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SOME UTOPIAN CONSIDERATIONS

BETWEEN the obligations of Up-and-at-Em activism and what might be called the Passing Glance approach are tensions it should prove useful to look at. What is the difference between the two responses? Well, pick an issue, any issue, and stare at it a while. If it involves a notably Bad Situation, it will be natural to think about what needs to be done to make corrections; or if the problem is to reinforce a weakening Good Situation, then another, usually more difficult, kind of thinking seems required.

A bad situation with a little good in it is described in an article on children's books in the January *Harper's.* The writer, John Goldthwaite, says in his first paragraph:

> A children's publisher, to succeed, must assume the guise of doing good deeds, and to do that he must keep the muse, old and toothless though she be, out front in a rocker, gumming platitudes. Some publishers and editors are not insincere about this. Excellent children's books do get published. On the other hand, the department must profit the house; each editor must earn his keep. That means marketing a whole heap of books that are less than good, and warehouses of books that are downright awful. Every trifle must be decked out as handsomely as possible, every author and illustrator made out to be God's gift to children. This requires a certain suspension of disbelief on the part of publisher and editor, and inevitably some insensibility will set in, until the publisher and the editor and soon the librarians as well, can themselves no longer tell the difference between a work of art and a commodity.

Could anything be much worse when it comes to books? Even the occasionally good book is lost in the welter of the second-rate. Only a critic like this one, who knows what he is talking about, can hope to spot excellence in the midst of so much trivia. (Mr. Goldthwaite does this at the end, naming sixteen titles he thinks are particularly worth remembering, among the children's books published in the past ten years.) His remedy for the Bad Situation seems sound enough except for suggesting more stories, and fewer—or, for a while, *no*—picture books, his recommendations are all to stop doing a number of meritless things. He would put an end to "teen-age" fiction and stop giving "nice" books awards. He would eliminate the work of artists who, although they mean to stimulate the child's imagination, seem only to make the world "a little more banal." Finally, he would abolish undergraduate courses in "children's literature." In short, he wants children's literature to stop being a "multi-billion dollar industry."

These are the ways, he thinks, to get rid of the pretense, waste, and degradation of slicked-up mediocrity. Its effect is insidious, getting in everywhere, weakening minds, vulgarizing taste, and deceiving or bewildering parents who have no idea what to do about it. Mr. Goldthwaite's program of reform seems fine, but how will you put it into effect? The passing-glance approach would turn quite soon to the reflection, "But this is the trouble with everything else out there—all our cultural activities as well as practically all manufacturing are in some way or other afflicted with this disease of elaborate promotion of the commonplace, and infection seems to be the price of survival. So where do you begin?"

This is an attitude which leads naturally to utopian reveries. When everything seems wrong—all conditions Bad—one can at least dream, and indeed ought to, since good dreaming or imagining sometimes turns out to be the most effective primary cause of large-scale change, eventually meeting all the requirements of the up-and-at-em drives.

What sort of Utopia, then, would really do right by children? Forgetting "feasibility" entirely, what Good Situation for children would erase bad

literature along with countless other useless or harmful things?

The spontaneous inclination, today, when it comes to thinking utopian thoughts, is toward the small community. Natural community life promises to exclude automatically most of the evils we catalog so industriously. So, for a possible Utopia for children we borrow from something that Vinoba Bhave has written about village education. In his contribution to the *Resurgence* paperback, *Time Running* Out, he says:

> People now think that every village ought to have a primary school, every big village or town a high school, and a big city a college. . . . But when all the business of life from birth to death is transacted in villages, why should not the whole learning of life be available also in villages? Some poverty-stricken minds are planning only for one university in each state, but according to my plan there must be a university in each village. There is no meaning in giving four years of education in the village and requiring children to go elsewhere if they want to go further. I ought to be able to get a complete education in my own village, for my village is not a fragment, it is an integral whole. My plan is for a complete and integrated village community where every aspect of life is complete.

For some readers, this will sound far too "utopian" to be worth talking about. And who, after all, wants to spend his whole life living in a *village?* But why not? Why is getting around, seeing the world, so very much better, or even important at all? Well, people want to *do* things, and so little is possible within the limits of village life, it is said.

An interlude for some hard thinking has to come here, to provide time to consider various aspects of this question. What one understands to be the meaning of life will have to be confronted. Is the meaning in the achievement of "goals," one after another? What does one "get out of" just living, in contrast to racking up goals? What happens to people in the societies which are insistently goal-oriented? Do they have good lives? Do we, in our progress-obsessed society, lead good lives? What is progress, anyway? Who makes it? Who measures it? How? Is there a progress which is not marked off by goals?

Back to Vinoba:

> Countless poor children all over the world have to begin working for their bread at a very tender age; and even so they do not get enough to eat, still less do they get any education. At the same time, other young people, right up to the age of twenty-five, are getting a false travesty of education; they give their minds to finding ways of getting rich without working, while millions of people who do work cannot even get enough to eat. Our motto must therefore be: "Education for self-sufficiency up to sixteen, education through self-sufficiency after sixteen." Unless we make our educational plans on this basis, those twin evils of our present system will not be overcome.

Here another "time-out" for a few passing glances. Vinoba proceeds in his plans with only brief attention to the Bad Situation of schools. Schools, according to Ivan Illich and John Holt, are or have become intolerable places for children to be in. Schools start the young on a chase they can never complete. Schooling instructs them in their inferiority or, in a few cases, feeds their egotism. It establishes artificial standards in life and these, if adopted, unfit the young for healthful and constructive living. The ways of schools are so firmly established in bureaucratic custom and administrative habit that there is little or no hope of changing them. Leave them alone and they'll fall apart, says Ivan Illich. Don't try to reform them, says John Holt; it can't be done. If you read Illich and Holt—and would-be utopians as well as parents and teachers *should* read them—you are likely to agree with what they say.

How can we summarize what's wrong with the modern schools? The simplest way might be to go back to the man who seems most responsible for their origins—Johann Comenius. In his day Comenius was a great reformer, even a visionary, at least in his own eyes. In his view, universal schooling was the path to universal peace and good. The grandiloquent title of his major work, published in 1657, was *The Great*

Didactic, Setting forth the whole Art of Teaching all Things to all Men, or A Certain Inducement to found such Schools in all the Parishes, Towns, and Villages of every Christian Kingdom, that the entire Youth of both Sexes, none being excepted, shall Quickly, Pleasantly, and Thoroughly Become learned in the Sciences, pure in Morals, trained to Piety, and in this manner instructed in all things necessary for the present and future life. Comenius was completely convinced that humans grow to maturity only through being *taught* by schoolmasters, and that "one man excels another in exact proportion as he has received more instruction." Teachers, Comenius believed, would remake the world!

Discussing his Up-and-at-Em outlook and immeasurable influence in an article in *Teachers College Record* (December, 1971), Robert McClintock says:

> Comenius cared nought for study; teaching and learning were his thing. He . . . set forth the techniques and principles by means of which teachers were to impart knowledge, virtue, and faith to empty minds "with such certainty that the desired result must of necessity follow." . . . Here is the basis for our cult of the degree; and Comenius' faith in the power of the school has no bounds: he even suggested that had there been a better school in Paradise, Eve would not have made her sore mistake, for she "would have known that the serpent is unable to speak, and that there must therefore have been some deceit." . . .
>
> All the basic concerns of modern Western education were adumbrated in *The Great Didactic:* there was to be universal, compulsory, extended instruction for both boys and girls in efficient, well-run schools in which teachers, who had been duly trained in a "Didactic College," were to be responsible for teaching sciences, arts, languages, morals, and piety by following an exact order derived from nature and by using tested, efficacious principles. This outline has been given fleshly substance; initiative has everywhere been thoroughly shifted from the student to the teacher; a world of instruction has completely displaced the bygone world of study.

Other factors, combining the determination of various up-and-at-em reformers to turn bad situations into good ones, strengthened the conviction that only by proper schooling could the young be made to turn out well and the world thereby improved:

> Lockean empiricism, especially as it was developed in France by the sensationalists and ideologues, gave rigor to the view that man was a teachable animal, for it held that ideas and intellectual qualities were not inborn, but that these were etched into the receptive human slate by the hand of experience. With packaged experiences, the school could etch fine minds and upstanding characters. [Quite diverse] motives all led to a paternal pedagogy. . . . statists, progressives, philanthropists, and political idealists all looked to a system of compulsory instruction and state influence in higher education as an important, positive means of implementing their historic visions. . . .
>
> Whatever the rationale behind it, the principle of compulsory schooling automatically put the student in a subservient relation to his teachers, and it became most difficult to maintain the conviction that the student provides the motive force of the whole process. The principle of compulsion proclaimed to each and every person that there was something essential that he must allow one or another school to do to him between the ages of six and sixteen. Such a proclamation did not encourage initiative on the part of the student, but it did give the professional educator a very strong mandate and considerable responsibility to shape his wards according to one favored pattern or another. Thus, a large teacher corps has come into being in every Western country, it is accorded professional status and is charged with a clear-cut mission: it must produce, and in order to produce, it must assert initiative. Student servility is an integral function of professional accountability in compulsory systems of schooling,

Well, it is all there, or very nearly all there—all the basic reasons for the rejection or condemnation of schools by Ivan Illich and John Holt. Would they, one wonders, have found fault with schools if the schools they experienced had been founded on Vinoba's ideas, or Tolstoy's principle of helping the students to reach *equality* with the teachers, instead of making them servile in the presence of authority? Or are schools simply bad things, per se, no matter what happens in them?

Let us return to Vinoba's utopian conception, represented in the past practice of village life:

> Our forefathers made provision to enable villagers to have access to kinds of knowledge which no one in the village possessed. This plan must be carried on. It is the tradition of the *sannyasi* (holy man). The *sannyasi* travels continually among the villages for the greater part of the year, remaining in one place only for the four months of the rainy season. The villagers thus get the full benefit of his knowledge. He can teach them both knowledge of the world and knowledge of the Self.
>
> A *sannyasi* is a walking university, a wandering school, who goes at his pleasure to each village in turn. He will himself seek out his students, and he will give his teaching freely. The villagers will give him fresh, wholesome food, and he will need nothing else. They will learn from him whatever they can. There is nothing more tragic than that knowledge should be paid for in money. A man who possesses knowledge hungers and thirsts to pass it on to others and see them enjoy it. The child at the breast finds satisfaction, but the mother too takes pleasure in giving suck. What would become of the world if mothers began demanding fees for feeding their babies?

Right here, it seems absolutely clear, is where our Utopia, and our criticism, should begin. None of these priceless things should be done for money. Those who write for children, who edit for children, who publish for children (as becomes plain in Mr. Goldthwaite's *Harper's* article), all owe their ordinariness, their compromises, their loss of taste, from doing what they do for money. You could say, in regard to such cultural activities, that what is done for money soon becomes not worth doing at all, and that this eventually becomes obvious from simple inspection of the result.

What is true of stories for children is true of education. Vinoba continues:

> The "knowledge" which is purchased for money is no knowledge at all; knowledge bought for cash is ignorance. True knowledge can only be had for love and service, it cannot be bought for money. So when a wise man, travelling from place to place, arrives at a village, let the people lovingly invite him to remain a few days, treat him with reverence and receive from him whatever knowledge he has to give. This is quite a feasible plan. Just as a river flows of itself from village to village, serving the people; just as cows graze in the jungle and return of themselves with full udders to give children milk; so will wise men travel of themselves from place to place.

How will we know the wise from the people who package wisdom and sell it over the counter? Easily. If we stop paying people who claim to be teachers, only the wise and the good, animated by the motives Vinoba speaks of, will remain. The Sophists didn't work for nothing; only Socrates taught because he wanted to. And Socrates would teach only those who really wanted to know. The Good Situation for teaching has to be maintained by contributions from both ends. So, as Vinoba says,

> We must re-establish this institution of the wandering teacher. In this way every village can have its university, and all the knowledge of the world can find its way into the villages. We must also reinvigorate the tradition of the *vanaprasthashram* (a state of freedom from worldly responsibility) so that every village gets a permanent teacher for whom no great expenditure will be incurred. Every home must be a school, and every field a laboratory. Every *vanaprastha* must be teacher and every wandering *sannyasi* a university. The students are the children and the young people who want to learn; in every village there will be people who give an hour or two to learning and spend the rest of the day working. This seems to me to provide a complete outline of education from birth to death.

Well, is there anything wrong with this proposal? Nothing at all, one might reply, except that it's completely impossible in our time and under our conditions.

That may seem the only answer from the Up-and-at-Em point of view. But the passing glance practitioner might keep on looking around and eventually recognize, here and there, a few people who act on just these principles, no matter what labels they have or what is the superficial pattern of their lives. But they are *too* few, it will be said. Exactly! They are far too few, and obliged to cope with terrible odds, but whose fault is that? Whose fault is it that only heroes will attempt to

live ideal lives—follow moral principles—in the midst of our immoral society? What has made it so tough to act decently and intelligently in our relations with others and ourselves?

We usually say that the System has spoiled everything—shut out hope of good things happening. This seems obvious enough. But there are still those few people around who manage to act quite independently of the System, at least some of the time. They may give some hostages (hours) to the System, but on their own time they act on the *vanaprastha* or *sannyasi* principle, or some occidental equivalent thereof. Does anyone suppose that either Ivan Illich or John Holt is getting rich!

The system didn't really spoil the people. The System is the spoiled article itself, the result of blind adherence to yesterday's Up-and-at-Em program, which doesn't work well any more, which has been transformed into the means of establishing security, holding on to status, making a profit.

A *sannyasi* might say that this habit of enslaving ourselves to one system after another is the natural outcome of expecting to find progress in situations, of seeing our evil mainly in institutions, of defining our goals always in terms of something that won't happen until tomorrow, or can't really be accomplished until next year, or next century.

The sage has no external "goals." He knows better than this. His life is without identifiable ends and without measurable result. When he dies he leaves nothing tangible. While he lives he seeks nothing tangible. The story-teller, the saga-singer, the wandering teacher and some other unclassifiable people live absolutely resultless lives. Not everybody, it will be said, is able to do that. Of course not. But *why* are the *sannyasis* able to do it? Why do they *choose* to do it? And why, despite all our doubts, do we find what they do admirable and good?

Such matters deserve a passing glance—several times a day.

REVIEW
RETURNED TO PRINT

THERE is always risk in claiming that anyone was "the first" to write about some important subject, but no one will seriously object if we call George Perkins Marsh the first great American ecologist. He was doing ecological research years before Haeckel proposed that such investigations be known as "Ekologie." It is a joy to report that Marsh's classic volume, *Man and Nature*, first published in 1864, is at last back in print as a Harvard University Press paperback, and at the comfortable price of $5.95. This is a book which every literate person ought to have. The MANAS library has had from the beginning a copy of the second (1874) edition, titled *The Earth as Modified by Human Action*, and our pages have often been enriched by material from its contents.

Marsh was a talented Vermonter who at twenty-five was practicing law in Burlington early in the last century. To call him a "bright young man" would be understatement, since by the time he was thirty he had mastered twenty languages! Elected to Congress in 1842, he met most of the distinguished citizens of the day, especially the scientists, and he became deeply concerned with the responsibility of government as the conservator of natural resources. His diplomatic career began with his appointment as ambassador to Turkey by Zachary Taylor in 1949, and his subsequent travels made possible first-hand observation in many parts of the world, while his linguistic skills gave access to the entirety of the European literature relating to his subject. The reason for all these devoted labors is clear from a statement in the preface to *Man and Nature:*

> The earth is fast becoming an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant, and another era of equal human crime and human improvidence . . . would reduce it to such a condition of impoverished productiveness, of shattered surface, of climatic excesses, as to threaten the depravation, barbarism, and perhaps even extinction of the species.

Diplomats were not overworked in those comparatively peaceful days, and when Lincoln made Marsh ambassador to Italy he was able to sort out the material he had collected for his book in a quiet retreat on the Italian Riviera.

A passage from the *Not Man Apart* review of the Harvard reprint of *Man and Nature* gives a current evaluation of the volume:

> Combining an unsettling insight with an almost encyclopedic attention to detail, Marsh has produced what remains today one of the most intelligent and comprehensive discussions of the fundamental natural relationships that humankind must come to understand and obey, if we are ever to guide ourselves out of the present world predicament.
>
> Marsh's consideration of nearly all the issues that have crept into the current world hunger and food resources debate lends an eerie contemporary aura to these yellowed pages. He notes, for instance, that "the ground required to produce the grass and grain consumed in rearing and fattening a grazing quadruped would yield a far larger amount of nutriment, if devoted to the growing of breadstuffs." Thus he explains in 1864 the relationship that has lately been "discovered" with much fanfare and labelled the food-chain pyramid. He urges development of the "lifting power of the tide" and cites "well known experiments" which "show that it is quite possible to accumulate the solar heat by a simple apparatus." We are reminded that "all nature is linked together by invisible bonds" and, in this context, are instructed in the controlling balances between bird and insect populations.

Of particular interest to present-day readers is Marsh's extraordinarily complete account of ancient Egyptian methods of regulating for use the flood waters of the Nile, showing that thousands of years ago practically the same amount of land was brought under cultivation as that planned for restoration by the Soviet-constructed Aswan High Dam, but without its disastrous side-effects. Besides such intensive studies, the book is filled with curious facts that become unforgettable for the reader—such as, for example, the account of how the inhabitants of Malta once used to drill holes in the rock of their island, which would then catch fragments of soil carried by the sirocco

winds from Africa; and in fourteen years the holes accumulated enough dirt for cultivation! (This was observed by Schliemann.) No one who reads Mr. Marsh can ever remain an unaroused witness of obvious waste of natural resources. The book is a treasure for young and old. (For more on this author's life and his enduring contribution to the conservation movement in America, see the chapter devoted to Marsh in Stewart Udall's *The Quiet Crisis.*)

Fitting in with this remarkable book is the present flood of critical material on nuclear power plants—almost every day something new comes out, amplifying the informed protest against both the theory and the practice of relying on this enormously expensive and incalculably dangerous source of energy. A good way to keep posted on the nuclear issue would be to subscribe to *People & Energy* (1757 "S" Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009) for $7.50 a year (only $5 if you're poor). This well-edited monthly reviews newly published material on nuclear power and reports on the development of alternative sources of energy. You learn not only of studies such as the recent Nader volume—*Nuclear Plants: The More They Build, the More You Pay*—but also of less widely publicized research such as the cost-comparisons of the Council on Economic Priorities, showing that in most regions electricity is produced more cheaply by coal than by nuclear-powered generators. CEP research also reveals that claims of low-cost energy from nuclear plants assume that they will run at capacity, while in fact they never do; the sixty existing commercial reactors have averaged only 59 per cent of their planned capacity' and the larger the installation, the poorer the performance.

A handy low-cost book on this subject by a writer who has been reporting on nuclear power since 1959 is McKinley Olson's Bantam paperback, *Unacceptable Risk* ($2.25). Olson begins with a quotation from one of the three nuclear design engineers who a year ago quit their jobs with General Electric rather than continue working on what they had come to regard as a "serious threat to the future of all life on this planet." All the major issues are covered by Olson in reportorial style, with emphasis on criticism and objection to nuclear sources of energy. With the wide distribution that Bantam books receive, a very large audience will now be better informed about the dangers of nuclear power.

Mr. Olson writes easy-to-understand English. His chapter on the future deals with immediately applicable conservation methods (such as eliminating electricity for heating, as wasteful and unnecessary), and with the development of new fuels such as methane gas from organic wastes. "Some urban homeowners," the author says, "instead of throwing their garbage away, have been converting it into methane to heat their city homes." Discussing other possibilities, he continues:

> The carbon and hydrogen in waste and garbage can also be converted into methanol, or wood alcohol, the clear fluid we find in Sterno and use to heat food or keep it warm. All sorts of vehicles were operated on wood alcohol in France and Germany during both world wars when gasoline was scarce. Many racing car drivers have preferred alcohol to gasoline for some time; there is every reason to believe that ordinary cars could be modified to make direct use of methanol as a fuel or as a blend or additive with gasoline. Right now methanol is expensive, but if demand increases, widespread manufacture could drive the current price way down. In fact, methanol seems to have so much fuel potential for vehicles that some nuclear critics, who have been endorsing it as one of the many alternatives to nuclear power, are afraid it will encourage a continued reliance upon the automobile, which they deplore for a host of social, energy, economic, and ecological reasons.

It should be said that Mr. Olson talked to numerous advocates and defenders of nuclear power, and gives their point of view.

For almost ten years MANAS contributors have been celebrating the virtues of *Therapeia* by Robert E. Cushman, a book on the substance and intent of the Platonic philosophy. We kept on recommending and quoting it even though it long

ago went out of print; in fact, we made several attempts to find a paperback publisher who would take it on. The distinctive excellence of Mr. Cushman's work grows from his determination always to provide a *Platonic* reading of Plato, not offer interpretations which reflect the fashions of Western scholarship. When he needs to explain a difficult passage—of which there are many—he obtains the light required from somewhere else in Plato. It is another joy, therefore, to be able to report that *Therapeia*, first published by Chapel Hill in 1958, is now available in a second hardback edition by Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., at $20.00. The price is high, but there will be no sudden sale of this book, only a slow movement from year to year, so that the charge is understandable. Meanwhile, we shall continue to hope for a paperback edition as the quickest means of increasing the circulation of *Therapeia.*

The following is from the Prologue:

> Plato has no faith in borrowed findings, no faith in socalled truths which a man does not achieve for himself as a personal possession. And here indeed is a fundamental difference from Aristotle, who was subtly lured by definitive answers of supposedly enforceable demonstrations and who, consequently, was impatient with dialogue and preferred the declarative treatise.
>
> Plato wrote only dialogues, and his results commonly annoy readers easily exasperated by tentative and provisional conclusions or, seemingly, no conclusions at all. Often Plato appears to be wholly absorbed in the quest and indifferent to the outcome; yet he is fully convinced that the dialogue alone preserves, in some measure, the form of "living speech" in search of truth and is alone, therefore, suited to be the vehicle of dialectic. Dialectic . . . is the art of inquiry rather than of demonstration. It is a method calculated not so much to enforce a thesis as to discover one. It does not derive consequences from postulates; its business is to authenticate postulates. . . Plato discounts all answers except those a man gives to himself, inwardly consenting to the import of the converging lines of evidence. So he provides a method by which a man may be both inquisitor and witness. *Elenchos* [cross-examination] is primarily, if not exclusively, the instrument of metaphysics. In this sphere issues may be isolated which lead, or may lead, to "agreements" which are neither forced nor enforceable. Hence, in metaphysics, a judgment is worth nothing if it is not one's own. If it is, it is a conviction and a commitment. It is, even more profoundly, an agreement of the mind with itself and with ideal Being.

COMMENTARY
WHAT IS AND WHAT MIGHT BE

VINOBA (see page one) wants the village to become a place of rich educational and cultural opportunity. He describes what might be done—was once done—in this direction. What about industrial societies? Could they accomplish anything like this?

With fundamentally the same intent in mind, Arthur Morgan set out in the 1920s to strengthen, broaden, and add to the cultural resources of Yellow Springs, Ohio, to make it a place where people would *want* to work and live. He tells about these successful efforts in *Industries for Small Communities.*

Leopold Kohr, in *The City of Man* (a book we have for subsequent review), considers the present-day obstacles to good community life from the viewpoint of an urban planner. Planning authorities, he says, seem to have a fixation on "the swift movement of cars and its attendant problems, as if the sole purpose of the city were to serve as a race track for drivers commuting between gasoline pumps and hamburger stands." He continues:

> In Los Angeles, with its more advanced degree of traffic perfection, the same thoughtful philosophy has been responsible for turning three fourths of the entire urban area over to roads needed for travelling and space needed for parking. The result? What might have been an elegant metropolis has become one of the most tormented sprawls of our time. Instead of offering its harassed populations the luxuries of leisure derived in graceful *urban vicinities,* it has burdened them with *rural distances* in the midst of their famous conurbation which are hardly shorter than those negotiated by medieval journeymen when travelling across entire principalities. . . .
>
> But there is another way of coping with the situation. This is to solve the problem not in vehicular but in human terms. Let us not adjust . . . to the requirements of cars made indispensable by our modern dispersed living habits let us adjust . . . to the requirements of humans who could live in the area were it not for the voracious appetite of cars eating up all the still available urban space. In other words let us adjust our living habits to ways that do not depend on cars. This will be the case when every location which the citizen must visit in the course of a normal day—school church, hospital, shops, cafés, doctors' offices, friends' houses, communal authorities—is once again brought back into our immediate pedestrian neighborhood. [The urban area or neighborhood] must, in short, be reconstructed as an economically largely autonomous little pedestrian city of its own, inhabited not by specialized car-park attendants or commuters to distant work places, but by the full range of urban occupations from janitors to physicians, from waiters to inn-keepers, from tailors to priests, from students to teachers, from craftsmen to musicians, from bakers to postmen, from street-cleaners to magistrates. Then, and only then, will cars become largely superfluous.

This is a Western planner's way of repeating Vinoba's theme: "My plan is for a complete and integrated village community where every aspect of life is complete."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

SOMEWHERE in the hills surrounding Ukiah, the Mendocino (Calif.) County seat, is Mariposa School, started back in 1968 by some Stanford University graduates. These future doctors and lawyers had organized a seminar on education at Stanford, then decided to put theory into practice, so they started a school. At present Mariposa is getting a new building—it should be finished by now—purchased with funds gained in a victorious law suit. The moving spirit in the school, according to Vicki Allen, who tells about her visit there in the *Mendocino Grapevine* for last Oct. 21, is Kate Anderson, who gave up teaching public school in Pittsburgh in 1969 to come to Mariposa. Her husband, Kit Anderson, also teaches, but lately has been giving all his time to constructing the new building.

The school has had its problems. Along with all the other United Stand people, the school buildings were "red-tagged" (declared unsafe or unfit by county authorities) in 1974 (see MANAS, March 5, 1975). Kate Anderson says:

> "They even put a tag on a fort the kids were building. We got the first permit in the county for a compost privy and we spent two years trying to make everything legal. We have a permit for an organized camp."

The kind of thing they were up against:

> "This kitchen has to meet the restaurant code. It cost almost $1,000 for a three-basin sink.
>
> "Of all the people, though, the people from the health department have been the nicest, the most helpful. . . . The legal problems really inhibited us. Now we feel free to expand, to start developing. We can open up our minds."

What do they do at this school? Vicki Allen's impressions help to answer:

> In the first room, Lisa Stevens is showing a group of children how to spin and dye wool.
>
> The bagpipe music is coming from the celtic dance class, where girls in leotards are kicking their feet in the air. . . . In the next room children are making animals out of clay, a rabbit with a carrot in its mouth, a duck bank, a dinosaur box with a head for the lid. . . .

Replying to questions, Kate Anderson said:

> "For four years we had a high school. We finally decided it was too much of an age-range to do the kind of job we wanted to be doing. Things just hang together a whole lot better now.
>
> "It's a real struggle though, to develop a process for talking about things that affect everyone, to get the students to realize they have control. Sometimes, it's easy for space to be abused. We're trying to get them to figure out how to use the free space we give them, to be constructive and positive. That's what you learn in school—how to make decisions that affect you and the people around you. We teach academic skills as tools for survival rather than for some intrinsic goodness."

That seems a sensible way to evaluate academic skills.

The school used both near and far country for curriculum:

> She [Kate Anderson] talks about children taking care of animals, working in the garden, learning auto mechanics, going on field trips.
>
> They went to Death Valley in the spring, camping at Shasta and Lassen. . . . The youngest children spent two days in San Francisco, learning about life in a city. Six years ago Kate Anderson took high school students to Mexico for ten weeks. "Some of them had never been out of Ukiah," she said. "Sometimes, you have to get out of your own reality in order to see it."

To teach at the Mariposa School the level of commitment needs to be high:

> "It's a real financial hardship to work here," Ms. Anderson explains. ""There are four new teachers this year. They live on their savings. We get room and board and $25 a month pocket money. It's a borderline existence.
>
> "The houses are real simple. They're cabins, sleeping quarters. We share meals. We have a lot of space, but it's not luxurious. . . .

> "The school is the people who choose to live simply and work together in a cooperative situation. That's a model for the kids. There's no president, no principal. It's nonhierarchical. All decisions are made by consensus. And that struggle among us to figure out what's right, that on-going process, is the real life of the school.
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> "Nobody owns the school. It is whoever is at the school at the time. You can create what you want. It's your decision, how you want your life to be. But it will be made for you if you don't make the decision yourself."

This, too, seems pretty fundamental as a "model." If children are able to learn that, all through life, the decisions we don't make for ourselves will be made for us, they will be far ahead of most adults.

Such common-sense discoveries are always getting away from us—through the kind of forgetfulness that seems an early product of civilization—and have to be made all over again, usually under difficult circumstances that are restorative as well as painful. Actually, civilization has for a long time been measured by the number of decisions which have been taken out of our hands and put in the charge of experts. Getting them back from the experts is often a struggle because of all the rules (laws, regulations, etc.) based on bureaucratic forms of decision. It's also a struggle because the experts enjoy their authority and because we no longer know how to manage our own lives. Take crime, for example. As the nineteenth-century anthropologist, Edward B. Taylor, pointed out, "one of the most essential things we can learn from the life of rude [!] tribes is how society can function without policemen to keep order." In his *Tract* (18) paper, Stanley Diamond gave various reasons for the absence of disorder in "primitive" societies (little or no possessiveness, for one thing), and recently John Paddock, a Vanderbilt University professor, reported on some communities of Zapotec Indians in the mountains halfway between Mexico City and Yucatan which have no violent crime and need no police. According to Mr. Paddock—by a combination of shared community responsibility and "for even the most minor decisions and gentle, consistent disciplinary practices, they have existed almost crime-free for generations, perhaps centuries." In these "antiviolent communities," as he names them, the training of the young begins early with avoidance, later on, of the "civilized" sort of schooling. As a result,

> The Indians have managed to hold onto their lands without fighting. Through their child-rearing practices and community codes, they have produced men who show almost no machismo and women who take a strong social role.

Neighboring Zapotec communities where other habits are engendered have a "normal" amount of violence, Prof. Paddock reports. Here the treatment of the young is arbitrary, subject to adult whims. The parents stress accomplishment in school and take pleasure in showing off their children's abilities.

In contrast, the parents in the anti-violent towns care little about formal education and emphasize household skills. When a North American woman offered to pay for secondary and higher education for some of the brightest children in this region, the parents "politely declined, saying that their children would return from city schooling different from the townspeople." They agree, you could say, with Ivan Illich without ever having heard of him!

FRONTIERS

Our Friends, the Arabs

THAT people are decisively affected by what they read hardly needs pointing out. But that few people recognize the blinders acquired from their choice of reading is something that needs to. be pointed out continuously.

Such recognitions, when they come, are likely to be somewhat shocking. Take for example the way in which, by habit and choice of reading, we are led to think about the Arabs. *Hmmm*, we say to ourselves, those Arabs are in a position to make us *very* uncomfortable. By dumb luck they've got all that oil, and they're making a lot of money out of it—more, probably, than they deserve. And they didn't know how or anything about it until we explained it to them. Our engineers located the oil and showed them how to get it out of the ground. We made them *rich*, and now look what they're doing!

So, for weeks and months, you read in the papers that the Arabs are likely to raise the price of oil. The think-pieces in the papers do a will-they, won't-they, dance. How much will they raise it? How hard will we be hit?

And then, finally, they do raise the price of oil, and for weeks more we read expert speculations about the effects of the new price levels on the domestic economy. Sage comment is offered on why Saudi Arabia didn't do what some of the others did—on the kind of deal the Saudis want. And so on. . . .

So we pay more for our gas now, or will soon. And we'll go on reading about present and future hard times for the harassed American consumer—after all, that's what we are, *consumers.* It's about *all* we are, according to the papers. And just now, if you should happen to see an Arab go down the street, you'll say to yourself, I bet he's wondering how soon he'll have enough money to buy out General Motors!

A different line of reflection might result if you read an article by E. F. Schumacher in *Resurgence* for last November-December. He is talking about the changes in attitude that are now going on, and how they will affect human behavior. In one place he mentions the Arabs. We have every reason, he says, to be *grateful* to the OPEC countries—the petroleum exporting countries, which are mostly Arab.

Why? Because, he says, "they have called the Uuff of an economic system that assumes that the non-renewable materials like fossil fuels can be used at a rate that doubles every ten years."

After all, the oil won't last forever. OPEC spokesmen have for years pointed out that unless the countries which now consume so much petroleum learn ways to moderate their demands, the oil may be simply gone—used up—within thirty years or so, perhaps less. The Arab countries need funds, they say, to develop their capacity for economic survival in other ways, since the oil is sure to run out some day. This seems entirely reasonable. Meanwhile the U.S. importation of oil keeps increasing, while domestic production goes down. The sooner we learn that this won't—can't—work, the better, and if the Arabs are able to teach it to us by a stiff price increase, then gratitude, Mr. Schumacher suggests, is the only sensible response.

Mr. Schumacher is himself persuaded that the era of counting, with its quantitative approach to knowledge, is on the way out. Counting has its uses, but when counting acquires oracular authority it gets in the way of real thinking. Schumacher tells a story to illustrate this:

> I learned a lesson during the war when I was a farm labourer up in Northampton shire and one of my jobs every morning, before breakfast, was to go up a hill to a field nearby and count the cattle. So I trotted there, half asleep, and counted 32 and then I went down to the farm, touched my cap to the bailiff and said, "Yes sir, 32," and he said, "Go and have your breakfast." One day, when I arrived there, an old farmer standing by the gate said, "Young man, what do you do here every morning?" I said, "Nothing

much I just count the cattle." He shook his old head and said, "If you count them every day they won t flourish." So I went back, murmuring to myself, "Those country yokels! How stupid can you get?" I mean, I am a professional statistician—he didn't know that. [Schumacher *was* a professional statistician—a Rhodes Scholar and Oxford graduate studying in England when the war came, making him an "enemy alien" who was interned and put to work on the land.]

One day I came up there and I counted, I counted again and again, and there were only 31. I wanted my breakfast so I went down and said to the bailiff, "There are only 31." He was very angry and said, "Have your breakfast—we'll go up there after breakfast." We did, and searched the place and, under one of the bushes, was a dead beast. I said to myself, "Wait a minute—why have I been here every morning counting them? That hasn't stopped the beast dying, has it? Maybe that old farmer had a point here which I missed." Perhaps he didn't put it very clearly, "If you count them every day they won't flourish!" What he may have meant was that if you train your mind on *the quantity* of them, you won't stop them dying. What does quantity matter?

What could have happened if I hadn't counted? A beast might have strayed away, but somebody would have brought it back. No, I ought to have looked for the qualitative factor, looked at every beast to see whether she was all right whether she had a sheen on her coat, and so on. I ought to have been able to go back to the bailiff and say, "Oh, they seem all right except that one looks a bit mangy." Then we would have gone up and done something sensible. Quantity had got the better of me and filled my mind instead of what really mattered, which is the quality of things.

We have the habit of depending on counting, Schumacher says, because we think that's the way to be sure we'll have an easy and comfortable time. But the counting theory of reality produces a precisely opposite result—we have a meaningless and increasingly anxious and painful time. And the more "things" we believe we have to count, the more unhappy we are. Perhaps we need to go back to school to some "old farmers."