He says:

He was and is an only child. There were few neighborhood children his age close by, and we felt it important he have an environment that provided him the opportunity to develop his social skills, and to get away from the home in which the world revolved around him. . . . SRV's preschool turned out to be a terrific environment for Adam; he got to experience the richness of a varied social setting. Kids of both sexes, all close to his age (but with older children close by), and of varied backgrounds were there every day. Adam started to learn (from other than his parents) the crucial lesson that the entire world did not revolve around him, and that consideration for others and the need for patience are required to get along day-to-day. The classroom of three-year-olds quickly became the place he eagerly looked forward to each day, not just as the outlet for his high energy level, but also as an opportunity to satisfy his curiosity about his world. His closest friendships of today started during that class. . . .

When we reflect on diversity and Adam's learning to accept others freely, we'll always remember him describing one of his classmates as the kid with the curly hair. We later learned that the child he was describing was a black child; the child's skin color never struck Adam as important enough to mention when he couldn't remember the child's name.

FRONTIERS

The Ordeal of Tibet

IN *Humanitas* (No. 4, 1987), issued by Humanitas International, founded by Joan Baez in 1979, Ed Lazar draws attention to the continuing injustice to the Tibetan people of the occupation of their country by military forces from China. Why, he asks, do we hear so little of this antihuman policy of China, which began with the invasion of Tibet in 1950, driving the Dalai Lama, the recognized leader of the Tibetan people, to seek refuge in India in 1959?

One explanation may be that Tibet seems to have lisle strategic importance to the West. Ed Lazar proposes that—

> it was a convergence of events including some of the violence without which news is seldom deemed "news" in our not so civilized world. In June, partly as a result of efforts of The Office of Tibet which represents the Dalai Lama in the U.S., the U.S. House of Representatives adopted legislation which condemned China's human rights abuses in Tibet (a stronger Senate bill passed in early October). On September 19, the Dalai Lama began a long-planned ten day visit to the U.S., and on Sept. 21 he outlined a five-point peace plan for Tibet when he met with the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington.

Since the invasion in 1950, what have the Chinese done in Tibet? Ed Lazar summarizes:

> Ironically, tragically, during one of the great periods of decolonization, the avowedly anti-imperialist Peoples Republic of China, through its military power, became the Imperialist ruler of Tibet. Since that time over one million Tibetans have died (one-sixth of the population), two-thirds of the Tibetan territory have been added on to adjoining Chinese provinces, and more than 6000 monasteries have been destroyed. . . .
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> In recent years China has had a policy of moving Chinese settlers into Tibet to dilute the native Tibetan character of the area. In the Amdo area Chinese now outnumber Tibetans (two million Chinese to 1.8 million Tibetans), and in Lhasa itself there are only 50,000 Tibetans with 150,000 Chinese settlers. Altogether, in what used to be Tibet, there are 6 million Tibetans and 7.5 million Chinese. . . .
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> There are reported to be some 100,000 Tibetans imprisoned in labor camps. In addition there are 15 military divisions composed of 200,000 soldiers, within the Tibetan Autonomous Region alone. . . . many Tibetans feel that "Tibet itself is one large prison."

Lazar provides this general background:

> Prior to the 1950 invasion, Tibet was a fully independent nation, and had a long history of independence over a 2000 year period. During its history Tibet has been invaded and partly controlled by China several times. These past aggressions ~n no way legitimize the present aggression or China's claim to the area, just as Nicaragua cannot be considered to be part of the United States by virtue of the U.S. intervening there several times this century. The full story of the violation of human rights in Tibet is brilliantly presented by John F. Avedon in his book *In Exile from the Land of Snows* (Vintage, 1986). The *Los Angeles Times* in reviewing this book called it "The most significant nonfiction book of the season.". . .
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> The Buddhist religion has been and remains at the heart of the Tibetan culture. From the time of its invasion, a central purpose of the Chinese in Tibet has been to undermine the strength of Buddhism in the life of Tibet. Chinese spokespersons claim that the cultural revolution was responsible for the destruction of Tibet's monasteries, but most of the monasteries were destroyed well before the cultural revolution. The Chinese purpose is not to destroy Buddhism but rather to totally control and render powerless the religion. . . . The Buddhist faith and allegiance to the Dalai Lama remain very strong in Tibet. The Chinese for example, were amazed at the outpouring of support which was given to representatives of the Dalai Lama when they were allowed to visit Tibet on a fact-finding mission in 1979.

Another writer in *Humanitas,* Tinley Nyandak, editor of *News Tibet,* issued three times a year, relates:

> Since 1959 there have been more than fifty major uprisings against the Chinese occupation. The Chinese response was always swift and brutal, as it is now. The Chinese killed 432,772 Tibetans as they crushed each and every uprising. News of these massacres never before made headlines because of China's complete closure of Tibet to the outside world

and the world's indifference to the reports presented by fleeing Tibetan refugees.

As recently as October 1983, during the so-called "spiritual pollution" campaign, the Chinese authorities in Tibet rounded up 3,000 political activists and summarily executed 40, all of them shot in the head in public spectacles. Before they were slain, these forty victims were tortured to near death and then paraded through the streets of Lhasa as stern warnings to other Tibetans. Just last February, two Tibetan nationalists were executed, three more were sentenced to death and 30 were sentenced to hard labor.

Yet despite these killings and the risk of imprisonment that protest brings, Tibetan resistance to Chinese Communist rule has never ceased and never will. Tibetan determination is well illustrated in a recent news story by a Tibetan monk who said, "This is something we are willing to die for. They (Chinese) can kill us, but the Dalai Lama will live on.". . .

To insure peace and stability in Asia, we Tibetans believe that the best solution would be an honorable and peaceful exit on the part of China. Such a gesture would fulfill Tibet's natural role as a buffer state maintaining and promoting peace not only in Asia, but in the world.

In a statement made in Washington last September, the Dalai Lama proposed his peace plan with five components, as follows:

1. Transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace.

2. Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.

3. Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.

4. Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.

5. Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese people.