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IS THERE MORAL LAW?

NO matter how much reading one has done in books by experts, the question "Do you think we are going to get into a nuclear war?" reduces anyone attempting to give an answer to feelings and hunches. The best discussion we have come across of questions like that is Freeman Dyson's *Weapons and Hope,* and the one thing Dyson is sure of is the *unpredictability* of what may happen and how bad it might get. The more confusing, numerous, and contradictory the supposedly "objective factors" which play a part in determining the future, the more subjective our speculations become. Does that inevitably mean that as our thinking grows subjective, it loses its rational ground?

In other words, must the way you *feel* about a serious question leave behind the world of order, of cause and effect? Or is there perhaps a non-physical or transcendental order that one's feelings may or may not divine?

For example, one person, asked what he thought about the probability of America suffering nuclear attack, said: "Of course, I don't really know, but I do have a feeling about it. So far, I don't think the American people *deserve* to be victims of nuclear destruction and all the pain and protracted disaster that would be involved. It may come to that, but not, I think and hope, yet."

This observation, we should note, lifts the inquiry to the level where moral causation is regarded as real and operative, a plane where much good company may be found, although practically none of the present-day managers of the societies of nation-states are encountered there. We are speaking of the realm of moral law, classically defined by such spiritual teachers as the Buddha and Jesus, treated in all its mystery and obscurity by the ancient Greek dramatists and philosophers, and compellingly presented to the modern world in the great novels of Dostoevsky.

The Buddha's teaching is unambiguous. The opening 'twin verses" of the *Dhammapada* say:

> All that we are is the result of what we have thought; all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain pursues him, as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the ox that draws it.
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> All that we are is the result of what we have thought; all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness pursues him like his own shadow that never leaves him.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, gave the Christian teaching: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

In Plato's *Phaedo,* the account of the death of Socrates, after a long discourse concerned with the immortality of the soul, Socrates says to his mourning friends:

> If the soul is immortal, it demands our care not only for that part of time which we call life, but for all time. And indeed it would seem now that it will be extremely dangerous to neglect it. If death were a release from everything, it would be a boon for the wicked, because by dying they would be released not only from the body but also from their own wickedness together with the soul, but as it is, since the soul is clearly immortal, it can have no escape or security from evil except by becoming as good and wise as it possibly can. For it takes nothing with it to the next world except its education and training, and these, we are told, are of supreme importance in helping or harming the newly dead at the very beginning of his journey there.

This, quite evidently, is the view of Socrates, but as a teacher he tempers what he said with an element of uncertainty, since in such matters each one must decide for himself. So he adds:

> Of course, no reasonable man ought to insist that the facts are exactly as I have described them. But that either this or something very like it is a true account of our souls and their future habitations—since we have clear evidence that the soul is

immortal—this, I think, is both a reasonable contention and a belief worth risking, for the risk is a noble one. We should use such accounts to inspire ourselves with confidence, and that is why I have already drawn out my tale so long.

In *The Brothers Karamazov,* Ivan the thinker cries out to his saintly brother, Alyosha, a believer:

"With my earthly Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause fol and that I know it—I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth. Justice that I can see for myself. I have believed in it. I want to see it. . . .

"You see, Alyosha, perhaps it may really happen that if I live to that moment, or rise again to see it, I, too, perhaps may cry aloud with the rest, looking at the mother embracing the child's torturer: 'Thou art just, O Lord!' But I don't want to cry aloud then. While there is still time, I want to protect myself and so I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of one tortured child who beat itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its tears to 'dear, kind God'! It's not worth it, because those tears are unatoned for. They must be atoned for, or there can be no harmony. But how? How are you going to atone for them? Is it possible? By their being avenged? But what do I care for avenging them? What do I care for a hell for oppressors? What good can hell do, Since those children have already been tortured? And what becomes of harmony, if there is hell? I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don't want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will. Let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother's heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer, even if the child were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, what becomes of harmony? Is there in the whole world a person who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it. I would rather be left with unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, *even if l were wrong.* Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it's beyond our means to pay so much. And so I give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return the ticket to him."

Ivan then tells his brother the tale of the Grand Inquisitor, to explain his rejection of the Church teaching. Religion, you could say, teaches the moral law, but it does not *demonstrate* it. Ivan wants to see it demonstrated. He is not satisfied by the explanation that "some day" he will understand that the way things are is "God's will" and that all is "just." "Why," he exclaims, "the whole world of knowledge is not worth that child's prayer to 'dear, kind God'! I say nothing of the sufferings of grown-up people, they have eaten the apple, damn them, and the devil take them all! But these little ones! . . ."

Puzzling over problems of this sort, made even more urgent by so much meaningless suffering in the modern world, Wendell Berry (in *Standing by Words*) wonders whether "the will of God," understood as the moral law, may "have the same standing as the laws of gravity and thermodynamics." In our time, he thinks, "such evidence has accumulated as to suggest that it may be an absolute law: Love one another or die, individually and as a species."

What stands in the way of acceptance of this idea? Only, it may be, Berry proposes, the passage of time. In that case—

the difference between that law and a physical law such as the law of gravity is only a difference in the proximity of cause to effect. If I step off the roof, I will fall *immediately;* if, in this age of nuclear weapons, toxic chemicals, rampant destruction of soil, etc., we do not love one another, we or our children will suffer for it *sometime.* It is a critical difference, for it explains why people who do not ever willingly step off a roof will fearlessly regard their neighbors as enemies or competitors or economic victims. The uncertainty of the term between offense and punishment licenses all our viciousness, foolishness, and pride. Though most of us know that it is moral law—which is finally apt to look suspiciously like natural law—that visits our sins upon our children (and other people's children), still, to the worst side of our nature, deferred justice is no justice; we will rape the land and oppress the poor, and leave starvation and bloody vengeance (we hope)

to be "surprises" or "acts of God" to a later generation.

The moral law, in short, is easily doubted or denied by some, and less comfortably by others, although still neglected and let go. Materialism is the doctrine that there is nothing like a moral law, although if we look at the origins of materialism in history we soon see that its claims grew up on a moral ground—the contention that priestly interpretation of the moral law, or rather "God's will," had led to unspeakable injustice and oppression of the common people. As Bertrand Russell put it in his introduction to Frederick Lange's *History of Materialism* (1925):

> Historically, we may regard materialism as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked. They were in the position of men who raise armies to enforce peace. Accordingly we find that, as ancient orthodoxies disintegrate, materialism more and more gives way to scepticism.

If we accept this account of materialistic negation of moral law, we are enabled to understand somewhat the revival of the concept in the present. There are, it seems, only two reasons for rejecting it. One is the sway in human life of personal selfishness and the determination to get what we can while the getting is good. The other support for denying or ignoring the idea of moral law is the doctrine that the pursuit of self-interest is a natural rule of human life. The natural man, it has been widely believed, is an aggressively acquisitive being, and while the eighteenth-century formulators of this doctrine were by no means atheists or unbelievers, their ideas were later reinforced by the "naked ape" theory of evolution.

Today, time and untoward events have been wearing away at these beliefs, with the result that the idea of a moral order is once more gaining attention. We are becoming very largely a race of frightened humans, at the same time disliking intensely the various messes aggressive self-interest has made of the world. So people are asking, as is common enough in a time of trouble, Is there, after all, a moral law, and if so, what must we do to restore our faith in it, in order to lead more intelligent lives?

One other factor should have consideration. Wendell Berry showed in his analysis that the time lapse between moral cause and effect leads people to act in ways that self-interest would prevent if they were able to anticipate the long-term results of what they are doing. There are plenty of illustrations of this short-sightedness in even the area of physical or biological law. Diabetics learn to their sorrow, in middle or late life, that what they have been eating has at last produced an incurable disease. The same lesson may come to excessive smokers and other consistent abusers of their organisms. One who through study and observation has learned the laws of health adopts restraints and practices which take the time-lapse into consideration, realizing that its passage does not alter the effect of ill-advised action: sooner or later, sickness or disease will come. This is a way of suggesting that the moral law, if indeed it exists, is better understood by people with foresight than by those wholly taken up with enjoyments in the present.

This question—and argument—will doubtless continue for centuries. Yet examining it is always timely and useful. The most fruitful inquiries seem to be, not the ones which tell us why we ought to believe in the moral law, but the studies which show why it is not universally accepted. Berry's explanation—that time gets in the way of seeing the law work—is certainly helpful, in effect a commentary on the mythic meaning of the story of Prometheus, the god of foresight, and of his brother, Epimetheus, who had only hindsight, more or less like ourselves.

But there is another reason why the moral law is unattended to—the reason given by Dostoevsky through the voice of the Grand Inquisitor. When, in his story or legend of the return of Christ to earth in the sixteenth century, in Seville, in which Christ is arrested and imprisoned by the Cardinal in charge of burning heretics at the stake, Ivan has his cell visited by the Grand Inquisitor, who comes, not to recognize the spiritual teacher or Son of God, but to point out to him the terrible mistake that he made during his earlier time on earth. In three pages of lucid prose,

in *Harper's* for last October, Benjamin DeMott gives the substance of the Inquisitor's charge:

> The crux of the indictment is the assertion that Christ cruelly overestimated the intelligence of ordinary mankind. Most men and women "are only pitiful children." Christ's promise of a truth that would set us free—free of material desire, tribal idols, conventional wisdom, pragmatic realism—is too demanding and therefore intolerable. No craving is stronger in us than the craving for the loss of individuality. We seek disappearance into the herd, and no wish is less controllable in us than our wish for dependence. Hence the fate of rulers forced by historical accident into public adherence to Christian doctrine. They have no choice but to realize its fatuity and to set about, as secret unbelievers, to make it an instrument of the state. The Inquisitor and his colleagues will meet the human longing for bread, miracle, mystery, and authority—the human hunger for figures close at hand to whom supernatural powers can be attributed. Christians will be taught to bow down to churchmen and adulate superstition. "They will become timid," says the Inquisitor. They will "look to us in fear as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awestricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful. . . . We shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin."

Mr. DeMott goes behind the form of the indictment to an aspect of its hidden substance:

> The Grand Inquisitor speaks with assured irony, but behind his voice we feel the presence of his inventor, Ivan Karamazov—a soul desperately anguished by loss of faith, desperately unwilling to admit the anguish. All the psychological complexity of nonautomatic atheism comes into view. We glimpse the connection between unbelief and the awareness of unusual intellectual powers; we grasp the thinker's need to distance himself from the faithful, whose religious commitments are fundamentally mindless. Terrible questions rack Ivan's conscience: Is my unbelief merely intellectual pride? Is it possible that my loss of faith is only a gesture of distaste for my inferiors? What's the difference between genuine intellectual alienation and the mere taunting of the uneducated? If there is no difference, and if I'm capable of recognizing that, why can't I shed my arrogance? Karamazov wrestles with guilt, struggles to reach some plateau from which to compose a view of his own pain. But no such plateau exists. Feeling its absence, the reader has a seizing intuition of the costs of the deprivation.
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> An immense achievement: the transformation of an experience one might have thought one couldn't take seriously into a passion that matters overwhelmingly.

Thus Dostoevsky's great novel becomes a realistic account of the human situation or condition—realistic in the full meaning of the term, since it includes the longing of aspiration, the higher hungers which come to the surface during times of private revery. Mr. DeMott finds still more in the novel—a quality which balances the stark discouragement of the historical situation.

> A chapter called "An Onion" shows us an irradiating burst of moral glory in a creature hitherto degraded—a person resembling the normal stumbling humanity so depressingly portrayed by the Inquisitor. But we don't experience any of this as counter-argument. We experience it as an entrance into the grainy, moment-to-moment dawning, within a human creature, of the possibility of living "in faith" *without* dependence upon miracle and mystery; we discover, breathtakingly, what it would be like to break through, by the use of mind and sympathy, to the truth and freedom Christ promised. . . .
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> And always, astonishingly, with the book in your hands, : you feel you're up to it. The book insists that you can do it no sweat. You're equal to this, says its voice. . . . I'm saying, in sum, that what counts about Dostoevsky's "richness of discourse" is that it enormously expands a reader's reach.

Which seems ample justification for Freud's belief that *The Brothers Karamazov* is "the most magnificent novel ever written."

REVIEW
ON AVOIDABLE ILLS

IF we have—or are—a sick society, then it follows that the professionals who concern themselves with healing will be confronted by a series of particular ills that may have been rare or even nonexistent say a hundred years ago, when the people of the country may be said to have enjoyed a more natural health. The books written about these troublesome and initially mysterious afflictions are scary to read—so *many* things can now go wrong with us, it seems—yet for those who don't feel at all well, and can find no ordinary explanation of their trouble, such books may prove of great value. There is the further consideration that a growing number of our present-day ills are of a sort that cannot really be helped without the understanding and determination of the patient. This is an epoch in which, it may be, we must all learn and practice self-reliance simply in order to survive. Good books often illuminate the question of what self-reliance means.

We have for review two such books, both from the same publisher, Jeremy Tarcher, Inc., in Los Angeles. One is called *Detox*, by Phyllis Saifer, M.D., and Merla Zellerbach, a journalist ($13.95). The idea of the book is how to remove or reduce the poisons in our environment so that they affect us less or not at all. The broad approach to this undertaking is given in the Introduction:

> It is now a fact that harmful substances are everywhere: in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the fresh vegetables we eat, and the clothes we wear. The environment once so familiar and trustworthy, is becoming a stranger as toxic chemicals permeate our atmosphere, lakes, oceans, and soil.

The industrial offenders presumably responsible for this pollution tend to say, when confronted with charges, that "no one really knows" the causes of the pollution and more research is needed; and so, in many cases—such as, for example, the blight of acid rain—the pollution continues, perhaps until it gets so bad that remedies, if then applied, will have come too late. The Introduction goes on:

> In recent years, doctors, scientists, and nutritionists have begun to realize that common physical and mental complaints, ranging in magnitude from chronic headaches and irritability to immune system deficiencies and depression, are often the result of an accumulation of these toxic substances in the body. The enormous strides made in symptom diagnosis have also found that the causes of toxicity are increasing. A toxin may be as common as the nicotine in a cigarette and the caffeine in a cup of coffee or as subtle as the traces of pesticide in tobacco crops and the gas used to roast the coffee beans. Chemical contamination is so widespread that simply cutting down on food additives is no longer enough to maintain good health.

The first chapter of this book begins:

> Doctors are often amazed at the number of people who tolerate or ignore mildly unpleasant symptoms. These individuals think that everyone is drowsy after meals, wakes up with a slight headache, or feels claustrophobic around smokers. Because their suffering is neither severe nor disabling, they shrug off minor ailments as too insignificant to treat. Afraid of being called complainers or hypochondriacs, they make little or no effort to seek treatment for or to determine the source of their symptoms. The result is a large population of semihealthy citizens suffering from a variety of avoidable illnesses from a myriad of avoidable causes.

We have space for only a brief account of the kind of illnesses the authors are talking about. They say:

> Recent scientific research has shown that both natural and synthetic chemicals directly affect our well-being; for instance, many "hopeless" mental disorders such as depression and schizophrenia have been magically "cured" by the simple removal of a food or one of its ingredients. "Untreatable" rashes suddenly disappear when the sufferer stops taking aspirin, moves to a different area, or changes hairdressers and escapes a toxic spray or shampoo.

On the matter of mental disorders being caused by an element in food, we asked a psychiatrist and neuropathologist his opinion, and he said that such cases exist but are by no means

common. In general, then, the statements in this book seem reasonably reliable and if a person feels poorly too much of the time he or she may find the reason from reading of this sort. On the other hand, we can well understand why so many people ignore minor symptoms; "going to doctors" for every little thing is also a sort of disease, and material which warns us about so many threats to health can become obsessive unless reading it is accompanied by good judgment. We remember the excellent advice an old doctor gave to a friend who was, with his wife and child, living on a mountainside far from any hospital, and who decided to deliver the new baby that was on the way. The doctor lent him a big book, told him what to read in it, but also what *not* to read, which was the section on pathology. "Read that," he said, "and you'll just give yourself nightmares about things you won't be able to do a thing about." Well, the father took the advice, but after the birth read the section on hemorrhaging, since the mother seemed to be bleeding a little too much. All he learned was that, as the doctor predicted, he couldn't do anything about a real hemorrhage, since only a transfusion would help. So he had his nightmare, but everything finally came out well, and the new child was the veritable picture of health.

Readers who are skeptical of claims that new poisons are now entering our food should watch the news for stories like the one we happened to read in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* for last Sept. 16. The report was in the *Washington Post* section of the *Guardian* and began:

> Widespread use of antibiotics to stimulate growth of food animals is a major source of serious, sometimes fatal, disease in humans, according to researchers from the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and health departments in two states.
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> Their new study has demonstrated conclusively for the first time that feeding antibiotics to beef and dairy cattle, hogs and poultry breeds a novel form of microbe that can later infect humans.

The report gets specific, saying that the researchers "found that bacteria resistant to antibiotic drugs caused serious intestinal illnesses in people who had eaten hamburger that came from farm animals in South Dakota." It took a year to make this discovery, which grew out of the ills of eighteen people, eleven of whom were hospitalized for an average of eight days. The investigation began after Minnesota health officials noticed an increase in such intestinal infections and asked for help from the Centers for Disease Control. The patients in the case were all infected with a particular form of salmonella bacteria shown to be resistant to three antibiotic drugs. The only thing the patients had in common was "that they had eaten hamburger meat in the week before becoming ill." The researchers tracked the source of this hamburger, finding that all the Minnesota patients had purchased in supermarkets beef which came from South Dakota. The story notes that scientists have long suspected that infection could result for humans from using antibiotic drugs to stimulate growth, but that this has been difficult to prove. Years ago the FDA sought to restrict use of such antibiotics, but the attempt was over-ruled by Congress, which asked for "more data." Now, it seems, the "data" are available. (The *Washington Post* writer of this article is Cristine Russell.)

What we say here about the other Tarcher book—*Freedom from Chronic Disease,* by Arthur L. Kaslow, M.D., and Richard B. Miles (paperback, $7.95)—will be largely an act of faith, since we have no more knowledge of the practice of medicine than most other laymen. Yet there is a reason—what seems a good one—for the faith. The book is a deliberate and self-conscious part of one of the best movements of the times—the movement toward self-reliance and personal responsibility in health. In his practice Dr. Kaslow relies entirely on his knowledge of nutrition and the response of the human body to foods of different sorts. He does not use drugs. Doctors of this persuasion require patients who are ready and willing to get well themselves, with the

persuasion and guidance of an experienced nutritionist. Dr. Kaslow's work, as the book put it, "is designed to educate the individual on how to build his or her own health and is not intended to treat a disease."

> There are no drugs and no expensive and prolonged treatments. Nor is there a continuing dependency on medical professionals who may deprive you of your sense of destiny and self-control. Instead, there are simple procedures you can learn to undertake by yourself. Your future is now in your hands. Many of the simple concepts and exercises in this book can show you how to achieve freedom from your pains and illnesses.

The book proposes that we begin to see "the amazing inner wisdom of the human body in a new light."

> Based on experience with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, smallpox, diptheria, and malaria, we came to believe that *all* diseases were caused by invasion from outside. Experience at the Kaslow Center indicates that chronic and degenerative diseases (for example, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, cardiovascular disorders, diabetes) are more likely caused by long-term distortions of the body's built-in self-regulation systems. . . . achieving health is simple. It involves supporting the natural self-regulating and self-healing systems of the body that *already know how to correct the disease.*

A fundamental of this program is that each human has individual needs in nutrition which may be different from the needs of others. Dr. Kaslow has worked out a method of finding out what those needs are, through a series of tests or experiments which show what the body accepts and what it rejects. There seems a great deal of common sense in this volume.

COMMENTARY
A CONTRAST

How do we stack up in relation to the idea of moral law? An answer to this question would be easy if we had for comparison a population of some size in which confidence in moral law is paramount; but we don't; at least, not any more. Yet such populations have existed.

In *The Primitive World and its Transformations* Robert Redfield wrote that primitive man believed in and lived by the moral order, regarding the laws of nature as "part of the same moral system in which man and the affairs between men also find themselves," in which "man's action with regard to nature are limited by notions of inherent, not expedient, rightness." Laura Thompson, in *The Hopi Way,* says that the Hopi Indians regard the world as under "the universal system of interdependency," in which the individual has an active role, imposing on him "a high degree of personal responsibility." The Buddhist people of Burma in the last century, described by Fielding Hall in *The Soul of a People,* lived according to their understanding of the law of Karma, which is the moral law. Each village, he said, "managed its own affairs, untroubled by squire or priest, very little troubled by the state. . . . They taxed themselves without friction, they built their own monastery schools by voluntary effort. They maintained a very high, very simple code of morals, entirely of their own initiative." The Buddhist priests never told anyone what to do, but repeated the teaching of Karma, leaving decision to each individual. One escaped from the moral law no more than he could escape from gravitation. This created habits of self-reliance and personal responsibility. Each one makes his own life and future. The situation into which one is born was created by himself—this presented no difficulty for the Buddhist peasants, who were and doubtless are, reincarnationists. In short, the social and personal fruits of strong belief in moral law are impressive, as these and many other books show.

What happens to societies which, due to theological abuse, have ceased to believe in the law? They produce grand inquisitors, expect confidence men who claim to love the people and keep them weak so that their behavior has external control. Such rulers demand an atomistic society and oppose self-reliance by whatever means they can find.

Yet a feeling that moral law exists cannot be erased, only weakened, by materialistic denial. Evidence of faith in this law keeps coming to the surface, especially in those who labor for the good of others. They don't pretend that they understand the subtleties of the law's operation, but are convinced that, in the long run, it works.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY

PAIDEIA is the word used by the ancient Greeks to describe the function of the community as *teacher*. They, or at least some of them, recognized that unless the whole community exercises a beneficent influence on the young, talk of education tends to become empty and meaningless. This is increasingly true of the present, when the most powerful and influential institutions of the time are so largely anti-human and therefore anti-educational. We remember, for example, the comment of a spokesman for an agency in New York that was attempting to give young people in trouble with the law a new start, by gaining them probation to some kind of job instead of a jail or prison sentence. The agency found the jobs, but soon discovered that the youth they were trying to help had little or no idea of what it meant to work for a living. They were late getting to work, careless at what they were doing, and too easily discouraged. A fundamental problem was that for a great many of them living in the inner city, the only "successful people" they ever saw on the streets were pimps and numbers runners. Heroic efforts were made to overcome these disadvantages, but after ten years or so the agency felt it was time to give up. They couldn't accomplish much of anything against: such odds.

The middle class environment is of course "nicer," but is it really a great deal better? For the answer to this question, John Holt may be the best consultant. For years he taught the early grades in middle class schools, eventually to give up on education of this sort, devoting his considerable energy and capacity for invention to the teach-your-children-at-home movement. This amounts to an attempt by parents to create their own, small-scale *paideia*, not hermetically sealed off from the outside world—which would be impossible—but surroundings generated by the family in which good qualities can have a chance at natural development.

Teaching children and building community are very closely related. People, after all, are grown-up children and susceptible to the same sort of influences, good and bad. Community-building, too, begins in the family, in the home. The journals devoted to a better, more natural life are increasingly concerned with such ideas. For example, *Rain*, now in its tenth volume, has an opening editorial which says:

> To build better cities, you build better communities, to build better communities, you start at home. You begin with your own life and circle outward. You build connections between your life and your community, your life and nature. Making things better always comes down to personal experience and personal responsibility.

The writer, Tanya Kucak, present editor of *Rain*, turns to the part played by art in this development, since she writes in an issue devoted to art—the September/October number of last year. She says:

> We're not going to define art here because that's not what we're talking about; rather, we're concerned with *art in everyday life*, which means participating in the cultural life of your own community. It means living in such a way that integration, durability, aesthetics, play, and connection with nature are paramount. Here are the elements of that vision:
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> *Integration:* Art is not separate from life, but an integral part of life. Artistic expression forms part of whatever else one does. Actor Peter Coyote, writing in the July 1984 *New Age Journal*, says, "In the less 'developed' cultures, there is no separation between art and everyday life, between art and community life. Whether they are making a pot, weaving a mat, building a house, or deciding where to plant, average people are empowered with the means and tools and imagination for artistic expression."

In another article, Tanya Kucak takes a passage from Austin Wright's novel, *Islandia* (1975), a wonderful place without industry where everything is well made by hand. She says:

> At one point in the novel, an American visitor to Islandia tries to convince an Islandian that the country would be better off with railroads and mines. The Islandian explains: "If we go on here as we have been, and are let alone, life hundreds of years from now will be as it is now, and life now with growing things all about us and changing weather and lovely places kept beautiful and new people growing up, is

> too rich for us already, too rich for us to endure sometimes. We haven't half exhausted it, and we cannot so long as young people are born and grow up and learn new things and have new ideas. All that is to us the vital thing . . . and the change foreigners propose—railroads to carry us about, new machines to till the soil, electric lights, and all that—are just superficial things, and not worth the price we have to pay for them in exchanging our whole way of living, in threatening our children with the chance of ruin!"

Next comes a sketch of the life of William Morris—more and more regarded as a prophet who anticipated the discoveries of our own time and showed what to do.

> In William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), people spend their time creating useful and beautiful artifacts, which, they give to each other freely whenever asked. People live close to the land. Morris decried the erects of industrialization on society and espoused socialism. His vision was of a post-industrial, post-revolutionary society where everyone shares the dreary work and there are no machines.
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> This was the vision that Morris (1834-96) tried to realize in his work. He went to Oxford to study for the Anglican priesthood, but upon reading John Ruskin's essay on "The Nature of the Gothic," he decided the way to save souls was through art. In that essay, Ruskin taught that "art is the expression of man's pleasure in labor." (Ruskin also wrote *Unto This Last*, a book that Gandhi held responsible for "the turning point in my life.")

Rain is published six times a year from 3116 North Williams, Portland, Oregon 97227. Subscription is $9.50 a year. *Rain* is a paper that helps to give coherence, continuity, and development to the good ideas and practices that are generally emerging around the country in behalf of a more intelligent, friendly, and peaceful way of life. It is rich in resource materials along these lines, with an ecological emphasis.

William Morris called his Utopia *News from Nowhere.* Today we know from the sketches of the lives of a few isolated peoples that such conceptions of idyllic community life are not all imaginative but have been realized somewhere—bearing out the validity, you could say, of Arthur Morgan's book about Utopias, *Nowhere Was Somewhere.* In evidence one might recall J. I. Rodale's *The Healthy Hunzas* (Rodale Press, 1948), a book about the small Asian nation of people who have no diseases and live to a ripe old age. Then, more recently, in *Resurgence* for July/August of last year, Helena Norberg-Hodge tells about life in Ladakh, a part of Kashmir where the language is a Tibetan dialect and the religion is Buddhism. Visiting there as a linguist on an anthropological project ten years ago, she became fascinated by the Ladakhi culture and stayed there to live. In the *Resurgence* interview she said:

> This was one of the very few places in the world that had really stayed outside of Western industrial influences and a place which demonstrated in quite a dramatic way that human beings could live at a surprisingly comfortable level without the technological gadgets that we have grown dependent on in Western societies. In spite of the fact that this was one of the most difficult environments anywhere in the world, the Ladakhis were managing to feed, clothe and house themselves, yet a lot of educated people including Ladakhis themselves thought the Ladakhis were backward.

She pointed out to them that they already had achieved what an increasing number of Westerners were looking for—a happy, harmonious, and satisfying way of life. It is a "culture without violence. The people here are among the happiest people I have ever encountered anywhere." She goes on:

> I believe it is a whole way of life and many variables coming together that make it possible: their world view, myths and values, the way they treat their children, the way they live close to the earth and in harmony with nature. The Ladakhis have been able to evolve a way of life in which they work with their natural environment in a cooperative way to ensure adequate food, clothing and shelter, generation after generation. They have enough and ask for no more.

The work Helena Norberg-Hodge has undertaken is to help the Ladhakhis to realize that they have already gained in practice the principles that are now being outlined in the West as "essential foundations for a sustainable society." She is saying in effect, "Don't copy us; let us copy you."

FRONTIERS

Some "Stirrings" in America

HOW do worldwide changes in human attitudes, and then in behavior, take place? The question is important since, as anyone can see, the present is very much in need of such a change. For one ready for extensive study, the great awakenings known to us as the Renaissance and the Reformation would supply materials, but mainly we would probably find out that in the case of both these changes—which were of course related—there was a great hunger in people to begin to think for themselves in independent ways, and there were also courageous and articulate individuals who became leaders of one or another sort, spreading new ideas and challenging established authority. Something similar could be said of the revolutions in Europe and America during the eighteenth century, and a comparison of the French and the American Revolutions would also prove instructive. Hannah Arendt, making this comparison in *On Revolution* (Viking, 1963), remarks:

> It is odd indeed to see that twentieth-century American even more than European learned opinion is often inclined to interpret the American Revolution in the light of the French Revolution, or to criticize it because it so obviously did not conform to the lessons learned from the latter. The sad truth of the matter is that the French Revolution, which ended in disaster, has made world history, while the American Revolution, so triumphantly successful, has remained an event of little more than local importance.

Are we getting ready, today, for some kind of great change that might be termed "revolutionary"? The one thing that we do learn from history is that such changes have small beginnings, seldom recognized for what they eventually become. So we might here have a brief look at some of the "stirrings" now going on, happenings that would hardly be noticed at all, were it not for the efforts of some thoughtful journalists.

For example, last fall Tristram Coffin, editor of the *Wasthngton Spectator,* devoted nearly all of one issue (Sept. 15) to the subject of "Missionaries for Peace," individuals who have been aroused to work almost full time for putting an end to war. "They are," this writer says, "men and women working at the grass roots of America—clergymen, scientists, retired military officers, physicians and hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens" who "do not believe that might makes right; they argue that with the hydrogen bomb and intercontinental missile, war is suicidal."

Coffin tells of a peace vigil held weekly in a small Connecticut town, and relates that in Los Angeles "some 40 former employees of military-contract firms speak against nuclear war at colleges and work for conversion to civilian products." Disarmament Now, in Wisconsin, is urging banks to invest in "peace" activities and not to fund nuclear weapons contractors. Some Minnesota women went to England to join with women protesters against the deployment of cruise missiles at Greenham Common. Stockholders in the Martin Marietta Corp. denounced "building death and destruction" at the company's annual meeting in Baltimore. Coffin describes at some length the "Beyond War" movement which had its beginning in a converted body and fender shop in Palo Alto, Calif. This group hopes "to change basic American thinking about war and peace."

> Beyond War bases much of its planning on studies which show that if 5% of the people take up an idea, it is embedded firmly in the society. If 20% agree, the idea can no more be halted than could Rome stop Christianity. Actually, abolition of slavery began as a small movement of outraged citizens, mainly in New England, spreading into churches, public forums, and through newspapers.

In every community, it seems, people can be found who are ready to work for peace. Beyond War is helping to train "communicators" able to spread this idea. Coflin describes the thinking:

> A guiding principle is passed on at each meeting: We must accept that war is obsolete. The same process of discovery that has led science and technology to develop weapons of annihilation has also produced the possibility of new ways to relate to other nations, other cultures, other peoples. Technology has moved beyond war. What we must now move beyond war is the human mind."
>
> This credo was inspired by Albert Einstein, who said in 1945: The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

A paragraph in *Washington Spectator* among various news notes based on the findings of the Census:

> The 4.5 million increase in the foreign-born population in the 1970s was the largest one-decade growth in American history. Most undocumented aliens counted in the 1980 census—about 57%—have been here for at least five years. Only one in eight is 40 years or older.

This will introduce the beginning of another sort of change in spirit and attitude in the United States. While the undocumented aliens referred to in the *Washington Spectator* were mostly people who crossed the border in order to find work, today there is another sort, people who flee to this country in order to avoid torture and death. The *Catholic Agitator* for last August, in an issue devoted to "Sacred Sanctuaries," presents several reports on the ways in which U.S. church congregations have undertaken to offer hope to refugees from Central America. The *Agitator* editor, Jeff Dietrich, provides an interview with the Rev. John Fife, a Presbyterian pastor in Tucson, Arizona, identified as the founder of the sanctuary movement (in 1981), who, with members of his congregation, began helping undocumented people with legal assistance, but soon realized that this was ineffectual. Then his church decided to become a sanctuary for refugees, which in time led to prosecutions of three persons by the Immigration Naturalization Service.

Asked about historical precedents for this movement, Fife said:

> One was, of course, the underground railroad of the Abolition Movement in the 1830s and 40s. Church history has determined the activities of this movement to be highly moral and ethical in the face of threats from civil authorities. Secondly, and most important to me personally, was my memories of the failures of the church in Europe to provide sanctuary to Jewish refugees in the 1930S and 40s. That was very much a personal memory of mine, because I have talked with Jewish refugees and numbers of Christian pastors from Germany, France and Switzerland who had either acted or failed to act in the midst of that crisis. So I was personally familiar with that piece of church history, and quite frankly one of my motivations was to say, "We are not going to fail this time around like the church failed so badly in the 1930s and 40s."

The sanctuary movement, Dr. Eife says, now involves 150 congregations, "Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, *public* sanctuaries." He adds: "Of course' there are many many more that are not public." The public sanctuaries are only a third of the total.

Another article gives the names of persons deported from Los Angeles to El Salvador, who were later killed. A paragraph tells what the deportees may expect on being sent home:

> Last year, 3,175 Salvadorans were deported by plane to El Salvador. Upon arrival they were questioned; police maintained lists. In response to public concern the United States embassy surveyed 500 of the returned refugees, investigators could find only half. In a nation where 50,000 people have been murdered in the past four years, return means certain suffering, and the very real possibility of torture, imprisonment, disappearance or death.

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