VOLUME XL, NO. 49
DECEMBER 9, 1987

A DIAGNOSIS—OF WHAT?

THE problems of the world are approached in various ways. The Buddha, for example, found the fundamental cause of human suffering to be "craving," through which normal and necessary desire is exaggerated into obsessive longing, leading to behavior which inevitably brings pain. Plato made a similar diagnosis, suggesting that in a given community, those who had power usually combined the capacity to do what they wanted in action under the rule of their appetites, which had the result of producing injustice throughout the community. In the more recent centuries of our history, other diagnosticians appeared who saw the troubles of mankind arising from the systems of government and economic enterprise which had been established by the dominant classes in perpetuation of their own material interests and authority. Revolutions were fomented to correct these abuses, but the succeeding "systems" soon exhibited flaws often as great as those which the revolutions had set out to correct.

Today the critics are more thoughtful and cautious. The world's problems have multiplied many-fold with the growing power over natural forces that science and technology have provided, and the most obvious of present-day problems is the frightening prospect of nuclear war, which numerous groups, growing in number, are striving to avert. Yet there is not just "one big problem." In the Los Angeles *Times* for last July 16, Marvin L. Goldberger, a physicist who is the retiring president of the California Institute of Technology, soon to head the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton, told an interviewer:

> "The problem of international security is not a scientific problem. There are no magic bullets and there is no impenetrable shield. This is a human problem. It requires wisdom. All the arms control is just buying time until wisdom has a chance to prevail." . . . At one point, he spoke about the continuing failure of American education to teach many students anything about science, a point that has been made by every blue-ribbon commission that has looked at the subject in the last several years. What can be done about it?
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> "I don't know what it would take to recharge the educational system," Goldberger said. "I don't have any good solutions. I really don't. Like most hard problems, if you try to solve the whole problem, you throw up your hands in despair. You just have to attack it a bit at a time and hope you do something."
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> Nor is the danger of science just the threat of nuclear catastrophe. "We're pouring an immense amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere," Goldberger said. "We are going to cause a significant climatic change, the consequences of which we don't understand, and it could be very serious. We seem to be in the process of destroying the ozone layer. We're cutting down the rain forests. It's going to influence our climate and cause some erosion.
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> "What we require now of science is that it indeed pay very close attention to the fact that we have it within our grasp to exercise forces that are comparable to the forces of nature, and we are in the process of rather mindlessly doing things that could profoundly affect the planet.
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> "We have to devote a great deal more attention to the underlying economic and sociological problems that the world faces. It's very easy to concentrate your attention on negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva because that's a well-defined problem. But dealing with the maldistribution of resources or the destruction of the oceans—these questions are much harder. They don't involve just physicists and engineers. They involve everybody."

These observations of Marvin Goldberger may be taken as representative of the thoughtful members of our society—no doubt in the Soviet Union as well as in the United States. In addition, there are those who see what needs to be done in some large area of human enterprise—such as agriculture—and are hard at work trying to set an example. We are thinking of men like Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson, and some others of like

mind. Then, lately we received here at MANAS a book for review by Martin Shapiro, *Getting Doctored* (published by New Society Publishers in paperback at $9.95), entirely devoted to what is wrong with the medical profession. It was written mostly while the author was going through medical school in the early 1970s. (He is now assistant professor of medicine at the University of California in Los Angeles, teaching public health and the history and teaching of medicine.) The larger value of this work grows out of the fact that the writer, as he worked on it, became convinced that the diagnosis of his profession was also a diagnosis of the entire society. The defects in the practice of medicine, as he sees them, arise from the common faults of human beings generally. He believes that the medical profession cannot be singled out for "treatment" or change without undertaking a fundamental change in society at large. In this, we think, he is completely right. This makes his book fundamentally valuable.

Some passages from the Preface of *Getting Doctored* will illustrate how he gets at his subject. He entered medical school at McGill University in Montreal in 1969.

> At the outset, the medical school class seemed to contain so many remarkable people, overflowing as they were with idealism and empathy. They seemed well-suited to making substantial contributions to the world as caring physicians. I thought that it reflected well on me that someone, however mistakenly, thought that I belonged among them.
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> These illusions rapidly disappeared as I saw my colleagues become less concerned with the needs of the poor, with the problems of war and peace than with the obligations to contribute to the creation of a better society. Some of these changes clearly reflected the conservative trends of the 1970s, but others could not be dismissed so easily as trends of the times. We were not only becoming less concerned about the larger world and its problems we were also becoming more self-absorbed. And our relationships—with patients, with other health-care workers and with each other—were becoming problematic. As we continued our educations, I gradually came to the disturbing realization that the people among whom I was once so honored to count myself were becoming much less admirable.
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> This transformation seemed closely related to the process we underwent in our studies: the games we played, the rituals we practiced, the patterns of interaction we learned, the values and expectations we acquired. In short, our transformation was part of a process of socialization. But this socialization transformed apparently nice people into *Doctors* who, frequently, were not nice at all.
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> I felt so bad about what medical education was doing to me and to those around me that I was unable to pursue a career in medicine until I sorted through my feelings. So I devoted the year after my internship to thinking, reading and writing about the process of being socialized into the role of physician.

It is appropriate here to reflect that a book like *Getting Doctored* could have been written with a different title, *Getting Lawyered, by* a young man who has just passed the bar exam, or another one titled *Getting Engineered* by a graduate of our technical schools. At any rate, reflection seems to have convinced Martin Shapiro of this. Of his own work he says:

> The book that resulted from my search is in many ways a personal exploration. I have endeavored to illustrate the problems discussed with events drawn from my own experience, and these events are points of reference for my analysis. I have proceeded this way so that readers encounter the concepts used in the book as I did, at times and in ways that affirm their validity and relevance. In this sense, the book might be called a "critical memoir." I have deliberately avoided scholarly exegeses on the topics covered, but I have tried to provide a partial resume of available literature when it exists and is pertinent to the discussion. At the same time, I emphasize that the problems raised are both related to one another and to problems and factors outside of the medical context. *Getting Doctored* moves from the question of how medical students get into medical school, to the forms of socialization that they confront while there, to what happens when they reach the hospital wards. The book then examines the hierarchy of relationships established in hospitals and the kind of patient-doctor relationships which result. It also discusses the effects of increasing technology and specialization on medical practice and on the social implications of medical jargon.

The conclusion to Dr. Shapiro's Preface is perhaps the most important passage in his book, although its impact depends largely for the reader on reading the book. He said at the end of the Preface:

> When I decided to enter medical school after much indecision, a friend said to me, "It's good that you are going to be a doctor. Most people have very little control over the circumstances of their work: they have to take whatever job is available in order to survive. Physicians, on the other hand, have lots of choices. They can serve those in society who really need them, even if it means making sacrifices, or they can pursue their self-interest cynically. Based on the choices you make in this regard, we shall be able to judge your worth as a human being."

There is certainly some truth in this friend's remarks, accepted by Dr. Shapiro. He in effect replied:

> I believe that physicians and other health-care providers should be subject to such judgments. An authoritarian and insensitive physician does not have to be that way, regardless of the environmental influences which encourage these traits. Medical students who are insensitive to patients and physicians who are insensitive to colleagues are insensitive human beings, not merely reluctant and involuntary participants in a less-than-perfect system. And there are physicians and health-care workers who devote themselves to the well-being of others, who are empathetic and altruistic. They may not be able to transcend all of the limitations that society places on their ability to practice a medicine which is truly unalienated, but they often make truly grand efforts to do so, and in so doing they do positively influence their environment and those around them. The relationship with each patient and coworker in the medical hierarchy is a test of one's character; one must always struggle to affirm in these interactions the kind of world in which one believes.
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> But *Getting Doctored* does point beyond individual changes to changes in the health-care system and to the need for broader social changes. If this book encourages people to take a personal stand and to ally themselves with the forces that would make medicine more humane, then *Getting Doctored* will have fulfilled its purpose. For some of us, this will mean struggling to transform society as a whole in fundamental ways. For others it will mean working for systemic change in the health-care system and for still others, it will mean trying to practice medicine in ways which are currently in such short supply.

The hope for the future, then, lies with those who are "physicians and health-care workers who devote themselves to the well-being of others, who are empathetic and altruistic." But what accounts for the presence of these qualities in individuals who are usually only the few? Dr. Shapiro's book is largely devoted to the obstacles they encounter in the institutional formations of society, which seem virtually designed to weaken human decencies and aspirations, to promise satisfactions to those who give in and conform to the pressures of the environment. Institutions ought to foster intellectual and moral excellence, yet they seem inevitably, as time passes, to do the opposite, both catering to and rewarding moral limitations. It is the same in all professions, in business, and even, perhaps most of all in religious institutions. History confirms this judgment. Wherever institutions have acquired power over people that power has been used to weaken people into unquestioning conformists submissively obedient to the "authorities" of the day.

Have there ever been, one might ask, associations of humans which worked for a common end yet did not seek power over others? The early followers of Gautama Buddha may have been of this sort, and so, also, the immediate circle of "friends" who studied with and came under the influence of Plato. There were those in the early centuries of our era who were inspired by Ammonius Saccas and formed the fraternity of Neoplatonists, of whom Plotinus and Porphyry are the best known. More recently there have been other groups, such as the Quakers or Society of Friends, who have discovered that there is no reformation of human beings save through self-reformation and who limit their efforts in behalf of change to precept and example. The Quakers, although comparatively few in number, have been a constructive historical influence over centuries, as is known to those who have given attention to

their history. And as for learning from history in general, there is one truth that all history teaches, still mostly ignored, that Lord Acton put into words: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

It follows from this rule that whenever organization gives to some men power over others, a measure of corruption tends to enter into the administrative procedures, giving privilege to some people, harsh enforcement to others. There are of course some forms of administration which seem completely necessary, such as the rule of driving on the right (or left) on the road, and other commonsense traffic provisions. Here, one might say, a minor use of power to provide these provisions is indispensable and unlikely to open the way to much corruption. Criminal law gives administration much more latitude, evident from the fact that people with money are much less likely to be convicted and punished for crimes than the poor. Corruption in government where power is in some respects more far-reaching, is now the shame of the United States and so common that it is widely regarded with an easy tolerance by large numbers of people who have come to take public corruption as something to be expected and to be endured like bad weather.

How is public corruption to be eliminated or at least reduced? Preaching and moral exhortation do not work. Reform administrations do not last, whatever the original intentions. No one who has read the *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* will waste his time by efforts in this direction. Only a design solution will help, which in this case means the vast simplification of government to the scale of small town administration where the processes of government are very simple, wholly visible, and within the understanding of all the citizens. But in the modern mass society, the reduction of government to this scale, necessary though it may be, is difficult to imagine. Only the bioregionalists know a way to move in this direction, and this is indeed a long~term project. The present organization of society, the concentrations of population, the inability of the large majority to adjust their lives to the simplicities of rural life, the complexities of the technologies which are now part of our support systems are such that only specialists can understand their requirements and may sometimes recognize their susceptibilities to mismanagement and corruption.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of human nature. We are talking about, ultimately, the way people think about themselves and their interests, and about the world and its resources, and what they expect of themselves, if they have given that question some thought.

The importance of asking this question is made evident by Dr. Shapiro in his last chapter. There he says that "authoritarian behavior can be observed at most stages of medical education and in almost all areas of hospital medical practice."

> The earliest manifestations appear in the prospective physician well before entry into medical school. Ever-increasing numbers of young people are looking to the institution and the profession of medicine as a way of escaping from the pressure and competitiveness almost all members of society face in their daily lives; they seek to escape this reality in a way that is at once socially acceptable and psychologically bearable. Many medical school applicants approach the prospect of a medical career uncritically and unrealistically, expecting that it will transform and give meaning to a less than satisfactory existence. All too willingly, they submit before the authority of the institution of medicine, submerging themselves in it, but inescapably forfeiting part of their own identities in doing so. Once in medical school they continue to submit....
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> It should be pointed out first that some of the authority is quite rational and appropriate, as in the case of a very ill person who is incapable of making a decision about therapy, particularly in an emergency situation. But if the allocation of authority in the physician-patient encounter were entirely rational, the power relation would dissolve as the patient's health improved and he or she became better able to participate in decisions about care. Because it is irrational, however, the physician's authority does not evaporate. It stems not from any therapeutic necessity, but from the desire of the physician to hold

power over others, and from the willingness of the patient to submit.

Why should the patient *want* to submit? Only an unwillingness to accept responsibility for his or her own life can be the reason. That is why a consciously adopted conception of the self is the basic responsibility of all humans, and for this modern learning tells us little or nothing. A study of what the Buddha or Plato taught, and of those who think in harmony with these sources, would give us clues to what we can only call self-knowledge. Both Buddha and Plato taught that beneath the outer coverings of human beings, they are immortal souls working out their destiny in life after life. It is perhaps only by reflecting on such possibilities that we are able to understand why some individuals are led to write the kind of book Dr. Shapiro has written, and why, occasionally, heroes arise among us and live exemplary lives.

REVIEW
ALL THE BRAVE MEN

IT was Abraham Lincoln who decided that the motto, "In God We Trust," should be printed on our dollar bills. Daniel Bassuk, author of a recent Pendle Hill Pamphlet, *Abraham Lincoln and the Quakers,* makes this decision by Lincoln the basis of his inquiry into Lincoln's religious convictions. He asks at the beginning:

> But do we know that Lincoln trusted in God? Did he pray, did he attend church, did he belong to any church? It happens that Lincoln's religious beliefs have been an area of controversy for more than a century. Should the reader check an almanac for the religious affiliations of our Presidents, he or she would find that Lincoln is different from other presidents in that Lincoln "did not claim membership in any denomination." He is listed as "liberal" or as having "no formal affiliation." Not only has Lincoln been called an "infidel" (Remsburg and Herndon), a "practical mystic" (Grierson), and a "Christian without a creed" (David Mearns), but also "our most religious President" (William Wolf).

Nathaniel Stephenson, author of *An Autobiography of Lincoln* (1926), wrote that Lincoln's

> religion continues to resist intellectual formulation. He never accepted any definite creed. To the problems of theology he applied the same sort of reasoning that he applied to the problems of the law. He made a distinction, satisfactory to himself at least, between the essential and the incidental, and rejected everything that did not seem to him altogether essential.

James Randall, a historian, in *Lincoln the President* (1955) said that:

> Lincoln was a man of more intense religiosity than any other President the United States ever had.... Surely, among successful American politicians, Lincoln is unique in the way he breathed the spirit of Christ while disregarding the letter of Christian doctrine. And the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Following is the concluding paragraph of Bassuk's Introduction:

> In the domain of religion, Americans have been characterized as a nation of believers and joiners, yet Lincoln poked fun at many commonly held religious beliefs, and refused to join any church. Could this be because Lincoln repudiated religion when it was outward display, and chose instead an inner approach to religion, similar to the approach taken by Quakers? The purpose of this pamphlet is twofold: first, to present research indicating that Lincoln had a knowledgeable affinity with Quakers, and second, to show that 19th-century Quakers were drawn to this President's spirit.

Lincoln was not, however, impressed by anyone's claim to have a revelation as to "God's Will" in matters of the nation's affairs. When a Quaker lady told him that "he was the appointed minister of the Lord to do the work of emancipation," and quoted at some length from the Bible, he allowed her to finish, then said:

> "I have neither time nor disposition to enter into discussion with the Friend, and end this occasion by suggesting for her consideration the question whether, if it be true that the Lord has appointed me to do the work she has indicated, is it not probable He would have communicated knowledge of that fact to me as well as to her?"

Yet he was kindness itself to Quaker visitors to the White House who came to express their sympathy and encouragement. To one of those, Eliza Gurney, he wrote in September, 1864:

> I have not forgotten, probably shall never forget, the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath forenoon two years ago; nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later, ever been forgotten. In all, it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good Christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolation, and to no one of them more than yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. . .
>
> Your people—the Friends—have had, and are having a very great trial. On principle, and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds, I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law. That you believe this, I doubt not; and, believing it, I shall still receive, for our country and myself, your earnest prayers to our Father in Heaven.

A Quaker lady who came to see him in the winter of 1864, when her turn came to shake hands with him, said:

Yes, Friend Abraham, thee needs not think thee stands alone. We are all praying for thee. All our hearts, the hearts of all the people, are behind thee, and thee cannot fail! The Lord has appointed thee, the Lord will sustain thee, and the people love thee. Take comfort, friend Abraham, God is with thee.

Lincoln replied:

I know it. If I did not have the knowledge that God is sustaining and will sustain me until my appointed work is done, I could not live. If I did not believe that the hearts of all loyal people were with me, I could not endure it. My heart would have broken long ago. It is that blessed knowledge and that blessed belief that holds me to my work. This has been a bad day, and I was almost overwhelmed when you ladies came in. You have given a cup of water to a very thirsty and grateful man. Ladies, you have done me a great kindness today. I knew that good men and women were praying for me, but I was so tired, I had almost forgotten. God bless you all!

While reading this informative pamphlet, we were reminded of an extraordinary book brought out by Viking years ago—*The Face of Abraham Lincoln,* which presented in careful reproduction all the photographs that were ever taken of Lincoln—a treasure indeed, since his face says so much more about him than words can convey. In addition, the editor, James Mellon, provides the reader with a wide selection of extracts from Lincoln's writings and speeches, a fine addition to the portraits. We present here one of them, taken from his exhortation to the people of Maryland to approve the abolition of slavery by state law. This extract is from an address given in Maryland, in Baltimore, on April 18, 1864. He said:

The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty, but in using the same *word* we do not all mean the same *thing.* With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name—liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names—liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a *liberator,* while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures, even in the North, and all professing to love liberty. Hence we behold the processes by which thousands are daily passing from under the yoke of bondage, hailed by some as the advance of liberty, and bewailed by others as the destruction of all liberty. Recently as it seems, the people of Maryland have been doing something to define liberty; and thanks to them that, in what they have done, the wolf's dictionary has been repudiated.

Lincoln's attitude toward conscientious objectors was, Bassuk says, "thoroughly consistent." Bassuk tells a story to illustrate Lincoln's policy.

In 1861 a third-generation Quaker from Lake Champlain was drafted. "But it will be no use," he said. "I shall never fight. My mother taught me it is a sin. It is her religion, and my father's and their fathers'. The recruiting officer took little notice. "We'll see about that later," he commented carelessly.

The regiment went to Washington, and the Quaker boy drilled placidly and shot straight. "But I shall never fight," he reiterated.

Word went out that there was a traitor in the ranks. The lieutenant conferred with the captain, and all the forms of punishment devised for refractory soldiers were visited on him. He went through them without flinching, and there was only one thing left. He was taken before the colonel. "What does this mean?" demanded the officer. "Don't you know you will be shot?"

"That is nothing," said the Quaker. "Thee didn't think I was afraid, did thee?"

The colonel went to the President, to Lincoln. Lincoln listened and looked relieved. "Why, that is plain enough, he answered. "There is only one thing to do. Trump up some excuse and send him home. They can't kill a boy like that you know. The country needs all her brave men wherever they are. Send him home."

For ordering this pamphlet write to Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pennslyvania 19086. The price is $2.50, postpaid.

COMMENTARY
THE POOR ARE NOT HELPLESS

A UNIQUE sort of bank has come into existence recently, a non-profit affiliate of an Arkansas bank-holding company that will depart from all the rules of banking. An account of this institution is given in the August issue of a magazine called INC., by David Osborne. The "loans," he says, "will be small, the recipients poor." No collateral will be required. This enterprise, he says, will be "the most radical experiment in rural economic development since the Tennessee Valley Authority."

What was the inspiration for this enterprise? It came of all places, from Bangladesh. The new bank is called the Shorebank and two of its executives, Ronald Grzyinski and Mary Houghton, in 1983 were invited by the Ford Foundation to visit Bangladesh to study the Grameen Bank there that was doing a lot of things banks aren't supposed to do.

> It loaned to some of the poorest people in the world, and it loaned without collateral. Yet its default rate was less than 2%, and it was growing like Topsy.
>
> The secret? The Grameen Bank had found a powerful alternative to collateral—peer pressure. To apply for a loan, a group of 50 people of the same sex had to form smaller groups of 5. The 10 groups each met with a bank worker for training, then met regularly to discuss each project. They also met weekly with the 9 other groups and the bank officer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their business ideas. Each loan had to be approved by the small group, the larger collection of 10 groups, and family by the bank officer.
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> Initially, the group chose its two most needy members to apply for loans. The average loan amount was $60; at close to half the per capita annual income in Bangladesh, it would have been analogous to about $7,000 in the United States. After six weeks, if the weekly payments had been made on schedule, the next two members became eligible for loans. And after six more weeks, again, if everyone had paid on time, the final member got a loan. The group not only provided a mechanism to ensure repayment, it allowed the bank to forego analysis of each loan application, thus eliminating the high "transaction costs" that normally discourage small business loans.

Some five hundred different types of businesses have been funded by this Bangladesh bank.

> Most borrowers used their first loan to go into business doing work they had already been doing for wages. They bought their own rickshaws, they husked rice, they bought a milk cow or two. Some groups borrowed for collective activities: digging a well or building a mill. Everyone contributed a small fraction of earnings to a group savings fund to be used for emergency no-interest loans. And some of their interest payments were applied to an insurance fund for old-age pensions and other needs.
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> According to its founder and managing director, Muharnmad Yunus, the bank now has 328 branches servicing 5,600 villages. It has made more than $54 million in loans to over 275,000 borrowers, and its monthly disbursal rate is $2 million. Equally important, it has changed the lives of many of its borrowers—particularly the women, who now account for 75% of all loans in a country in which they make up only 5% of the labor force. According to Yunus, women make far better borrowers than men, because they are so fiercely determined to improve the lives of their children....
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> So far, however, the major impact has been on the lives of the poor, not on overall economic growth. "The real change is when a one-sari woman becomes a two-sari woman," says Yunus. He describes knocking on a woman's door, knowing she is home, and finally realizing that she cannot answer because her only sari is hanging out to dry. When she can buy a second sari, he says, she is liberated from this indignity.

The two bankers who visited Bangladesh to study the Grameen Bank are modelling their Chicago venture on what they learned.

> Houghton is helping launch two programs in Chicago that are based on Yunus's model, one in the familiar South Shore neighborhood, the other citywide. The maximum loan is $5,000, but loans to first-time borrowers will be limited to $1,000. The citywide Women's Self-Employment Project is trying to convince the state to allow participating welfare recipients to keep their welfare checks and child-care subsidies during their first year of self-employment.

> In the beginning, both Chicago programs will follow the Grameen model, although Houghton expects adjustments along the way. As in Bangladesh, she says, most people will start with work they already know, such as home day care, word processing, cleaning services, and dressmaking.

Conditions in Bangladesh are of course very different from conditions in Chicago, and the opportunities for self-employment and small businesses are also different. But there are also similarities:

> "The commonality between Bangladesh and America is the fact that poor individuals are capable people," says Yunus.... "In the minds of the theoreticians, poor people are helpless. To me, a poor person is a force. She has lots of unutilized capacity."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
TWO KINDS OF EDUCATION

GENERAL writing about education seems virtually endless, with books, articles, and pamphlets coming out all the time. The anecdote, telling about the experience of a teacher and child, or a parent and child, is almost invariably more interesting, more useful, than a general statement Yet there are *some* general statements which are both priceless and easy to understand, even though they are few and seldom encountered.

We are thinking of certain passages by A.H. Maslow in *Farther Reaches of Human Nature* in the chapters related to education. In one of these chapters he begins:

> If one took a course or picked up a book on the psychology of learning, most of it, in my opinion, would be beside the point—that is, beside the "humanistic" point. Most of it would present learning as the acquisition of associations, of skills and capacities that are *external* and not *intrinsic* to the human character, to the human personality, to the person himself. Picking up coins or keys or possessions or something of the sort is like picking up reinforcements and conditioned reflexes that are, in a certain, very profound sense, expendable. It does not really matter if one has a conditioned reflex; if I salivate to the sound of a buzzer and then this extinguishes, nothing has happened to me; I have lost nothing of any consequence whatever. We might almost say that these extensive books on the psychology of learning are of no consequence, at least to the human center, to the human soul, to the human essence.

Intrinsic learning, for Maslow, meant growth and development of character. It meant, as he says, "the 'self-actualization' of a person, the becoming fully human, the development of the fullest height that the human species can stand up to or what that particular individual can come to. In a less technical way, it is helping the person to become the best he is able to become."

This does not mean that associative learning is without value, but that it is secondary in importance compared to becoming a better person. As Maslow says:

> Associative learning in general is certainly useful, extremely useful for learning things that are of no real consequence, or for learning means—techniques which are after all, interchangeable. And many of the things we must learn are like that. If one needs to memorize the vocabulary of some other language, he would learn it by sheer rote memory. Here, the laws of association can be a help.... But in terms of becoming a better person, in terms of self-development and self-fulfillment, or in terms of "becoming fully human," the greatest learning experiences are very different. . . . If one thinks in terms of the developing of the kinds of wisdom, the kinds of understanding, the kinds of life skills that we would want, then he must think in terms of what I would like to call *intrinsic* education—*intrinsic* learning; that is, learning to be a human being in general, and second, learning to be *this* particular human being.
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> I am now very busily occupied in trying to catch up with all the epiphenomena of this notion of intrinsic education. Certainly one thing I can tell you. Our conventional education looks mighty sick....
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> Many people are beginning to discover that the physicalistic, mechanistic model was a mistake and that it has led us . . . where? To atom bombs. To a beautiful technology of killing, as in the concentration camps. To Eichmann. An Eichmann cannot be refuted with a positivistic philosophy or science. He just cannot; and he never got it until the moment he died. He didn't know what was wrong. As far as he was concerned, nothing was wrong; he had done a good job. He *did* do a good job, if you forget about the ends and the values. I point out that professional science and professional philosophy are dedicated to the proposition of forgetting about the values, excluding them. This, therefore, must lead to Eichmanns, to atom bombs, and to who knows what!

Maslow was one of the handful of humanistic psychologists who recognized the dire consequences which have resulted from ruling out of the universe the values by which we ought to be living, deliberating and acting; he resolved to find ways to restore serious thought about the higher qualities of human beings to both philosophy and education. Maslow wrote:

> We must make a new vocabulary for all these untilled, these unworked problems. This "cognition of being" means really the cognition that Plato and Socrates were talking about; almost, you could say, a technology of happiness, of pure excellence, pure truth, pure goodness, and so on. Well, why *not* a technology of joy, or happiness? . . . Education is learning to grow, learning what to grow toward, learning what is good and bad, learning what is desirable and undesirable, learning what to choose and what not to choose.

Parents and teachers who have these ideas at heart discover, first, the difficulty of teaching them—a difficulty to which, you could say, all the dialogues of Plato are devoted; and second, they discover the dead weight of opposition they encounter in the habits, customs, and authorities of the civilization of a mass society. Civilization gives us numerous conveniences, pleasures, arts, and order of a sort, but it also gives us stultifying conventions and rules which are devitalized and mechanical interpretations of what was once wisdom in the past. Mature and wise parents find ways of freeing themselves and their offspring of much of the customs and "requirements" of civilization, often developing open-minded and creative children as a result. For the most part they are happy in doing this, since it is a fulfillment of the obligations of life, and the fulfillment of obligations is a source of joy to people who understand what they are doing. And in these terms, Maslow was a happy man, by reason of the clarifications of human obligations that he provided for his readers. He did this through the positive implications of the philosophy he proposed and by the practical criticisms he gave of the obstacles characteristic of society. He said:

> If we look at education in our own society, we see two sharply different factors. First of all, there is the overwhelming majority of teachers, principals, curriculum planners, school superintendents, who are devoted to passing on the knowledge that children need in order to live in our industrialized society. They are not especially imaginative or creative, nor do they often question *why* they are teaching the things they teach. Their chief concern is with efficiency, that is, with the implanting of the greatest number of facts into the greatest possible number of children, with a minimum of time, expense, and effort. On the other hand, there is the minority of humanistically oriented educators who have as their goal the creation of better human beings, or in psychological terms, self-actualization and self-transcendence.
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> Classroom learning often has as its unspoken goal the reward of pleasing the teacher. Children in the classroom learn very quickly that creativity is punished, while repeating a memorized response is rewarded, and concentrate on what the teacher wants them to say, rather than understanding the problem. Since classroom learning focuses on behavior rather than on thought, the child learns exactly how to behave while keeping his thoughts his own. . . .
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> The phrase "earning a degree" summarizes the evils of extrinsically oriented education. The student automatically gets his degree after investing a certain number of hours at the university, referred to as credits. All the knowledge taught in the university has its "cash value" in credits, with little or no distinction made between various subjects taught at the university. A semester of basketball coaching, for example, earns the student as many credits as a semester in French philosophy. Since only the final degree is considered to have any real value, leaving college before the completion of one's senior year is considered to be a waste of time by the society and a minor tragedy by parents. You have all heard of the mother bemoaning her daughter's foolishness in leaving school to get married during her senior year since the girl's education has been "wasted." The learning value of spending three years at the university has been completely forgotten.

Maslow goes on to propose what would be for him an ideal college curriculum.

FRONTIERS

Backpacks Unpacked?

IN July of 1986, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection made public its plan to truck radium-contaminated soil to a quarry in Vernon, N.J., close to the border of New York state, the nearest town being Warwick, N.Y. Under this plan the contaminated or "hot" soil was to be combined with local dirt at the quarry and then this untested mixture spread over surrounding land. In a report of this event, Jean Kenney, who lives in the area, said in a letter to MANAS:

> The quarry is located over a major aquifer and water from a nearby creek flows from New Jersey into neighboring New York (only 1.6 miles away). The citizens of Vernon were immediately outraged. They organized a citizens' committee, the No-Name Committee, to coordinate efforts to block this decision. Within two weeks, Warwick's citizens also organized, forming WARD (Warwick Against Radioactive Dump). People felt it would be necessary to fight the decision on all levels: community education and organizing, political pressure and legal recourse. While these activities were going on, it became clear that if all else failed, the people were committed to physically stop the trucks themselves. There was a pervasive sense of protecting one's family, land and water that led not only to intense commitment, but also anger and fear.

The chairman of WARD, Jean Kenney says, saw the need for training in non-violence. He feared that without such training and planning the Department of Environmental Protection would simply wait a while, until the excitement died down, and then carry out its plan. But when a New Jersey Judge lifted the temporary restraining order barring shipment of the contaminated soil, the WARD chairman asked Jean Kenney, who had been active in training people in non-violent action, to talk to the Warwick group. She talked to the group and then found some helpers for a program of training. They decided that the best way to begin would be to focus on nonviolent civil disobedience and its legal consequences. Between 60 and a hundred people attended the initial meetings.

Her previous experience, Jean Kenney said, had been with people who wanted to oppose nuclear weapons and were already committed to non-violence.

> Neither was the case in Vernon and Warwick. The people were committed to stopping the trucks: we had to convince them that nonviolent resistance is the only way. The techniques and terminology I used were initially alienating. The "legal consequences" part of the training was allotted approximately 20 minutes, touching on general explanations of misdeameanors, violations, personal recognizance, etc. However, when we faced the people (mostly middle class and many older folks), the legal aspects of civil disobedience were their primary concern. Therefore, 20 minutes was insufficient. The questions that surfaced when the legal issues were addressed extended the training for an hour or more. The most basic concept, that civil disobedience is breaking the law and we would be subject to arrest and possibly jail, caused outbursts of disbelief and extreme anger. People were willing to risk physical harm blocking the trucks, but had not grasped the reality that no matter how justifiable their actions they were breaking the law. Facing the reality of arrest and jail forced people to deal with how it would affect their lives. They questioned the likelihood of losing teaching certificates or medical and other professional licenses. They realized this action would affect their families and jobs. They were frightened by the consequences that are inherent in an act of civil disobedience. But they also began to see the necessity of nonviolent action.
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> After the initial anger had dissipated and the risks were identified, people accepted the responsibility of the action and felt their collective power.

In addition, they learned of the preparation of the state to deal effectively with any violent action. And they realized that any violence on their part would turn public sentiment against them.

> There was no doubt we were justified in this act of civil disobedience, and if we resorted to violence, or even disorderly conduct, we could not win. Non-violent discipline was a way of protecting ourselves, and the key to our winning. People turned their focus

> from shooting out truck tires to devising wonderfully creative nonviolent actions. Farmers offered to drive their herds of cows into the roads if the trucks came. A junk yard owner was willing to block the road with "wrecks." Tow truck owners refused the state government's offers to hire them to tow cars from the road if necessary on the day of the action. And people who work in New York City drafted a "commuter guerillas" plan to drive as close as possible, leave their locked cars blocking the road, and walk to the site.

While there were some who said the training was "scaring the people away," the trainers believed it was right to tell the people what might be the result of civil disobedience. The state was already considering the use of an armory as "a holding tank for the protectors." But the trainers believed that "by understanding the risks, the people could then make their own choices as to how deeply to become involved." By the end of the summer, three to four hundred people had participated in the training, were attending weekly meetings, had their bags packed and were "ready to go." A group of ten people were chosen to plan the action.

> An alerting network was developed that linked both communities and involved the volunteer fire corps CB radios, phone chains, and the ringing of church bells. . . . Police contacts were made, and an elaborate support system was devised in the event of the action evolving into an encampment. Through this team we were even able to communicate with people not within our group who were planning destructive or violent acts. This outreach allowed us to feel reasonably assured that people would not be harmed and the other group would distance themselves enough that our commitment to nonviolence would not be compromised.

This story has a happy ending. Apparently the news of all these careful preparations got around, perhaps reaching the state's administrators. In any event, Jean Kenney was able to conclude her report:

> On the day before Thanksgiving, 1986, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection announced it had abandoned its plan to dump radium-contaminated soil in Vernon. We are still happily surprised at our own strength. The backpacks that the folks had prepared for the day of the face-off with the trucks are probably unpacked—but maybe not!