

A TIBETAN ON MT. VERNON STREET

MT. Vernon Street is the loveliest in Boston—lovelier than Louisburg Square, the name of which is better known and which it runs past. It happens that my family has long lived in the Square. It also happens that in 1958-61 I was the U.S. Foreign Service officer with "principal reporting responsibility for Tibet." I was then a consul in Hong Kong. Because the U.S. government did not wish to antagonize Chiang Kai-shek, it was careful to do nothing which might suggest that it did not consider Tibet part of China. In 1972, after it switched to Mao Tse-tung, the U.S. became even more careful about this. Therefore Hong Kong, rather than Khatmandu or New Delhi, was the center for the collection of information about Tibet.

Canada has a slightly better record on Tibet than the U.S. does. The Passport Office in Ottawa wrote to an applicant in October 1977: "As the situation prior to October 2, 1949 [when the People's Republic of China began] was less clear, applicants who were born prior to that date may have in their passports the designation given on their application forms." I suppose that this reflects the difference between the U.S. and the British government's policies towards India, which almost broke off relations with China in 1959 after the Lhasa Uprising took place, and offered asylum to the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan on Mt. Vernon Street was one of the perhaps 100,000 who succeeded in escaping to India in 1959 and later. He married a Tibetan woman in Sikkim. His case is like that of another refugee who ended up in Philadelphia and became a U.S. citizen, too. In 1977 this second refugee applied for a U.S. passport. He wanted to go back to India and visit his relatives. His passport application was refused because he had given his birthplace as "Tibet." He should have given it as "China." The chief of the legal division of the

Passport Office of the State Department eventually wrote him that "Tibet is located in present-day China. Therefore China will have to be listed as your place of birth." Yet when he had become a citizen in Philadelphia, his birthplace had been recorded as Tibet, not China. This refugee was quoted as follows in the *New York Times*: "The Chinese occupied my country, killed my parents, relatives, and my fellow countrymen. Therefore the last thing I want in the world is to give 'China' as my place of birth." It appears that the regional office in Philadelphia was less sophisticated than its Washington headquarters.

The Tibetans who did not succeed in escaping in 1959 later suffered various fates. Some were killed. Some were "re-educated." Some were treated as "reactionaries" or even as "imperialist agents."

When I became an amateur Tibetan nationalist in 1959, I had never met a Tibetan. In fact the man on Mt. Vernon Street was the first I had met—except for the Dalai Lama, whom I met in 1964. I feel deep anger at what I regard as Chinese imperialism in Tibet during 1950-1977. So I hope the reader will forgive me if this article sounds a bit emotional.

I wrote a chapter, "The Fate of Religion," for *The China Difference* (Harper & Row, 1979). In it I briefly discuss Tibetan Buddhism, which now seems to be riding a wave of popularity in the U.S. comparable to the wave that D.T. Suzuki started for Zen decades ago. Nyingmapa centers have been built in several states, as in Vermont. Perhaps this illustrates what Lao-tzu says about good growing out of evils. Nyingmapa leaders might be compared by an unfriendly critic to Sri Rajneesh of the "East-West Ashram" in Poona—a plagiarist who makes money from Americans' need for something that will give meaning to their lives. Yet the Nyingmapa leaders here will serve

to make Tibet a little less of a "forgotten kingdom." The fact that it is so poorly known is the fault of the Tibetans themselves. For centuries, sandwiched between China and India, they allowed no visitors to enter. The pre-1950 visitors who did succeed in entering—like Sir Charles Bell—left years ago. Another example is Heinrich Harrer, briefly the tutor to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who had to leave in November 1950, after the Chinese invaded with overwhelming force.

The world's interest in Tibet ran highest in the 1960s. In 1959 and 1960 the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva published two books: *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* (Geneva, 1959) and *Tibet and the International Commission of Jurists by Its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet* (Geneva, 1960). This committee concluded that Chinese authorities had, among other things, committed "genocide against Buddhists in Tibet." In the summer of 1977 Felix Greene (first cousin of Graham) was helped by the Chinese government to make a film of life in Tibet. He was provided with a plane and his own personal physician to attend to the needs of himself and his daughter. It seems unlikely that Greene was shown much evidence of genocide.

I believe that the charge of genocide was accurate. Neville Maxwell visited Lhasa in the summer of 1976 and wrote about it in the *New York Times*. He reported seeing only one lama wearing robes in the streets of the city. He learned that Drepung, the largest monastery in Tibet, which used to have 15,000 monks (now called "persons bound by personal servitude"), had only three hundred left, who were mostly over fifty years old and "supporting themselves." Maxwell also said that the mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum* ("Hail to Thee, Jewel in the Lotus"—that is, hail to the Bodhisattva of Mercy), had been replaced everywhere by slogans like "In agriculture learn from Tachai." Tachai is a model commune in north China.

The history of Sino-Tibetan-Indian-British relations is extremely complex. In the eighth

century Padmasambhava introduced Buddhism into Tibet from India. In the ninth century Tibetan invaders conquered large parts of northwest China—conquests of which Sir Aurel Stein found such dramatic evidence at Tun-huang in 1907. In 805 A.D. two missions were sent from the Chinese emperor bearing presents to the ruler of Tibet; in the same year the latter sent two missions bearing presents to the Chinese emperor. Before then Chinese envoys had visited the Tibetan king every year in 729-737 and 742-44. In 763 A.D., the Tibetans occupied the Chinese capital at Ch'ang-an. So this was a period when the Tibetans often terrorized the Chinese and were anything but a tributary part of the Chinese empire. T'ai-tsung himself—the first and greatest T'ang emperor—had given his daughter, the Princess Wench'eng, in marriage to the ruler of Tibet, Sron-tsanggampo, who also had as wife a Nepalese princess.

Successive matrimonial alliances served to unify Tibet; yet Indian influence was, perhaps, greater, because of Buddhism. Thus precedents were established for the competition of India and China over Tibet—competition that was most dramatically exemplified by India giving asylum to a Dalai Lama in 1910 and again in 1959.

Tibet fell apart into rival kingdoms during the 10th-13th centuries, but these were the centuries of the Sung dynasty, when China itself became increasingly divided and was finally conquered by the Mongols. The Mongol conquest of Tibet in the 1250's introduced the third element that has complicated its history until now.

The first emperor of the Ming dynasty tried unsuccessfully to reassert Chinese influence over Tibet. In 1413 A.D., the second Ming emperor apparently offered to go himself to Lhasa and become a disciple of Tsong-Kha-pa, the great Tibetan monk who established the Yellow Hat or Gelugpa sect—the reform sect of Buddhism—and who is, after Padmasambhava, the most important figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. His nephew became the first Dalai Lama. In all,

fourteen Dalai Lamas have ruled Tibet, first spiritually, then temporally as "god-kings."

The third Dalai Lama became the spiritual ruler of Mongolia. During the 17th century the "Great Fifth" built the Potala, the extraordinary citadel that dominates Lhasa. (Actually, his regent rebuilt it while he was dying, but the story has to be simplified.) In 1641 the Great Fifth was made king of all Tibet by an invading Mongol chief. Thus it was the Fifth who was the first "god-king." It was he who created the office of Panchen Lama—so often used by the Chinese to counter the power of the Dalai.

The Sixth Dalai was a poet and broke the monastic rules of celibacy and abstinence from alcohol. The Seventh is also known as "great" and so is the thirteenth, who died in 1933. His death is described by Sir Charles Bell, the British Resident, who knew him well and admired him. By 1933 great changes had taken place in Tibet's international status. Bell states that it "gained independence from China during the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama."

Let us go back to 1718, when a Chinese army invaded Tibet. During most of the Ch'ing (Manchu) dynasty Tibet looked to China for protection. A Chinese amban was stationed in Lhasa. His role was much like that of the British Resident after 1912: to advise the Dalai Lama when he was asked to (and he was seldom asked). Lhasa was a hardship post for a Chinese, to whom it seemed far from Peking. He was surrounded by an alien people, who were so gay, so happy (in spite of a miserable life at high altitudes), and so hard to understand.

In 1900 Britain wanted to protect India's northern border, while the Chinese wanted to keep the British out of Tibet. In 1901 the Viceroy of India sent a letter to the Dalai, who returned it unopened. (The Chinese had told him that the British wanted to abolish Buddhism in Tibet and introduce Christianity.) So the Dalai turned for help to Russia. Enter the fourth complication The Tsar was delighted to compete with the British for

control of Tibet. A Buryat Mongol named Dorjjeff had been the tutor to the thirteenth Dalai Lama. He was a loyal Russian. He apparently told the young Dalai, then only twenty-eight, that the Tsar might become a Buddhist. Thus the plot thickened and became so complicated that it would take a book, not an article, to describe what happened—if it were possible to ascertain.

In any case, the British sent the Younghusband expedition that took Lhasa in 1904. The Dalai fled to Mongolia. The Chinese backed the Panchen, about choosing whom the Dalai had, as usual, made the final decision. Since 1718 no foreign country had had direct diplomatic contact with Tibet. All had acted through China, which had been Tibet's suzerain for two centuries. In 1908 the Dalai moved from Urga to Peking. In 1909 he returned to Lhasa, ten days north of which the Panchen came to welcome him. The year 1908 had seen the death of the Dowager Empress of China. In 1912 the Chinese Republic was created.

In the meantime, Chinese troops had invaded Tibet. China had been alarmed by British and Russian interference. In 1910 they reached Lhasa. Where was the Dalai to flee now? He decided that the British were the least of many dangers, and so he fled to India. In February he met Sir Charles Bell in Darjeeling. The two became friends. The Dalai was then thirty-four. Bell spoke the Lhasa dialect and was able to assure him of British help. On March 14 the Dalai met the Viceroy in Calcutta, receiving a seventeen-gun salute.

The Chinese attempted to depose the Dalai in 1910 and replace him with the Panchen (an attempt that was to succeed with the next Dalai in 1959). The Chinese claimed Nepal and Bhutan as Chinese possessions. With the establishment of the republic in 1912, Chinese feelings about Tibet grew even stronger. At last they had overthrown their foreign rulers (the Manchus) and did not intend to let other foreigners steal part of their territory. The Tsar too had become active and sent the Dalai a letter, which Bell helped him to

read. Nothing came of the politenesses it contained.

The outcome of all this manoeuvring was that the thirteenth Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, along with Bell, in June 1912. China was then preoccupied with the republican revolution. It was too busy to oppose this return.

Almost everyone who has been there and written about Tibet is pro-Tibetan, except for those who are offended by a people who can be so physically dirty and backward, and yet so spiritually content.

I see parallels between the Tibetans and the Incas. Both are more or less forgotten. Both are victims of imperialism—the Tibetans of Chinese imperialism, the Incas of Spanish imperialism and the Catholic Church. Both are mysterious and happy. But the crimes against the Incas were committed by Pizarro in 1524-1528, whereas the crimes against the Tibetans were committed by Mao Tsetung in 1950-76 with Marxist rather than Catholic justification. In Peru and Tibet the U.S. is today more politically involved than is Britain. Such are the benefits of losing an empire.

Both Tibetans and Incas lived in countries full of gold, of which they made beautiful use. Both found gold to be their undoing—entirely in the case of the Incas, partially in the case of the Tibetans. The Tibetans—until 1950—had no wheeled vehicles. The Incas used knotted cords (Quipas—like the Chinese in the golden age described by Lao-tzu).

It is curious how many of the victims of imperialism are attractive. Besides the Tibetans and the Incas, I think of the Hungarians (subject to fits of elation and depression), the Irish (who are difficult), the Finns (dour), and the Norwegians (free at last). Then there are the Poles (emotional). So often every country in central Europe has suffered from imperialism. Until the 19th century Germany consisted of many little principalities, which Russia, Britain, and France tried to manipulate. Austria's turn came when it lost out in the First World War. As for

the Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Greeks, and so on—they have occupied hopeless geographical positions, like the Tibetans.

It seems that it does not pay to be attractive or to have charm. "None doth offend, none, I say none," in the words of King Lear. But some do offend sometimes. The Turks offend me by having blown up the middle of the Parthenon. Chinese Communists offend me by having torn down the walls of Peking. Cambodian and later Vietnamese Communists offend me by having partly destroyed Angkor (according to most reports). The Peruvians of Spanish descent offend me by having mistreated the Indians, who are of Inca descent and comprise 80 per cent of the population. More recently the Chinese Communists have offended me by making it necessary for a Tibetan to end up on Mt. Vernon Street.

But the story of Chinese behavior in Tibet may soon have a happy ending. When I visited China in May, 1980, a five-man Tibetan delegation (which included Thubten Norbu, the elder brother of the Dalai Lama) had just concluded a five-months' visit, during which they visited Tibet and, after Peking had sent new instructions to Lhasa, met many ordinary Tibetans. When I left Peking, another delegation from the Dalai was about to arrive. The Young-ho Kung was due to have its renovation completed by August, 1980. This temple is the seat of Tibetan Buddhism in China proper. I suspect that before the end of 1980 the Dalai Lama will visit Peking himself and stay at the Young-ho Kung, as he always has.

To the present government in China it is politically important to restore Tibet's internal autonomy—to go back to the system that worked so well from 1718 to 1912. If Teng Hsiao-p'ing succeeds, he may be able to convince Chiang Ching-kuo that Taiwan will enjoy genuine autonomy if he reaches an accommodation with Teng.

Boston

HOLMES WELCH

REVIEW

"CRUCIAL VALUE QUESTIONS"

THE LEAN YEARS by Richard Barnet (Simon and Schuster, \$12.95) is a reliable book about the material resources of the planet in relation to the human beings who depend upon them. It is a study of ingenuity, of misuse and waste. It is written for managers in the sense that in these later years of the twentieth century we are all in some sense becoming managers of the earth; that is, we now have the knowledge to regard material welfare from a planetary point of view and to take part, however minutely, in the care of the earth. This is surely an epoch-making achievement of some sort. It says something about the evolutionary degree reached by human beings. No longer can it be claimed that we "don't know what we're doing." If other books of this sort are in circulation—and several of them, such as *Food First!* and *Human Scale*, are easily available—we do know what we are doing. That is, the knowledge is in print.

Mr. Barnet, who was a co-author of *Global Reach*, an analysis and indictment of the multinational corporations, now writes about the earth's "five critical resource systems—energy, nonfuel minerals, food, water, and human skill."

All these resources have become increasingly integrated in global systems of control. How these systems of control operate determines which people in which parts of the world are hungry, cold, or out of work. Our interest is in who controls them, how they developed, and by what plans they are operated.

That anyone can write about these matters with both confidence and competence suggests the birth of a new sort of responsibility in the world—a responsibility growing out of recognition that the world is one and that humanity is one and that the time has come to act consciously in behalf of both, which are also one. That we have inherited a world divided up and used almost entirely for self-interest becomes evident in this book.

What, the author asks, can we are—we ready to—do about this situation? He has some suggestions, applying to world management, but since few of us are in a position to affect directly the management of world economic processes, the question—and answers—must be rephrased by each reader for himself, in terms of his own relations with the world. This is within the capacity of every human being. The importance of Mr. Barnet's book lies in the evidence it provides that the time has come to ask and answer this question.

There is no way to convey the quality of *The Lean Years* except by quotation. The following is from the chapter on food supply:

The food system stands squarely in the center of the resource chain that supports life and civilization. Throughout history there has never been enough.

Every day the world produces two pounds of grain for every man, woman and child on earth. That is sufficient to provide 3,000 calories a day for everyone, even without the enormous quantities of meat, fish, vegetables, and fruits that are produced each year. (Twenty-seven hundred calories, according to the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council, is what a moderately active adult male should consume.) The fact that people are hungry is due less to insufficient food production than to maldistribution. Most people who stop eating do so not because there is insufficient food grown in the world but because they no longer grow it themselves and do not have the money to buy it.

What would a photograph taken from outer space of the food production and distribution system of the present world look like? On such a photograph would appear 462 million people actually starving, over half of them children under five. Sixty-seven million of these people live in the Near East, and 28 million of them are scattered through what we call the "developed world." Of course, the numbers change, depending upon what day you take the picture. These figures were put together by the Food and Agriculture Organization on the basis of pictures taken in the 1969-71 period. Since that time, acute starvation in sub-Saharan Africa has eased but has increased in war-ravaged Ethiopia, Cambodia, and parts of Latin America. About 1.3 billion persons are chronically undernourished.

When the picture is taken again in the year 1985 the situation will be much worse. . . . According to the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress, the developing countries will need to produce over the next twenty-five years "an additional 600 million tons of cereals over and above their current production of about 400 million tons." To do this would require annual production increases of 4 percent, but gains have averaged no more than 2.5 per cent in recent years.

The goal is "out of reach under present conditions," the report concludes, and therefore developing countries will have to import somewhere between 94 million and 108 million metric tons. Two-thirds of the seriously food-deficient countries have annual per capita incomes of under \$200 and lack the foreign exchange for these massive grain imports. To maintain the 1970 import level (18 million tons) many poor countries have already mortgaged themselves. . . . Only two Third World countries, Argentina and Thailand, are now net exporters of grain, although Brazil and Pakistan are expected to join that select company by 1985.

Meanwhile subsistence agriculture, the world around, is declining. Many countries are becoming less and less able to feed themselves, while the prosperous countries are consuming more and more meat. Since it takes from three to ten pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat, the grain deficit of the industrial world "may double by 1985." At the same time the demand for grain is growing. Even in the Congo, bread is becoming more popular than homegrown native foods. An American agricultural attaché explains that since the colonial masters of Africa ate bread, "bread consumption is identified with progress and modernity for the masses."

What about oil, which accounts for a fifth of the entire capital investment of the United States? The world uses 30,000 gallons of petroleum a second, and Americans consume a third of that amount. The multinational oil companies, who control 40 per cent of the world's oil flow, Barnet says, have become world rationers of oil according to profits and politics. "They are by default the energy planners for the United States." Oil made America the scene of "perpetual motion."

"The trouble with this country," Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "is that you can't win an election without the oil bloc, and you can't govern with it."

Oil has been the key to political power in the U.S. because the automotive-petroleum complex has dominated the economy as nowhere else. It derives its power from a set of deeply rooted American fantasies that the dream packagers of Madison Avenue have put to effective use. They have been selling cars to three generations of Americans as a means to escape boredom and exercise vicarious power. . . . Until the Energy Crisis, the promise each year was more power, speed, and fierceness and more models named for tigers, cougars, cobras, barracudas, and other symbols of the fast getaway.

What about the shortage of oil? Barnet says:

The oil companies bear a great responsibility for the Energy Crisis, not only because of recent activities—withholding supplies, cutting refinery production, diverting oil from U.S. customers to the "spot market"—but, more importantly, because of crucial decisions made a generation or more ago. The decision to exploit Middle East oil instead of developing alternative energy sources in the United States was one of the most fateful policy choices of the century. It was made in private, but the consequences are public.

Why did the oil companies prefer Middle East oil to our own resources? The answer is simple and all-American: It was *cheaper*. So, when you condemn the oil companies for that decision, you have to ask yourself if you as, say, an oil stockholder, would have approved hiring an executive who wanted to ignore the chance to make more money because it was socially intelligent to develop our own oil wells. Meanwhile, Mr. Barnet predicts:

At some point in this generation and possibly in this decade the oil era is coming to an end. This does not mean that it will all disappear, but rather that the demand for oil will exceed the *available* supply. A crisis of industrial civilization may well occur long before global supplies are exhausted or even before the day consumption overtakes production. The key to the problem is timing. Reserves may still be high, but a situation in which oil cannot be delivered to ultimate users in time to keep factories running, cars moving, and homes heated, is the definition of a crisis.

Some day, in short, we are effectively going to run out of oil. The fossil-fuel epoch will come to a close, as no more than a transitory moment in world history.

Some coal was burned over 2,000 years ago and some oil may still be burned 2,000 years hence, but these are infinitesimal quantities given the energy requirements of the present and the projected industrial civilization.

What then is to be done? There is wide agreement that the postpetroleum civilization should be run on renewable energy resources. Whether the principal source is to be nuclear energy or solar energy is a matter of controversy in every industrial country. The choice of a strategy of transition—how to convert an oil-based energy system into one or the other—is eliciting one of the major political struggles of the century. Whether, for example, a society chooses as its principal transition fuel coal, natural gas, or some others such as shale oil will make and unmake fortunes and change the face of nations.

The choice of nuclear energy will have various unavoidable consequences. Only one or two of the technicians have been thoughtful and honorable enough to explain what they are. Barnet says in summary:

There is no way of avoiding what Alvin Weinberg, then director of the Energy Laboratory at Oak Ridge, called the "Faustian bargain." An inexhaustible supply of energy is available but only at the price of a "vigilance and a longevity of our social institutions that we are quite unaccustomed to." This is a gentle way of putting it. Society will be completely dependent on the "nuclear people," as Weinberg calls the priests and guardians of the brave new world. The problem of nuclear power has involved Presidents in some form of public deception. President Eisenhower ordered a cover-up of the disastrous effects on soldiers at atomic weapons tests. President Carter gave the nuclear industry private support for building the breeder reactor while he was taking a public position against it. In the plutonium economy, there can be no hope of safety and peace of mind without making sure that the government has its eye on all potential terrorists and troublemakers. The result will be a degree of surveillance, centralization, and government intrusion that will cause us to remember America of the 1970s as a *laissez-faire* paradise.

What the country does now to meet the energy crisis will have long-term effects. A useful writer on energy is one who points out these various effects so that the judgment of citizens can be applied. As Barnet says:

By choosing to burn up imported fossil fuels, to develop new coal technologies, to take the nuclear option, or to develop new alternatives—solar energy, fusion, harnessing of the ocean winds—leaders are also making decisions about how dependent society will be on scarce minerals, how much water it will use, how many jobs will be created, which cities and regions will rise and which will fall, and who will hold political power. Some energy sources, such as solar or biomass conversion (burning of refuse and vegetable products), are well adapted to decentralized use, although they can also be used in centralized ways. Decentralized energy sources make more possible the self-reliance of local communities. If it has its own solar or wind-based energy sources, for example, the Northeast becomes less dependent on the Southwest for natural gas. If local communities control their energy sources, they can determine the prices for their citizens instead of being dependent on the oil companies, the sheiks of Arabia, or the U.S. Government to decide how much of each dollar earned will go to drive the car or heat the house. . . .

Thus energy choices are not technical choices. They directly determine who will feel the effect of inflation and who will pass on those costs to others. . . . Energy choices involve the most basic decisions about values: What is efficiency and what do we sacrifice for it? Is interdependence good or bad? Is it avoidable? Is simplicity better than complexity? Is it important to protect individuals? Is democracy something worth preserving at the cost of rearranging the economy? Is the economy made for the people or are people servants of the economy? Which people? . . .

The crucial value questions about goals of development are imbedded in three fundamental choices: How much energy is enough? What kind of energy technology is appropriate? and, who should control it?

These are the sort of questions Richard Barnet raises, all through his book.

COMMENTARY

WHERE CRITICISM IS NEEDED

IN an article "On the Contemporary Hunger for Wonders" in the Summer *Michigan Quarterly Review*, Theodore Roszak discusses the current popularity of Eastern religion spoken of by Holmes Welch (page 1). He suggests that the aggressive rejection by scientific humanists of the yearning for a higher life, informed by mystical insight—often described by them as "neurosis"—has made Western peoples vulnerable to vulgarized and sensational versions of the spiritual quest. Speaking of the level of these conversions," he says:

Far and away the largest number of students who have gravitated to Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, and to spiritual masters like Swami Muktananda, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and the lame Chogyam Trungpa are maverick or dropped-out academics. Intellectuals constitute the largest public for such developments as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's investigations of immortality, and the remarkably successful Course on Miracles (a new Christian mystical discipline revealed by way of "channeled messages" to a New York University clinical psychologist). There are also the many study centers—the Institute for the Noetic Sciences, the Parapsychology Department at the University of Virginia Medical School, the Kundalini Research Foundation—which serve to draw academic talent into the realm of the extraordinary.

I cannot vouch for the depth or quality of these efforts; what I do know is that more and more frequently I find myself at conferences and gatherings in the company of learned and professional people who are deliberately and unabashedly dabbling in a sort of higher gullibility, an assertive readiness to give all things astonishing, mind-boggling, and outrageous the chance to prove themselves true . . . or true enough. Among these academic colleagues, the most prominent laudatory expletives of the day are "Incredible!" "Fantastic!" "O, wow!"

As corrective of these shallow and distorting enthusiasms, Roszak proposes another view of "our society's undiminished transcendent longings"—a view which

accepts that need as a constant of the human condition inseparably entwined with our creative and moral powers: a guiding vision of the Good that may often be blurred, but which is as real as the perception of light when it first pierced the primordial blindness of our evolutionary ancestors. In this interpretation, it is not transcendent aspiration that needs critical attention, but the repressive role of secular humanism in modern culture, which may be seen as a tragic overreaction to the obscurantism and corruption of the European ecclesiastical establishment: a justified anticlericalism which has hardened into a fanatical, anti-religious crusade.

Mr. Roszak adds that this generous-minded view requires *intellectual rigor*, offering Socrates as an example of its practice. "There is the willingness to put the uncomfortable questions—to oneself and others—which separates philosophy from faith."

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

MINUTELY SUBDIVIDED

THE sorry tale of the trivialization of education in the United States is briefly told by Christopher Lasch in *The Culture of Narcissism*. The chapter on this subject is titled "Schooling and the New Illiteracy," with content which wholly justifies a reflective passage later in the book:

The real value of the accumulated wisdom of a lifetime is that it can be handed on to future generations. Our society, however, has lost this conception of wisdom and knowledge. It holds an instrumental view of knowledge, according to which technological change constantly renders knowledge obsolete and therefore nontransferable. The older generation has nothing to teach the younger, according to this kind of reasoning, except to equip it with the emotional and intellectual resources to make its own choices and to deal with "unstructured" situations for which there are no reliable precedents or precepts. It is taken for granted that children will quickly learn to find their parents' ideas oldfashioned and out-of-date, and parents themselves tend to accept the social definition of their own superfluity. Having raised their children to the age at which they enter college or the work force, people in their forties and fifties find that they have nothing left to do as parents. This discovery coincides with another, that business and industry no longer need them either. The superfluity of the middle-aged and elderly originates in the severance of the sense of historical continuity. Because the older generation no longer thinks of itself as living on in the next, of achieving a vicarious immortality in posterity, it does not give way gracefully to the young. People cling to the illusion of youth until it can no longer be maintained, at which point they must either accept their superfluous status or sink into dull despair. Neither solution makes it easy to sustain much interest in life.

This, you could say, is a consequence of the empirical way of life. Nobody knows anything except what can be learned from immediate experience, which changes all the time. We go by impulses instead of intuitions concerning the meaning of our lives. The older people get, the less there is for them to "do," and the best thing

we can think of is to expose them to courses meant to teach them how to "play." Age ought to be naturally a time of wisdom, but for a great many it is only a time of uselessness. Wisdom is a meaningless word for the technological mentality. And technological know-how ("production of things") dominates our lives.

From a reading of the chapter cited above it becomes apparent that the entire educational establishment has lost faith in its own *raison d'être*. It takes little intelligence and no cultural background to operate the machinery of modern civilization, and there is hardly anything else that needs doing, so why bother with much education? As Mr. Lasch explains:

Standards are deteriorating even at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, which can hardly be described as institutions of mass education. A faculty committee at Harvard reports, "The Harvard faculty does not care about teaching." According to a study of general education at Columbia, teachers have lost "their common sense of what kind of ignorance is unacceptable." As a result, "Students reading Rabelais's description of civil disturbances ascribe them to the French Revolution. A class of twenty-five had never heard of the Oedipus complex—or of Oedipus. Only one student in a class of fifteen could date the Russian Revolution within a decade."

In any case, the decline of literacy cannot be attributed solely to the failure of the educational system. Schools in modern society serve largely to train people for work, but most of the available jobs, even in the higher economic range, no longer require a high level of technical or intellectual competence. Indeed most jobs consist so largely of routine, and depend so little on enterprise and resourcefulness, that anyone who successfully completes a given course of study soon finds himself "overqualified" for most of the positions available. The deterioration of the educational system thus reflects the waning social demand for initiative, enterprise, and the compulsion to achieve.

Mr. Lasch goes on like this for twenty-nine pages, and what he says is easy enough to confirm. He describes the scene which, a few years ago, drove Paul Goodman to write *Growing Up Absurd*, and a little later made Barbara Garson get jobs in factories to experience and observe

what it means to "work for a living" in our time. As she said in her book, *All the Livelong Day* (Doubleday, 1975):

I wasn't particularly surprised by the negative things I saw in factories: speed, heat, humiliation, monotony. I'm sure the reader will have guessed that I began this research prepared to expose and denounce "the system."

It was the positive things that touched me the most. Not that people are beaten down (which they are) but that they almost always pop up. Not that people are bored (which they are) but the ways they find to make it interesting. Not that people hate their work (which they do) but that even so, they try to make something out of it.

In factories and offices around this country work is systematically reduced to the most minute and repetitious tasks. . . . The crime of modern industry is not forcing us to work, but denying us real work. For no matter what tricks people play on themselves to make the day's work meaningful, management seems determined to remind them, "You are just tools for our use."

Modern man has wholeness only as a "consumer." In all his other relationships he is but a part, a cog, a tool used by those who make things to sell to consumers. What can we do about this? Practically nothing in any corporate way. People have to *think* their way out of this mess. You can't fix up the ills brought by organization with more organization. And thinking means starting with a fundamental conception of human beings. A good starting-point would be Emerson, who said:

Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the divided or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the shared work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace all the other laborers. But, unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops and cannot be gathered.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into

the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic, a machine; the sailor a rope of a ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state, he is Man Thinking. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

It's all there, in Emerson—the diagnosis and the cure. We don't need to make any "studies." We just need the kind of wisdom that grows out of a mature life and can be handed on to future generations. The problem is not the recovery of such wisdom—it exists. If you don't want to take it from Emerson, you might find another expression of it in Robert M. Hutchins. The problem is recovery from indifference to this wisdom. Our authorities don't know it exists and often make fun of the people who speak of its reality.

FRONTIERS How To Stop War

SOME months ago a reader sent us a column by Colman McCarthy in which he urged support for the proposal of a National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution. Our reader felt that MANAS should get behind this proposal. Two years ago the President signed a bill allowing \$500,000 to a Commission to talk about the proposal for creating such an academy. No doubt the people on the Commission are persons with the proper credentials, who will see that the academy, should it come into being (which means, should it be funded with federal money), is staffed by persons with the proper credentials. How else can we be sure that the money will be well spent?

Mr. McCarthy adds some eloquence to the appeal, saying:

Americans are passionate learners and organizers when it comes to the sciences of war. We pay for four military academies and five war colleges. The justification for these lavish operations is traceable both to the ancient motto of the Roman Empire, "In time of peace prepare for war," and to the current choler of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as they seek more money to combat "Soviet adventurism."

Now that more and more voices are raised in dissent against this demonstrably addled philosophy (history has shown that when nations prepare for war it is war that they get), it isn't surprising that support for a national peace academy has been growing stronger.

Anticipating the objection to one more "fuzzy-minded bureaucracy," Mr. McCarthy writes:

But the advocates of a peace academy are anything but fuzzy. The graduates of this institution, according to Milton Mapes, who is a driving force behind the idea, "would move on to positions in government, private organizations the Foreign Service, the armed forces, corporations, labor unions and other groups. They would work for creative alternatives to violence. If the levels of conflict continue to rise all across our society and our world, if crime continues to be one of our primary growth industries, if terrorism remains an active force and as

weapons become more and more available, the work of peace academy graduates may become crucial to the survival of organized society."

While reading such material, and it exists in surprising amount, an old phrase, which happens to be the slogan of the War Resisters League, keeps ringing in our ears:

"Wars will cease when men refuse to fight them." It might follow from this that small advisory groups to help conscientious objectors figure things out for themselves would be the most deserving "academies" one could imagine. But we don't have to imagine them; they exist and need support. In many cities there are various centers performing this service, mostly branches of the War Resisters League, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Friends Service Committee.

Another recollection has to do with certain "peace academies" of the past, as reported in a manual used by conscientious objectors to World War II:

The early years of the twentieth century reveal many tendencies which, on the surface, appear auspicious for peace. The Nobel Committee and Institute were established in Norway in 1900; Edwin Ginn, of Boston, organized the World Peace Foundation in 1910 in the same year Andrew Carnegie set up the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace with a gift of eleven million dollars. While representing good intentions, and presaging the more realistic Peace Movements of the future, these institutions failed to embody the moral force for peace that some pacifists had optimistically hoped of them. In March, 1923, in the *North American Review*, an American army officer, Major Sherman Miles (detailed to the American Peace Commission in central Europe after World War I), examined the work of these "peace societies." One organization, which announced as its primary objective "the thorough and scientific investigation and study of the causes of war," expended more than half a million dollars in eleven years. Its historians and other eminent researchers produced twenty-four pamphlets and ten books. The pamphlets, however, were simply descriptive studies of World War I, without concern for causes, and nine of the books dealt "with the general subjects of industry, commerce

and finance, with casualties in war and military pensions; with existing tariff policies and with conscription in Japan; but none of these subjects are studied as possible causes of war.

These organizations were privately funded. Could, one wonders, a federally financed body do as well? What William James wrote seventy years ago in "Moral Equivalent of War" is as true, or truer, than it was when it appeared in *McClure's* for August, 1910:

"Peace" in military mouths today is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war mean the same thing, now *in posse*, now *in actu*. It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations is *the real war*, permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the "peace"-interval.

No one who reads even a little on the subject can avoid the conclusion that no government really wants peace if the price of peace is refusal and inability to make war. With hardly an exception, modern societies are *based* on war and their managers are not about to fund actually *effective* work for peace. Who, we might ask, has done the most for peace in human history? The question may have various answers but it seems safe to say that the influence of four men has been undeniable: Buddha, Jesus, Tolstoy, and Gandhi.

So, if you want to serve the cause of peace, the thing to do would be to study what those four said and did, and spread around an understanding of it. What they said is available in books. What they did was, first, to break with the existing organizations (academies) of their time. Great and moving ideas are always reduced and made ineffectual by organizations. An Indian writer said recently:

A sure, smooth, and "non-violent" way to kill the spirit of Gandhian thinking is to introduce it into university syllabi. If I am serious about Gandhian thinking, I would save it from the deadly hands of our

universities: maybe there are some exceptions, but most of our universities are dead and deadly places—stricken areas from which all living things have to be kept at a safe distance. . . . Once Gandhian thinking becomes part of university thinking and research it is sure to wither away: the mighty, indomitable forces of co-optation and suction will slowly and steadily maim and undermine the spirit, the meaning, and the potential elan of the Gandhian way.

Faith in the world's greatest peacemakers means a loss of faith in a great many other things—things which, in the end, support the making of war. A list (and review of the lives) of the men and women who felt that they could afford that loss would certainly be instructive.