

A LONG WAY TO GO

ALL men desire peace," said Thomas à Kempis some five hundred years ago, adding that "few men desire those things that make for peace." This seems to cover practically everything that can be said about putting an end to war. Yet it has had little effect on behavior, the reason, no doubt, being the obscurity of the connection between moral causes and political effects. It might reduce that obscurity to turn his saying around: "Few men desire war, but (nearly) all men desire those things that make for war." This doesn't change the meaning of what à Kempis said, but it makes specific criticism easier. That is, it seems easier to trace the bad effects of bad causes than it is to trace good causes to good results. Consider medicine. There are countless fairly precise definitions of diseases, which are blamed on germs, heredity, and poor personal habits, but health remains a mystery. Health is "holistic" and described mostly by slogans, while bodily ills have particular symptoms which can be noted and often tracked to particular causes. As the British physician, G.T. Wrench, has put it: "We make no studies of the healthy—only the sick."

There is a reason for this. Sickness attracts attention; health, when you have it, enables you not to have to think about it. Of course, exceptional individuals—perhaps philosophical individuals—give instinctive or intuitive attention to the laws of health (whatever they are) and so are more free from disease. Their counsels, however, when they are willing to make them, are so general that professional doctors ignore them. "That isn't scientific," the conventionally trained physician says. "It isn't based on experiment," he says, and he is right; it is based on good life and good health, for which there are no definitions, only splendid generalizations.

In a good society, a society of people who are philosophically inclined, the generalizations would

be enough. The people would see the point and conduct their lives in ways that make for health—and peace. For us they are not enough. A sick society is used to being given particulars, having things spelt out for getting rid of particular evils, obtaining particular goods. Most books supposed to be on health are actually about diseases, as the index will show. Still, there are a few fine books on health by doctors who sought out healthy people, noted how they lived (as well as where), and most of all what they ate. The consensus of such authors has been that the Hunzas of India (now Pakistan), who number about six thousand and live in a sunny valley seven miles long, between cliffs as high as 15,000 feet, are the healthiest people in the world. The noted nutritionist, Robert McCarrison, told his colleagues in medicine that the Hunzas have practically no diseases because of what they eat and the way they raise their food. J. I. Rodale (founder of *Organic Gardening*) wrote *The Healthy Hunzas* to celebrate their achievement. So, in the area of health, we do have people whom we could study, and books like *The Wheel of Health* (Schocken) by Dr. G. T. Wrench, on the sources of the Hunzas' long life and health bring home to us what we need to know. Unfortunately, not very many people read them.

But what has this to do with peace? Years ago, one of the American visitors to the Hunza Valley asked their ruler, known as the *Mir*, why they were left alone by their more powerful neighbors. He smiled and said, "We are a society of *just enough*." Explaining, he said that while the Hunzas had great health, they had little wealth. No one had sufficient reason to want to conquer them for spoils. There weren't any. It is the rich countries that provoke wars, from fear of being poorer or wanting to be richer. All things being equal, then, if you want to live at peace, become

or stay poor. But no one wants to be poor! Well, as Thomas à Kempis warned, few men desire those things that make for peace. There must, people say, be another way. Why can't we be peaceful *and* prosperous?

Perhaps we can, but it's necessary to add another rule—no peace without justice. We, of course, *believe* in justice. But to get peace by *doing* justice is, as all the prosperous nations agree, too expensive. And they insist that there must be another way, which comes down to having more bombs.

An example of this way is examined by two writers for last year's May-June *Gandhi Marg*, who, discussing conventional attempts at disarmament, remark that "the pith and substance of the disarmament movement is to further expand the industrial growth in the industrialized countries," using for modernization the funds which would be saved by cutting down on armament manufacture. They also say:

War is a dreadful thing. But what is still more dreadful are those forces, institutions, values, and lifestyles which make war inevitable. What use is the effort at stamping out the immediate nuclear war, only to fall back into the laps of such forces which generate and thrive on exploitation and violence, and which will therefore make us prepare for another war, maybe conventional, but surely on Third-World territory?

They conclude:

Lastly, it should be obvious to anyone that the leadership in the industrial countries is not opposed to war so much as it is scared of a *sudden war*. Indeed, they consider war not only as an effective but also as a legitimate means to realize their hegemonic ambitions. But they are very apprehensive and somewhat allergic to the possibilities of *war by accidents*. Their support to disarmament, therefore, is actually an attempt to *license war*; that is, to have an agreement on the ground rules of war.

"Hegemonic ambitions" need amplification, and Seymour Hersh provides it in the *Atlantic* for last December. Preparing his readers for the story of America's intervention in the affairs of Chile, he writes:

Chile was a world leader in the mining of copper, but 80 per cent of its production—60 per cent of all exports from Chile—was in the hands of large corporations mostly controlled by U.S. firms, most prominently Anaconda and Kennecott Copper. Profits for the American firms were enormous: during the 1960s, for example, Anaconda earned \$500 million on its investments—generously estimated by the company at \$300 million—inside Chile, where it operated the largest open-pit copper mine in the world. The most significant threat to Chilean democracy, in the view of American policy-makers, was Allende, a member of the Socialist Party. . . . National concern over the disparity of income was especially critical to Allende's campaigns: by 1968, studies showed that the 28.3 per cent of the Chilean people at the bottom of the economic scale took in 4.8 per cent of the national income, while the 2 per cent of the population at the top received 45.9 per cent of the income.

In September, 1970, Allende became the president of Chile, and Mr. Hersh reports in detail the anxious and angry response of the leaders of the U.S. Government. "There is compelling evidence," Hersh says, "that Nixon's tough stance in 1970 was predominantly shaped by his concern for the future of the American corporations whose assets, he believed, would be seized by the Allende government," and the President, he adds, gave the CIA "a blank check to move against Allende." A young naval secretary in the White House National Security Staff is quoted concerning plans to prevent Allende from assuming office as president of Chile, including an assassination proposal. "I realized," he said, "that my government actively was involved in planning to kill people." Hersh later remarks: "Talk about assassination was not as traumatic inside the White House in 1969 and 1970 as it would become five years later, at the height of the domestic uproar over revelations of the CIA's assassination attempts against Castro, Patrice Lumumba, of the Congo, and Rafael Trujillo, of the Dominican Republic." In his conclusion the *Atlantic* writer says: "There is no evidence that the CIA played a direct role in the Allende coup, nor is there evidence that the Nixon administration was involved—through third parties—in Allende's

death," but he quotes a White House memorandum in which, "In essence, Nixon had authorized an economic death knell for Chile." This policy was adopted despite the fact that—

. . . intelligence agencies, while quick to condemn the spread of Marxism in Latin America, reported that Allende posed no threat to national security. Three days after the election, the CIA told the White House in a formal Intelligence Memorandum that, as summarized by the Senate Intelligence Committee, the United States "had no vital interests within Chile, the world military balance of power would not be significantly altered by an Allende regime, and an Allende victory in Chile would not pose any likely threat to the peace of the region."

It becomes obvious from Seymour Hersh's article, titled "The Price of Power," that concern for the interests of the multinational companies was the basis for American foreign policy in relation to Chile. This was the use made of the sovereign power of the United States. What was Allende's offense? He was a member of the Socialist Party, and advocated land reform, "nationalization of major industries (especially copper), closer relations with socialist and communist countries, and redistribution of income." These were the measures found menacing by American officials and diplomats.

In *The Fate of the Earth* Jonathan Schell considers the role of national power in relation to the nuclear armaments race. The plain fact, he said, is that "the nuclear powers put a higher value on national sovereignty than they do on human survival."

The terms of the deal that the world has now struck with itself must be made clear. On the one side stands a particular organization of human life—the system of independent, sovereign national states. Our choice so far has been to preserve that political organization of human life at the cost of risking all human life. We are told that "realism" compels us to preserve the system of sovereignty. But that political realism is not biological realism; it is biological nihilism—and for that reason is, of course, political nihilism, too. It is nihilism in every conceivable sense of the word.

Why is sovereignty so important? Obviously, a people without sovereignty is likely to remain poor—that is, they will be reduced to a society which has "just enough." It is more than coincidence that the most serious and thoughtful of the peace-makers of our time—the Gandhians, the communitarians, the colleagues and supporters of Danilo Dolci, the followers of E.F. Schumacher, some Quakers and other pacifists—give particular attention to defining "enough." There is enough in the world, Gandhi said, to satisfy everyone's need, but not everyone's greed.

In a booklet of 120 pages issued by the Navajivan Trust (Ahmedabad) in 1966, the editor, R. K. Prabuh, collected passages from Gandhi's writings under the title *Industrialize and Perish!* The introductory note by the publishers says:

The title of the book conveys its contents. It may be recalled that a last solemn warning, so to say, to India and through India to the world was uttered by Mahatma Gandhi in a letter addressed by him to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in October, 1945. In this letter he declared that the reckless urbanization of civilization which is proceeding apace all over the world, including India, constitutes a serious menace to the progress of mankind, since in the crowded cities people will never be able to live in peace with one another without resort to violence and untruth, that nonviolence and truth can be realized only in the simplicity of village life and that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. He maintained that it is possible for all man's real needs, material and spiritual, to be met in villages, suitably remodelled in the light of modern science. Such remodelling of villages, therefore, is the only means to avoid the menace of reckless industrialization and the modern cities which are its brood.

Did Gandhi exaggerate? No fair-minded reader will think so. At the beginning of the booklet Gandhi says (in quotations from various sources which nonetheless have a continuous flow of meaning):

I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization. At best they are a necessary evil. Neither adds one inch to the

moral stature of a nation. Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts much as I regard it as a "consummation devoutly to be wished for." Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills. It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for.

If I preach against the modern artificial life of sensual enjoyment, and ask men and women to go back to the simple life epitomized in Charkha [spinning wheel], I do so because I know that without an intelligent return to simplicity, there is no escape from our descent to a state lower than brutality.

A time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say, "What have we done?"

While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be re clothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all, every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world.

There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilization and the city civilization are totally different things. One depends on machinery and industrialization, the other rests on handicraft.

After all, this industrialization and large-scale production was only of comparatively recent growth. We do not know how far it has contributed to our development and happiness, but we know this much—that it has brought in its wake recent world wars. This second world war is still not over and even before it comes to an end we are hearing of a third world war. Our country was never so unhappy and miserable as it is at present. In the cities people may be getting big profits and good wages, but all that has become possible by sucking the blood of the villages. It is the city man who is responsible for war all over the world, never the villager.

In a passage at the end of the book (selections set down in the 1920s), Gandhi wrote:

Our civilization, our culture, our Swaraj [self-rule] depend upon not multiplying our wants—self-indulgence—but upon restricting our wants—self-denial.

I am humble enough to admit, there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the West. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. My resistance to Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asiatics are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West. I do believe that if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilization which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and progress of the world.

My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation.

While Gandhi was still alive (he died in 1948) his Indian colleagues set to work making plans for revived and refashioned village life, using, where needed, the knowledge and skills of science. In 1946, J.C. Kumarappa's *Economy of Permanence* (published in two small volumes by All-India Village Industries) set forth the essentials of this program. Today there is an effective monthly magazine, *Science for Villages*, published at Wardha, center for Gandhian education, and an important research center (ASTRA) in Bangalore is developing technology appropriate for village use. E. F. Schumacher devoted the last fifteen years of his life to devising and encouraging intermediate technology for small-scale enterprise, out of which has grown a movement of worldwide influence and achievement.

A generation later similar efforts became apparent in the United States—the formation in New England (on Cape Cod) of the New Alchemy Institute, which in 1980 published *The Village as Solar Energy*, and through the years has been demonstrating the techniques of small-scale organic agriculture; publication of *Rain*, in Portland, Oregon, and of basic texts such as

Rainbook and *Stepping Stones*; Wes Jackson's Land Institute, in Salina, Kansas, and the *Land Report*; *Ecology Action*, with its valuable educational pamphlets, and numerous other undertakings, all at least partly inspired by Gandhian thinking and the work of Schumacher.

In justice to Gandhi, and for a better understanding of what he stood for, we conclude with a report in his magazine, *Harijan* (for June 22, 1935), of an interview:

A socialist holding a brief for machinery asked Gandhiji if the village industries movement was not meant to oust all machinery.

"Is not this wheel a machine?" was the counter-question that Gandhiji, who was just then spinning, gave in reply.

"I do not mean this machine, but I mean bigger machinery."

"Do you mean Singer's sewing machine? That too is protected by the village industries movement, and for that matter any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labour, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave.

"But what about the great inventions? You would have nothing to do with electricity?"

"Who said so? If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do?"

"I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphyxiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many."

Well, there are the Gandhians, the appropriate technologists, the organic farmers, the communitarian planners and experimenters, carrying on their investigations and demonstrations, issuing their periodicals, and then, by "coincidence," there is the full-page ad in the December *Atlantic* showing a weather-beaten farmer, gray hair flying in the breeze, standing in the middle of an enormous wheatfield. He is saying (in the headline): "Wheat farmers in seven states listen to me. I listen to E.F. Hutton." He, the farmers in seven states, and all the rest of us, have a long way to go.

REVIEW

A BOOK TO COME BACK TO

HOW TO SAVE THE WORLD is the superficially presumptuous title of a book of 360 pages which the contributors do their best to live up to—successfully, we should say. The subtitle is "A Fourth-World Guide to the Politics of Scale," the contents, more than a hundred articles by people moved by the same inspiration that made Leopold Kohr and E.F. Schumacher shatter the stereotypes of conventional economic and social thinking and arm the movement for human awakening now growing strong around the world. The editors are Nicholas Albery and Yvo Peeters, the publishers Fourth World Education and Research Association Trust, 24 Albercorn Place, London N.W. 8. U.K. The postpaid price is £6.90. Part I has articles on Localism, Regionalism, and Internationalism—Ethnic and Human Rights; Part II is concerned with Fourth World Philosophy and Education, and with Peace Action; Part III is on Alternative Economy and Ecology; Part IV deals with Agriculture, Land Reform, Co-ops and Communes. The strength, coherence, and vitality of the contributions to this book make it an ideal single volume revealing the diversity of the movement toward non-violent change.

Following is the answer given to the question, "What is the Fourth World?"

The Fourth World as a concept has caught the imagination of several groups worldwide and has been variously defined. Since the early 60s in Britain, *Resurgence*, "journal of the Fourth World," has developed the very broad definition that we are using, in which "Fourth World" embraces small nations, groups working for their autonomy and independence at all levels from the neighborhood to the nation, minority groups, whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious, and those in the fields of peace action, ecology, economics, energy resources, women's liberation, and the whole spectrum of the alternative movement, who are struggling *against* the giantism of the institutions of today's mass societies and *for* a human scale and a non-centralized, multicellular, power-dispersed world order.

Many of the papers were presented at the first "Assembly" of the Fourth World in the summer of 1981. John Papworth, who was a convertor of the assembly, gives a keynote:

Human survival now depends on the swiftness with which our political, social and economic institutions can be made small enough for them to be manageable and more adequately responsive to human control.

Wars happen despite our intentions, not because of them; they are an inevitable product of the general giantist pattern of our collective lives and the explosive over-spill of power it creates.

Hence any moves toward peace which do not involve a profound restructuring of the size and scale of our institutions are bogus and inconsequential, and by lulling into a false sense that peace may be secured without such changes, are likely to be adding to the general pressures making for war. The purpose of the First Assembly is to begin the lengthy process of defining the nature of that restructuring and the means by which it may be accomplished.

This is certainly a difficult undertaking—like, as Karl Polanyi put it, rebuilding your house while you are living in it—yet there seems no other way to make a livable world. In this book you read people who have been thinking about how to do it, and trying things out, for years. The preface is by Jill Tweedy, and readers of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (for which she writes) will be eager to see what she says. She begins by speaking of the influence of Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*, which "sparked off a world-wide movement among all those working for a decentralized autonomy and independence against the giantism of mass societies." She turns to the idea of human scale as "the key."

There is no doubt in my mind that many human ills are intimately linked to numbers. Certain inner behavioural mechanisms enable us to regulate our conduct and our sense of worth, but those mechanisms break down once the size of our communities grows too large and have to be replaced by mechanisms imposed from the outside, with varying degrees of force and varying results of individual apathy, alienation, violence and chaos. Overwhelmed by numbers, we lose the human scale

and begin to commit the inhuman crimes that now threaten our planet.

Jill Tweedy recalls primitive forms of what we speak of as the face-to-face community, noting that in groups of about thirty, every member's voice is heard. In the mass society individual voices are drowned and disunion results. We can't, she says, go back to groups of thirty to make the decisions necessary for a crowded planet, but "some echo of that ancient human scale can and must be resurrected for our survival, because there is ample evidence that it is upon that scale that we still, today, operate in our own best interests." This leads to the basic question:

. . . at what stage in growth does the individual voice become meaningless? When is a group or a nation so large that the principle of democracy or autonomy remains just that—an ideological principle without basis in reality? Should it not be possible to apply the human scale to all existing structures without diluting political beliefs?

Today, many of us accept that we gain power only through numbers and, on one level, this is clearly true. . . . The paradox is that overwhelming numbers also threaten democracy; a loss of the human scale undermines our sense of worth and purpose and participation and, worse, alienates us from each other, causing a disturbance in the human psyche that leads to mindless violence. In a faceless crowd, in anonymous cities, in vast, multi-national companies, individuals lose the ancient checks upon behaviour. . . . Buttons and mega-deaths are substituted for normal face-to-face conflict, pieces of paper make profits more important than the deaths of children. Somehow, in some way, we must struggle towards a two-tier system that incorporates both the power that numbers bring and the human controls that can only be achieved by breaking down vast blocks into manageable units.

The vivid imagery of Leopold Kohr, who writes on *Fourth World Theories and Principles*, makes his prose memorable. "Numerical over-population," he says, "can be corrected by the sinister Malthusian Trinity of famine, war, disease; whereas velocity over-population (the velocity with which a population must move as a result of its ever-increasing integration in larger territorial units] requires contraction of national

communities so that a city's or a country's daily activities can once again be negotiated at a leisurely pace." Accordingly, he goes on:

Slow is beautiful. It reduces the size of a population without a drop of blood being spilled. I have formulated this in what I have called *the Velocity theory of population* which, in analogy to the quantity theory of money, reduces inflationary population pressure by reducing the speed of circulation. It is because of the mass and size-increasing effect of speed that theatres must have emergency exits. If an audience panics and starts to run instead of trying to leave the theatre, it has the same effect as if the audience had doubled or tripled. In other words, exits must be adjusted not to the numerical but the *effective* size of an audience, that is, numerical size multiplied by speed. . . .

A nation is forced to increase its velocity when it increases its degree of centralization and integration by increasing the commercial and administrative contacts of outlying districts as well as with each other. Not only do more movements become necessary, but they must also be made at ever increasing speeds, with the result that, aside from such areas as India, the world suffers today not so much from a numerical but from a velocity over-population, which can be solved through no degree of birth control.

What is needed is to slow down the pace of life, through autonomous regionalization, or a system of loosely-confederated small states whose citizens can once again resolve most of their daily problems in their own neighborhood rather than by journeying to even remoter governments and supply centers.

This is also the only way of radically solving the energy crisis: not through the discovery and utilization of new sources of power such as nuclear fission, whether it comes from the sun or the earth, but through making the inexhaustible supply of muscle power economical again by contracting the theatre of our daily activities once again to the dimensions of farm and city life that existed in earlier periods.

We conclude with quotation from John Seymour's tribute to Kohr:

Oh yes—we're all decentralists now. At least in intelligent and progressive circles—we've all jumped on the banana wagon again. But whenever I hear my fellow trendies pleading for human institutions of a human size, I think to myself—Kohr said that a

quarter of a century ago, and then nobody took any notice of him.

When the *great* nation-states slaughtered tens of millions of their own—and other peoples'—citizenry, smashed and devastated the heritage handed down by true civilizations, ruined the quality of life of the survivors throughout the entire world—people blamed every factor except the real one that caused it. . . . Only Leopold Kohr, so far as I know, blamed the right culprit: he blamed the obscene *size* of the swollen nation-states.

For a final quotation, we turn to J. V. Uexkull, who points out that the "trickle-down" theory doesn't work and is anyway ridiculous in a world of limited resources.

Is it not time to try the "trickle-up" theory, based on a minimum income, generosity and sharing? It is estimated that four million U.S. Americans have already "unplugged themselves from the commodity circuit" (Ivan Illich), having seen through the mirage of the consumers' paradise. They live in communities of many kinds and credos but with the common aims of consuming no more than their share of the earth's resources and finding fulfillment in non-material growth which is truly limitless.

How to Save the World is a book to come back to.

COMMENTARY

SOCRATIC AND GANDHIAN LOGIC

THE great question raised in this week's lead article is: How can we make the Gandhian logic prevail? How can we show that the well-being of the entire human race has greater importance than a transient prosperity for those endowed with superior technical skills and the ability to control mass attitudes through deliberate manipulation?

This was Gandhi's goal, patiently pursued throughout his life. What kept him going in the face of powerful counter-tendencies? He was upheld by a profound faith in the latent spiritual nature of human beings. He believed that moral evolution is a transcendental reality and, while laggard in most, would take place if given encouragement and the help of those who shared in his conviction and would live by the light of its vision.

Any other view, he could argue, with a strong show of reason, is defeatism if not nihilism. The use of nonviolence, he believed, is the only means of persuading the powerful that there is a higher interest than material acquisition, a better way of life than pursuing the goals that have brought mankind to its present perilous condition.

There are also those, in considerable number, who would like to adopt Gandhi's outlook but do not feel strong enough to do it. Their essential need is recognition of the power of disciplined thought. The story of Gandhi's life is of a man who, once he started thinking, felt inwardly compelled to act on whatever he discovered to be true. And to this was added the inner faith that all humans, in their best moments, can do the same. This is a faith confirmed more by biography than by history. Gandhi sought to confirm it in history.

What, then, can others do to strengthen themselves? Whom can they trust as leaders? The answer seems plain enough. The only individuals who can be trusted to remain true to their principles are those unwilling to influence others through any means except the power of

rational persuasion. They are themselves convinced that unthinking acceptance of any outlook, philosophy, or plan is in the long run self-defeating. What of the higher intuitions of the heart? They are the only durable foundation for serious thinking.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

SOME USEFUL PREACHING

WE are indebted to readers for material on "morals" and "manners" that deserves attention here. An article on "Friendship" by Francine du Plessix Gray (in *Vogue* for August, 1978) begins:

I saw Madame Bovary at Bloomingdale's [a New York department store] the other night, or rather, I saw many incarnations of her. She was hovering over the eye-makeup counter, clutching the current issue of *Cosmopolitan*, whose cover line read "New Styles of Coupling, Including Marriage." Her face already ablaze with numerous products advertised to make her irresistible to the opposite sex, she looked anguished, eager, grasping, overwrought, and terribly lonely. And I thought to myself: Poor girl! With all the reams of literature that have analyzed her plight (brutalized by double standards, victimized by a materialistic middle-class glutting on the excesses of romantic fiction), notwithstanding all these diagnoses, one fact central to her tragic fate has never been stressed enough: Emma Bovary had a faithful and boring husband and a couple of boring lovers—not so intolerable a condition—but she did not have a friend in the world.

It takes a certain courage to write about friendship these days, and, more than courage, it takes competence. Francine Gray is armed by a knowledge of both literature and history, providing the temper of maturity in her comment.

Emma was eating her heart out over a fantasy totally singular to the Western world, and only a century old at that: the notion that sexual union between men and women who believe they are passionately in love, a union achieved by free choice and legalized by marriage, tends to offer a life of perpetual bliss and is the most desirable human bond on earth. It is a notion bred in the same frenzied climate of the romantic epoch that caused countless pale Europeans to act like the characters of their contemporary literature. Goethe's *Werther* is said to have triggered hundreds of suicides. Numerous wives glutted on the fantasies of George Sand's heroines demanded separations from their husbands because they were unpoetic.

This notion, she points out, afflicted only a narrow segment of the middle class until the twentieth century. And from Greek times to the Enlightenment, friendship between members of the same sex was held to be "the cornerstone of human happiness." Musing about the romantic lovers of history—Tristan and Yseult, Madame Bovary—she says:

They are in love with love, their delirium is involved with a desire for self-magnification through suffering, as evidenced in Tristan's words, "Eyes with joy are blinded, I myself am the world." There is confrontation, turmoil, aggression in the often militaristic language of romantic love: Archers shoot fatal arrows or unerring shafts, the male enemy presses, pursues, conquers, women surrender after being besieged by amorous assaults. Friendship on the other hand is the most pacifist species in the fauna of human emotions, the most steadfast and sharing.

Moreover, "To this day, friendship totally resists commercial exploitation, unlike the vast businesses fueled by romantic love that support the couture, perfume, cosmetic, lingerie, and pulp-fiction trades." This is a comment worth thinking about. Noting that friendship among men is given far more attention than that among women, the writer remarks:

I think it high time that the same feminist perspective that has begun to correct the biases of art history and psychoanalysis should be brought to bear on this area of anthropology. We have indeed been deprived of those official, dramatically visible rites offered to men in pub, poolroom, Elks, hunting ground, or football league. And having been brought up in a very male world, I'm ashamed to say it took me a decade of feminist consciousness to realize that the few bonding associations left to contemporary women—garden clubs, church suppers, sewing circles (often derided by men because they do not deal with power)—are activities considerably more creative and life-enhancing than the competition of the poolroom, the machismo of beer-drinking, or the bloodshed of hunting.

With a laconic twist at the end, she says:

I suggest that the sufferings of partners mismatched by pragmatic marriages—in Japan, the Soviet Union, among Sicilian farmers—is not a bit

worse than the agonies currently caused by our excess of free choice, romantic passion, and concurrent disillusionment.

I think it quite possible that our disillusionment with romantic love may help us to realize that Western liberalism has over-stressed the individual at the expense of the community.

A not unrelated story is the interview with Stewart Brand in the *Christian Science Monitor* for Aug. 9, 1982, by Stewart McBride. Brand is the inventor of the *Whole Earth Catalog* and the editor of *CoEvolution Quarterly*. He is known for his ever-flowing store of new and good ideas. The report of the interview combines his distaste for ostentatious and often pointless do-gooding with enthusiasm for the almost lost arts of courtesy. "The difference," he says, "between compassion and guilt must be the most important difference there is in the do-good business. Guilt shrivels, it wants something; compassion extends far beyond the gift." Last summer Brand ran a school called "Uncommon Courtesy," with paying students; they studied fighting fires in the inflammable California landscape. Other courses were in "home care" (skillful nursing by family); "street saint" skills (training neighbors to advance beyond defending themselves to defending the street); creative philanthropy and local politics (how to serve as well as to win). The Uncommon Courtesy school sets out to "avoid the temptations of New Age squishiness" by taking on a "ferocity of rigor and explicitness." His background reflections give pithy substance to what are usually vague wonderings of a now maturing generation:

My generation threw out courtesy back when we were throwing out hypocrisy. It's clear that simple courtesy—and its secret ingredient, humor—is the main glue holding society together, especially where there's disagreement going on. Beyond that, it is courtesy that imbues every individual with the habit of thoughtfulness, of respect, which keeps all communication and the whole idea of good itself alive.

People may have compassionate feelings, he says, but what they lack are compassionate skills.

Nearly everyone feels the impulse to help—the crime victim, the accident victim, the passed-out drunk, the beleaguered cop, the publicly despairing—but we're uncertain whether to intervene and, more important, how to intervene. And we are well aware that as long as we feel powerless to help, the street is an alien place. When we do succeed in helping, the street is ours.

I never did buy the shallow, phony love propaganda of the '60s—you know, the hippie hug and soulful eye-to-eye contact. It became just as suspect as what it replaced. The honesty that replaced courtesy was not honesty but self-preoccupation. People would self-broadcast their mood, whether you cared to listen or not. . . .

Brand locates an interesting example of courtesy:

When Prince Charles visited California, everybody who was ever in the same room with him was just cooing at how sweet, wonderful, intelligent, he was. At about his 15th party, when he had blisters on his palms from shaking hands, someone asked him, "How do you manage to do this?"

He said, "They train us rather well, you know."

Quite a nice answer, huh? Enormously self-deprecating. . . . We could jolly well try some of that courtesy here. I would love to get a person from Buckingham Palace who would come over and teach those skills to the common folk.

FRONTIERS

Accumulating Pressures

A READING of No. 48 of the Worldwatch Papers—*Six Steps to a Sustainable Society* (Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., \$2.00)—brings home the fact that we are less and less citizens of some country and more and more people of all the world. Local solutions for problems are becoming difficult. The larger and more powerful countries may make it possible for the inhabitants to think nationally for a while longer, but the people of smaller and less developed nations have become fully aware that their well-being depends on activities beyond their borders. This is hard for them to bear and it accounts for the anger they express.

Here and there around the world are pioneer thinkers who are pointing to the practical necessity of learning to think internationally—on a planetary basis—but their task is arduous. They are giving reasons for reversing the habits of centuries and millennia—for beginning to think and act in a world where there are no longer any strangers, foreigners, or "barbarians," where one's countrymen include all members of the family of man. This is at root an ethical idea and the modern world has long been indifferent to ethical considerations. Modern prophets have stressed the need for standards of behavior, but their followers are measured in handfuls. All that we can say, in self-encouragement, is that this idea is at least in the world, and may some day spread around.

Yet there is another source of encouragement, however unpalatable we may find it at the outset. It is that sheer necessity—actual *want*—may be the spur to the recognition of interdependence and to joining movements insistent on far-reaching cooperation.

What does the Worldwatch paper say? The authors, Lester R. Brown and Pamela Shaw, point out at the beginning that during the third quarter

of the twentieth century—about 1950 to 1975—economic production around the world (but mostly in countries like the U.S.) reached its peak in all the basic commodities—wood, fish, beef, grain, and oil. Then, in general, in the early years of the fourth quarter, production began to decline. (A table gives the figures.) The writers say:

Only once in the last decade has per capita grain production been significantly above the 1971 level: in 1978, a year of bumper harvests worldwide. Given the falloff during the three years since, this could in fact become the historical peak that precedes a long-term gradual decline in supplies per person similar to those for seafood and beef. Africa plagued with both widespread soil erosion and the fastest continental population growth rate on record, has already experienced such a downturn. Since 1970 its per capita grain production has fallen 13 per cent, or more than 1 per cent a year.

The soil erosion that has undermined agricultural production in so many of the countries that currently import food from the U.S. and Canada now threatens productivity in the North American breadbasket itself. Recently released U.S. Department of Agriculture data show 34 per cent of the country is losing topsoil at a rate that is reducing its inherent productivity. . . . As the seventies ended, oil output turned downward as prices climbed, and the oil safety valve began to close. Per capita oil production, which had remained essentially unchanged from 1973 to 1979, fell some 15 per cent between 1979 and 1981. If world population grows as projected, a continuing, though irregular, long-term decline in per capita oil production seems inevitable. Pressures on the earth's biological support systems will increase accordingly. In such a world, a reassessment of national population and economic policies is essential if the economy is to be sustained. . . . the economic policies that worked so well during most of the third quarter of the century may not work well at all in the far different environmental circumstances of the final quarter. If governments continue to pursue inappropriate economic and demographic policies, they may be rewarded with a falling standard of living for their people.

Looking homeward, the writers say:

In a world where the economy's environmental support systems are deteriorating, supply-side economics—with its overriding emphasis on production and its near blind faith in market forces—

will lead to serious problems. Among other things, such a policy will drive the world up steeply rising, inflationary cost curves in both the energy and food sectors. The market has no alarm that sounds when the carrying capacity of a biological system is exceeded. Only when the system collapses and prices soar does the market "know" that anything has gone wrong. By that point, the damage has been done. In a world where population has passed the four billion mark and is now heading for five billion, the unalloyed working of market forces can destroy the very croplands, forests, grasslands, and fisheries that support the economy.

Such trends, the writers say, call for "a new approach to national policy-making." Indeed they do. In their conclusion Lester Brown and Pamela Shaw outline what needs to be done:

Building a sustainable society will require heavy investments, both public and private, simultaneously in several sectors. Funds are needed to construct soil-conserving terraces, install rooftop solar collectors, build fuel-efficient mass-transit systems, and take thousands of other steps. Once the transition is well under way, investment requirements will fall sharply. But until then, capital will be scarce and costly.

Well, if past and present performance be taken as the measure of future possibilities, government will be the last to get the point of these requirements. What institution of our society is more the creature of past habit, past beliefs, past conceptions of how to meet emergencies, than government? What would happen to a candidate for national office, these days, who adopted the Worldwatch program as his own in campaigning? It is the people, and not the legislature and the officials, who need to be persuaded, and the people, considered as a mass, are seldom persuaded of any unpalatable necessity, save by actual pain.

This is the unhappy dilemma which confronts the thoughtful segment of the population. Power is needed, but the powerful are blind. What is one to do? Somewhere between the powerless individual and the all-powerful state there are avenues of action, resources for change (however small at the start). The fact is that individuals have already begun to do what they can, and are

moving in the right direction. Through the years we have reported on their activities and their achievements here in *Frontiers*. Because of their efforts, a movement for "alternatives" actually exists in the United States. One group to which we have given insufficient attention is the Planet Drum Foundation, headed by Peter Berg, which recently published three pamphlets titled *Eco-Decentralist Design* (available for \$10 from the Foundation at P.O. Box 31251, San Francisco, Calif. 94131). We have already recommended two of them; the third is *Toward a Bioregional Model: Clearing Ground for Watershed Planning* by George Tukel. Its first paragraph speaks to the question: What is one to do?

Presently, the planning and shape of human settlements usually defined by market forces constrained by building codes, zoning regulations, and environmental controls, has more to do with the profits of developers and contractors and the politics of land usage than it does with individual and community well-being, human services, and the integrity of local ecosystems. The technologies which accompany such planning are projections of an industrial society which assume a life of their own. . . . Regardless of the ongoing traumas inflicted on the biosphere as a result of this institutional and technological bias, the human themes which depend upon the natural surround remain constant, cyclical, and fundamental. . . . Communities can begin to see themselves as aligning human requirements with natural ones in the course of using energy and resources.

The booklet tells what this means and how it might be done.