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COUNTER CURRENTS

IF we go back in our history a hundred years, and then a quarter century more, we come upon the genesis of the forces which have shaped the present. As Lynn White, jr., has pointed out, it was about 1850 when Western Europe and America "arranged a marriage between science and technology, a union of the theoretical and the empirical approaches to our natural environment." This amounted to practical realization of the Baconian credo that "scientific knowledge means technological power over nature," with the result in the present that, as this historian put it, "With the population explosion, the carcinoma of planless urbanism, the now geological deposits of sewage and garbage, surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its nest in such short order."

This period also saw the great migration to the West in the United States, the conquest and settlement of lands bordering the Pacific, and the unfolding of the epoch of Manifest Destiny for Americans. It was the time of the Civil War and of the Robber Barons who came after, of the making of great fortunes and the separation of the rich from the poor.

Yet it was also the time of Carlyle in England, and of Emerson and the Transcendentalists in America. The fruit of the latter enabled Van Wyck Brooks to write his book, *The Flowering of New England* (1936). Who were the Transcendentalists? They were men and women of New England during the middle years of the last century who transformed the inherited Puritan intensity of the time into a generous pantheistic philosophy and ardent idealism that proved infectious to their contemporaries, exercising immeasurable influence. The term *Transcendental* was borrowed from Immanuel Kant and given a richer if less precise meaning. In his doctoral thesis, *Studies in New England Transcendentalism,* published by Columbia University Press in 1908, Harold Goddard gave this summarizing account:

> Kant had taught that time and space are not external realities or even concepts derived from external experience, but *ways* in which the mind "constitutes" its world of sense. In terms of the familiar illustration, they are the mental spectacles through which we look. Again, cause and effect, he says, and all the other "categories" are forms or methods in accord with which the mental content is arranged. The ideas of God, furthermore, of freedom, and of immortality, are inevitable intuitions of the practical nature of man; and these intuitions, since man *is* essentially a practical and moral being, have therefore not a merely sentimental but a real validity. Now from these and other Kantian conceptions a broad generalization was made, and the word *transcendental* came to be applied—by the New England transcendentalists and others—to whatever in man's mental and spiritual nature is conceived of as "above" experience and independent of it. Whatever transcends (sensational) experience is transcendental. Innate, original, universal, *a priori*, intuitive—these are words all of which convey a part of the thought swept under the larger meaning of the term. . . .
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> This philosophy teaches the unity of the world in God and the immanence of God in the world. Because of this indwelling of divinity, every part of the world, however small, is a microcosm, comprehending within itself, like Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall, all the laws and meaning of existence. The soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world, and contains, latently, all which it contains. The normal life of man is a life of continual expansion, the making actual of the potential elements of his being. This may occur in two ways: either directly, in states which vary from ordinary perception of truth to moments of mystical rapture in which there is a conscious influx of the divine into the human; or indirectly, through the instrumentality of nature. Nature is the embodiment of spirit in the world of sense—it is a great picture to be appreciated; a great book to be read; a great task to be performed.

In this book Goddard devotes most of his attention to the four that he regarded as the most important—Bronson Alcott, Emerson, Theodore

Parker, and Margaret Fuller. They were, he says, *"Puritans to the core."*

> We have ample evidence of the stuff of which these leading transcendentalists were made. Though they had revolted against their ancestral creed, they had kept in its purity their ancestral character. Channing risks a life-long popularity and endangering many a life-long friendship by his stand on the slavery question; Alcott choosing to abide by his principles, and, at the price of its disbanding, to retain a colored child in his school; Emerson sacrificing his position in the ministry to his convictions on the question of the Lord's Supper—these are but typical instances of this survival from the ancient stock of a stern, unbending, uncompromising virtue. These men had in common the sincerity, the purity, the moral heroism, the noble and unselfish adherence to an ideal, which we always think of as the dominant grandeur of the old Puritanism. . . . Transcendentalism was a gospel.
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> They were not content to affirm abstractly the divinity of human nature; they must apply this belief in their stand on the slavery question. They were not content to rest in a theoretical individualism; they must preach and live lives of conspicuous self-reliance. And it was the union of the iconoclasm of the Puritan character and a philosophy that taught no adherence to "external" authority, even more, probably, than its French Revolutionary roots, that made New England transcendentalism a grand casting off of tradition.

Many of these qualities, we might add, seem to run in Goddard's veins, and to flow into his prose, enriching and broadening his Quaker heritage. We have been quoting his book in order to show the presence in American life of a far-reaching counter-current of thought and action during the years of the rise of industrialism and national egotism, and to suggest the *lifting power* of articulate individuals who combine intellectual freedom with moral integrity, a tempered and disciplined anarchism with deep concern for the common good, and whose ardor was in no way dimmed by the vicissitudes of either personal or national life, but rather was intensified, as in Alcott and Thoreau.

What was their influence and how did it work? The question produces frustration because of the difficulty in identifying the flow of high inspiration. The channels of influence in which they believed, and which they sought, more or less deliberately, were perhaps given an accurate description by William James at the very end of the century. He wrote in a letter to a friend in 1899:

> . . . As for me, my bed is made: I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and [for] the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets. Or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time.

Goddard ends his book by saying:

> The influence of Emerson on such men as Arnold and Tyndall, men so unlike Emerson in many ways and in many ways so unlike each other, is typical of the inspiration which this movement spread abroad. Many a tribute has attested this, and there is no more fitting way than with one of these to conclude what we have had to say of New England transcendentalism:
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> " . . . in a copy of Mrs. Jameson's Italian Painters, against a passage describing Correggio as a true servant of God in his art, above sordid ambition, devoted to truth, 'one of those superior beings of whom there are so few', Margaret [Fuller] wrote on the margin, 'And yet all might be such.' The book lay long on the table of the owner, in Florence, and chanced to be read there by a young artist of much talent. 'These words,' said he, months afterwards, 'struck out a new strength in me. They revived resolutions, long fallen away, and made me set my face like flint'."

Multiply this fragment by an unknown but potent coefficient and you have an idea of how good influence is spread. Yet one now repeats it with nostalgia. The idealists of the nineteenth century, we feel today, declaimed too easily about their inner life. Is this a modern shyness, or an appropriate reticence? Or is it that such resolves as the young painter declared are no longer made? Or are they silently made and hidden from view?

The ancients held, in their legends and myths, that the altar of fulfillment or the lonely path to truth is guarded by terrible monsters; and have we, during the century added to the time of Emerson, had encounters with those monsters, that discourage spontaneous outpourings of the heart? Some years ago, in his *Los Angeles Times* (Sept. 11, 1977) review of E.F. Schumacher's *Guide for the*

Perplexed, Theodore Roszak wondered about this, in connection with the direct appeal made by the author to such thinkers as Aristotle, Dante, and Thomas Aquinas. Wise as they may be, it is difficult indeed to bring their words past the Scylla and Charybdis of modern skepticism and disillusionment. Roszak mused:

> It does no good at all to quote them at length, to celebrate their insight, to adulate their wisdom. Of course, they are wise and fine and noble, but they stand on the other side of the abyss. They have not, with Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, looked into the heart of darkness and seen "the horror." No, not even Dante, who traveled all the circles of hell, but always knowing there was a way down and out and through.
>
> Similarly, it is naive to summon us to self-knowledge without acknowledging that the deepest self-knowledge of our time begins in the experiencing of radical absurdity and cosmic abandonment. Self-knowledge for us must go through Nietzsche, Kafka, Sartre, Beckett, not around them. Where does serious philosophy begin with us? With the truth that Schumacher does not face in these pages, that religious tradition has failed us. It has withered in our grasp. At some point in the drama of the modern world, the vertical dimension failed to provide a sure purchase upon the need for personal autonomy and common decency that people have come to yearn for desperately.

One need not altogether agree with this reviewer to recognize that he has got hold of a matter of some importance. In all likelihood we need a new vocabulary of spiritual aspiration, or to find some way of renewing the terms of the past with awareness of the dimensions Roszak speaks of. One could even say that the yearning for "personal autonomy and common decency" has already directly set going change in the lives of a growing number of men and women who, whatever their private feelings and inner philosophical wonderings, are acting on their longings, leaving the moral logic implicit instead of announced.

Yet there is enough good writing going on by such people to show that they are consciously engaged in the recreation of culture. And they may be, and likely are, reading Emerson and Thoreau while they carry on their work. It is too soon to say what will emerge as the "philosophy" of tomorrow, yet that far-reaching changes in thought are under way seems undeniable. There are plenty of easy definitions and shallow prophecies to choose from, but these are not the forces which have begun to remake the world. Perhaps we can say that the most actively constructive people of our time are not renewing their faith, but renewing the very grounds of faith.

Here Emerson becomes of service. In his long essay on Nature, in the section concerned with language, he shows that the art of communication has the deepest of roots. There are demanding requirements for speech about high things. He says:

> A man's power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth, and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise,—and duplicity and falsehood take the place of truth, the power over nature as an interpreter of the will is in a degree lost; new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time, the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation, who for a short time believe, and make others believe, that they see and utter truths, who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but who feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the country, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature.

It is of interest that Ortega, in giving an account of the artificialities of modern education, arrives at essentially the same conclusion as Emerson, although the elements of his discussion are somewhat different. Instead of those who "hold primarily on nature," he speaks of the creators of science who become masters in their fields through an inner necessity to know for themselves. They work in authentic response to a felt need, but those who "study" the science so created have no such feeling:

> The fact is that the typical student is one who does not feel the direct need of a science, nor any real

concern with it, and who yet sees himself forced to busy himself with it. This indicates the general deception which surrounds studying. . . . Thus, out of so genuine and lively a need that men—the creators of science—dedicated their entire lives to it, is made a dead need and a false activity. . . .

Meanwhile, generation after generation, the frightening mass of human knowledge which the student must assimilate piles up. And in proportion, as knowledge grows and is enriched, and becomes specialized, the student will move farther and farther away from feeling any immediate and genuine need for it. Each time, there will be less congruence between the sad human activity which is studying, and the admirable human occupation which is true knowing. And so the terrible gap which began at least a century ago continues to grow, the gap between living culture, genuine knowledge, and the ordinary man. Since culture or knowledge has no other reality than to respond to needs that are truly felt and to satisfy them in one way or another, while the way of transmitting knowledge is to study, which is not to feel those needs, what we have is that culture or knowledge hangs in mid-air and has no roots in sincerity in the average man who finds himself forced to swallow it whole. That is to say, there is introduced into the human mind a foreign body, a set of dead ideas that could not be assimilated.

This culture, which does not have any root structure in man, a culture which does not spring from him spontaneously, lacks any native and indigenous values; this is something imposed, extrinsic, strange, foreign, and unintelligible; in short, unreal. Underneath this culture—received but not truly assimilated—man will remain intact as he was; that is to say, he will remain uncultured, a barbarian. . . . This explains the colossal paradox of these decades—that an enormous progress in terms of culture should have produced a man of the type we now have, a man indisputably more barbarous than was the man of a hundred years ago; and that this acculturation, this accumulation of culture, should produce—paradoxically but automatically—humanity's return to barbarism. (*Some Lessons in Metaphysics*, Norton, 1969; Chap. 1.)

For still another version of Emerson's finding, see Wendell Berry's *Standing by Words* (North Point Press, 1983).

Interestingly, in the innovative thinking now going on, while many writers seem to share Roszak's distaste for medieval theologians, there is clear indication of a preference for ideas and terms which have moral implications instead of the language of preachment. Thus one sees fairly frequent quotation of Schumacher's distinction between convergent and divergent problems—convergent problems being ones which have finite elements and are solvable, while divergent problems are fraught with ancient dilemmas, as in the attempt to answer the question: How shall I educate my children? or, What is the best way to bring about peace? If they are fundamental, neologisms with moral content often become popular and are made part of everyday language, as in the case of "self-actualization," used by A.H. Maslow, which seems little more than a good translation of the ancient counsel, "Become what you are." In fact, the more ancient the source, the more easily are aphoristic sayings adopted in the present. One thinks, for example, of Lao tse's opening sentence in the *Tao Te Ching:* "The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name." A generation or so ago Lao tse's ideas on government were regarded as backward and childish. Today they are beginning to seem profoundly wise:

> Were I ruler of a little State with a small population, and only ten or a hundred men available as soldiers. I would not use them. I would have the people look on death as a grievous thing, and they should not travel to distant countries. Though they might possess boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them. Though they might own weapons and armour, they should have no need to use them. I would make people return to the use of knotted cords. They should find their plain food sweet, their rough garments fine. They should be content with their homes, and happy in their simple ways. If a neighboring State was within sight of mine—nay if we were close enough to hear the crowing of each other's cocks and the barking of each other's dogs—the two people should grow old and die without there ever having been any mutual intercourse.

A literal reading may seem ridiculous, but the Gandhian recension of this counsel is becoming widely appreciated. Moral ideas may need to return by way of the ground up, so that we can learn to think metaphysically without becoming theological.

REVIEW

ON POLITICAL CLASSIFICATION

A GOOD book review in the *Nation* (June 2), by Thomas Bender, of Jane Jacobs' *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*—of which we have since requested a review copy from the publisher—leads us to begin this week's "review" with some observations about the political classification of writers. In some cases—almost always in the case of good writers—classification means vulgarization. Political categories simplify and flatten character, ignore subtlety, disdain paradox. A familiar example is the calling of Ortega y Gasset a "conservative." He believed in the preservation and fostering of excellence and sought the development of an "aristocracy of character," and actually regarded the upper classes as largely made up of "mass-minded" people.

How does Bender handle such questions? Of Jane Jacobs he says:

> Perhaps no left-leaning critic of American society has so enthusiastically embraced capitalism since William Leggett brought the social theories of Locofoco democracy to the editorial pages of the New York *Evening Post* in the 1830s. Both Leggett and Jacobs belong to a once-popular American tradition of antimonopoly capitalism. This is a tradition which does not accept the equation of bigness with efficiency vaunted by corporate capitalism. It does, however, endorse the expanded opportunities offered by antimonopoly capitalism.

Is anyone else writing these days in this category? We think that Paul Hawken, author of *The Next Economy*, might fit. But this is also classification. Read, we suggest, his book.

Another classifying term is "left" or "leftist," used by Thomas Bender as "left-leaning." What does it mean? The reply we have found most useful was set down nearly forty years ago by Dwight Macdonald in his magazine, *Politics* (1944-49), as part of his essay, "The Root Is Man," which later appeared in a book of that title (with the appearance of which the MANAS editors had something to do—paperback copies still available from MANAS—at $5.00). Macdonald says that "Left" had a definable meaning from the time of the French Revolution (1789) until 1928, when Stalin drove Trotsky into exile. In the first part of "Root," titled "We Need a New Political Vocabulary," he said:

> Let me try to define the 1789-1928 "Left" and "Right."
>
> The Left comprised those who favored a change in social institutions which would make the distribution of income more equal (or completely equal) and would reduce class privileges (or do away with classes altogether). The central intellectual concept was the validity of the scientific method; the central moral concept was the dignity of Man and the individual's right to liberty and a full personal development. Society was therefore conceived of as a means to an end. There were important differences in method (as, reform v. revolution, liberalism v. class struggle) but on the above principles the Left was pretty much agreed.
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> The Right was made up of those who were either satisfied with the status quo (conservatives) or wanted it to become even more inegalitarian (reactionaries). In the name of Authority, the Right resisted change, and in the name of Tradition it also, logically enough, opposed what had become the cultural motor of change: that willingness, common alike to Bentham and Marz, Jefferson and Kropotkin, to follow scientific inquiry wherever it led and to reshape institutions accordingly. Those of the Right thought in terms of an "organic" society, in which society is the end and the citizen the means. They justified inequalities of income and privileges by alleging an intrinsic inequality of individuals, both as to abilities and human worth.

It should be noted here that for Macdonald "organic" did not sanctify, as it does today, but was a pejorative Hegelianism, as in "organic State," which mean very nearly the abolition of the individual. Macdonald goes on:

> This great dividing line has become increasingly nebulous with the rise of Nazism and Stalinism, both of which combine Left and Right elements in a bewildering way. Or, put differently, both the old Right and the old Left have almost ceased to exist as historical realities, and their elements have been recombined in the dominant modern tendency: an inegalitarian and organic society in which the citizen

> is a means, not an end, and whose rulers are anti-traditional and scientifically minded. . . . The whole idea of historical process, which a century ago was the badge of the Left, has become the most persuasive appeal of the apologists for the status quo.
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> In this Left-Right hybrid, the notion of Progress is central. A more accurate terminology might therefore be to reserve the term "Right" for such oldfashioned conservatives as Herbert Hoover and Winston Churchill and to drop the term "Left" entirely, replacing it with two words: "Progressive" and "Radical."

The Progressives believe that if we follow science we shall get where we want to go. "The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there." Macdonald explains his meaning for "Radical," and while a bit off our subject of classification, what he says is worth repeating:

> "Radical" would apply to the as yet few individuals—mostly anarchists, conscientious objectors, and renegade Marxists like myself—who reject the concept of Progress, who judge things by their present meaning and effect, who think the ability of science to guide us has been over-rated and who therefore redress the balance by emphasizing the ethical aspect of politics. . . . And we feel that the firmest ground from which to struggle for that human liberation which was the goal of the old Left is the ground not of History but of those non-historical values (truth, justice, love, etc.) which Marx has made unfashionable among socialists. . . .
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> The Progressive thinks in collective terms (the interests of Society or the Workingclass); the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility. The Progressive starts off from what actually is happening; the Radical starts off from what he wants to happen. The former must have the feeling that History is "on his side." The latter goes along the road pointed by his own individual conscience; if History is going his way, too, he is pleased; but he is quite stubborn about following "what ought to be" rather than "what is.

Writers do what they can to avoid misleading and sometimes meaningless political classification. Paul Goodman, for one, subtitled his book, *New Reformation* (1970), "Notes of a Neolithic Conservative." Hannah Arendt, toward the end of her life, said:

> "So you ask me where I am. I am nowhere. I am really not in the mainstream of present or any other political thought. But not because I want to be so original—it so happens that I somehow don't fit."

And her friend, Mary McCarthy, said recently in an interview:

> "I think I've always been extremely conservative. . . . Nobody who believes in the capitalist system can possibly be a conservative, because it s a contradiction in terms. . . . A true conservative wants to preserve something resembling a golden age.

Thomas Bender finds Jane Jacobs to be "profoundly American," especially in the intellectual method of her work, the best of which, he says, is "written out of the direct observation of Jane Jacobs." She is, therefore, a practitioner of what de Tocqueville called the"Philosophical Method of the Americans," distrusting authority and relying on direct observation and reasoning. Bender adds:

> A lesser writer might easily slide into anti-intellectualism; Jacobs does not. By insisting on the seriousness and consequence of intellect, she provides a testament to the life of the mind in America and a necessary complement and counterweight for academic discourse.

By "academic discourse" Bender means what he calls "the current hegemony of the academic mind with its commitment to science, formalism and abstraction."

What, then, is wrong with attempts at political classification? Why should it vulgarize?

Increasingly, and especially since Marx, hardly any distinction is made between politics and economics. Economics is concerned with the disposition of things, politics with the relations between the individual and society. When the two are joined, questions about things tend to dominate and displace consideration of the rights and obligations of individuals. It follows that placing someone in the political spectrum means reducing his or her outlook to a theory of the control of things when, actually, things may count for little in the person's life. That is vulgarization.

It is of course the ethics applying to the management of things that gives economics its importance, making concern with it understandable, but the methods of economic policy are so largely techniques of manipulation that the laws of things are allowed to define where and how ethics should be applied. So there is a definite tendency to manipulate people in behalf of what has been held to be the common material good, with attempts to measure how much possession of things will make them happy and "free." This, too, is vulgarization. As Emerson said, "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind."

From this point of view, the true reformer is one who believes in reducing the power and importance of things, so that other and more important human qualities may have actual freedom and play. When allowed or given the primary place in thought and life, political economy virtually ignores the level of relationships and human interchange where economics plays no part, insisting that all relationships be defined in economic terms. This degrades and drains a great many relationships of their human and moral character. It weakens or destroys the pursuit of utopian ideals.

COMMENTARY
A TROUBLE WITH POLITICS

A BASIC reason why political classification vulgarizes (see Review) is that political argument seldom or never has any subtlety, nor does it introduce legitimate doubts. One of the aims of political action is to win as many votes as possible, and this inevitably means over-simplification in argument. Programs of social and economic rearrangement always include numerous uncertainties—one has only to read a little history to find this out. For example, as Herbert Spencer showed in *The Man Versus the State*, British liberals early in the nineteenth century began by repealing bad laws—laws which "enhanced the State's coercive power, they always attempt to control it. They claim, of successes and the resulting benefits, they went on to use state power to attempt to extend these benefits, which did not work well at all. Spencer's point, which can hardly be disputed, is that legislators are simply not wise enough to control human life to the extent that, once given the power, they always attempt to control it. They claim, of course, that they are "doing good," and declare that their critics are against "doing good," when it is often the case that the *way* they are attempting to do good will not work and will probably bring evils that are unimagined.

This sort of discussion and argument is carefully avoided by politicians, who know better than to try to really *educate* the voters. What the politicians are after is consent and approval, not actual *thinking* about issues.

Yet there are, of course, magnificent exceptions that should be noticed. One could say that Tom Paine's *Common Sense* did much to politicalize the colonists to the point where they were willing to fight for their freedom; and there is a sense in which Gandhi sought to politicalize the Indian people in their struggle against British rule. There are no doubt principled men active in politics, but they suffer absolute limitations in what they are able to accomplish because politics today has little concern with principle, being so largely a struggle for power.

A reading of the *Federalist Papers* would help to illustrate the distinction we are attempting to make. Politics may occasionally have its high points, but then good ideas and principles are given priority in discussion, making it something more than the manipulation of popular emotions.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
DESIGNER'S REPORT

EARLIER this year an eminent American designer, well known and respected in his profession, was invited to give a series of three lectures in a museum, using material out his life's experiences. Some of this material will later appear as lead articles in MANAS, but here we want to report on what the speaker had to say about his audience. As he put it in a letter:

> The lectures were given in a basement classroom to a group of perhaps two dozen "students"—actually a very miscellaneous assortment of students, young designers in jobs, and a sprinkling of culture vultures. The composition shifted a bit from one lecture to the next.
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> What struck me from the outset was the total lack of responsiveness of the audience. They were perfectly polite asked no questions, did not stay afterwards to talk, never smiled or laughed. It was like talking to lifesize terra cotta images, like those soldiers recently excavated in China.
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> I was puzzled, then upset, then I got mad. The human animal can tolerate a lot, but a failure to communicate is one of those things, like an absence of discernible meaning, which we find truly devastating. I suppose it is built-in; we are social animals, and if we can't communicate, apparently our psychic foundations crumble, leaving us with nothing.
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> Anyway, I decided to stop at Lecture No. 2 and replace No. 3 with some innocuous slide shows, since they look at TV all the time. However, because I was still baffled, I asked the little group what thoughts they might have about the subject matter of the lectures, which was not at all what they might have expected. Silence. Then more silence. I asked if anyone had one single little thought, and a young man raised his hand and said, "you used the word 'boredom' last time."
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> I pleaded guilty, adding that I had also used perhaps 8,000 other words as well. Why boredom?
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> "Because I am bored," he replied, and proceeded to describe his job, which sounded very boring indeed. But later I kept wondering what had impelled him to isolate one word from a series of arguments and descriptions, and focus on that.
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> Then suddenly I realized that he was simply regurgitating the TV experience, where everything is in disconnected fragments all the time, like the multiple dog droppings on the pavements of Amsterdam. A soap is followed by "news," chopped up by commercials, mostly showing Dionysian revels in which exalted youngsters guzzle sugar-free soft drinks and display designer labels on their succulent jeans. . . . The boy was simply replicating a brainwashing process. There is no doubt whatever that it works.

What can we do about audiences like that? One is tempted to reply, "Nothing, absolutely nothing!" There are some conditions in life that people have to break out of all by themselves. Boredom is probably a devious route to awakening; conceivably, for the mind that begins to be reflective, boredom is an introduction to a sense of the meaninglessness of life, followed by the slow realization that life is without meaning because we haven't given it any. This was Tolstoy's discovery, as he explained in his *Confession.*

One reason why the audience the designer talked to were people who lived such colorless lives is that nearly all the people they know and associate with—including their parents—lead that sort of life themselves. Years ago Arthur Morgan said:

> A person without knowledge of history of the past must see the world as commonplace because, except at extreme times, he is going to live among commonplace people who have come to that conclusion. The only way to get at the sum and substance of human experience is to reach out beyond the years we have into the years of the past, into the significant experience of the human race.

Well, Morgan suggests that the study of history of the past is the *only* way to break the spell of ordinariness, but there are other ways of doing this—one being to reach out into the future. Our society is actually richly endowed with people who are trying to do this, some with a measure of success. These are of course few, in terms of the numbers of the mass society, but if we take Morgan's advice and look at history, we find that all great beginnings start with a few.

We are thinking of all the little papers—some of them quite large—that come to MANAS every week, month, or quarter. One that came in earlier this year—5½" X 8½", the Spring issue of *Ozarkia* (730 West Maple, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701), with 42 pages and a pink sheet for the cover showing an animated bioregional map of the Ozark Plateau—is

filled with news of bioregional activity in the Ozarks and other areas of the United States, with information about seeds, trees, meetings of environmental groups, and the importance of bioregions in thinking about the place where you live. The dozens of people who write for the paper and make the news will never be bored.

Then we have the first issue of the *Farallones Institute Journal* (Spring, 1984). The work of the Institute was begun about ten years ago in the Integral Urban House in Berkeley, California. The founders gave demonstrations, held classes providing instruction in all the things city people can do, with very little land, to live a more natural life. They now have a branch in the country called the Farallones Rural Center in Sonoma County. The programs are numerous: "One example is the Community Food and Nutrition Project of the California Human Development Corporation, where we have a subcontract to assist in the development of eight community gardens for migrant and seasonal farm workers. Throughout a six-county region, our staff will facilitate workshops in food preservation and storage, solar food dryers and cold frames." In a general statement it is said:

> In the times of uncertainty throughout the world, long-term land-use planning and sustainable agricultural systems are vital. 1984 marks the early planning and development stages of an expanded land use plan that will emphasize economic and ecological sustainability through the use of perennial crops. We continue to maximize production with efficient watering systems, small-scale machinery, and season-extenders such as cold frames, greenhouses, and row covers.

The orderly presentation of work being done in behalf of the future seems astonishingly complete if one considers as a whole—as a self-conscious and deliberate movement—all these efforts to map, prove, and practice the methods and forms of collaboration with nature that will one day be recognized as not only necessities for "survival," but also the basis for happy, fruitful lives.

A passage from a new book that will have fuller treatment elsewhere in these pages—*Bioshelters, Ocean Arks, City Farming: Ecology as the Basis of Design* (Sierra Club) by Nancy and John Todd—gives clear expression to the foresight and feeling of these pioneers:

> In recent years people everywhere have been experiencing a reawakening realization of the Earth as a planet, alive and beautiful beyond words. Photographs from space have affirmed its incandescent uniqueness. Scientists, ecologists and environmentalists are steadily increasing our knowledge of its complexity and vulnerability and are rapidly restructuring our understanding of it. Over much the same period our own research in applied biology and biotechnology has led to an emerging synthesis of precepts by which the present human community could sustain itself indefinitely without destroying its basis of living support systems. It is a claim, we think, that could not be made for current industrial cultures. Co-evolutionary with a reawakening sensitivity to the life of the planet there has developed a series of insights, methodologies and technologies that make it possible to create a posh or meta-industrial society without violating fundamental ecological integrity. This ability is as unprecedented as it is timely.

Finding out about, being inspired by, and then participating, in some way, in this movement would take people out of their boredom, their feeling of meaninglessness, and anxiety, and provide a satisfying engagement with life. But someone may say, "Your designer is just that sort of human, and he could stir a contemporary audience of young urbanites.'" No, he couldn't, and the only reason that can be given is that those young people hadn't seen, met, or experienced others who have already taken hold of the new vision. It takes a *lot* of influence to turn people around. We can liven their environment by what we do ourselves. In this way we help to change the temper of the audiences to which designers may speak. Surely it is time for the rest of us to join forces with them.

FRONTIERS

The Druze

THE Druze, or Druses, are commonly thought to be a mixture of Kurds, Mardi-Arabs, and other tribes, mainly Arab, who, as Scott Kennedy relates in the War Resisters International (*WRI*) *Newsletter* for last April, became an identifiable group in the eleventh century. They live, he says, "in the mountainous regions of Lebanon, Syria, Israel and the Golan Heights which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War." According to Kennedy: "The Druze have proven themselves a tight-knit, fiercely independent, politically flexible and pragmatic and sometimes militant force in Mid East politics—all-important attributes for a minority religious sect in sometimes hostile host countries." While the Druze religion is and will probably remain a mystery, their behavior, reflecting their beliefs, is of particular interest, making Kennedy's account of "The Golan Druze" of some importance. Today we hear of such people only from the headlines and seldom learn anything about what they are like. Yet Kennedy finds much to admire, and some years ago William O. Douglas, in *Strange Lands and Friendly People,* told how deeply he was impressed by the intellectual and moral qualities of a group of Druses he spent time with. Of the Druse "wise men," he said: "Seldom have I seen such aesthetic, spiritual faces as two of them had."

Israel's effort to change the legal and national status of the Golan area from Occupied Territories to a part of Israel, which began three years ago with the move of Israel's capital to Jerusalem, included an attempt to persuade the Druze population to accept identification papers (ID). Most of the Druze, however, regarded this as amounting to a loss of cultural identity and resisted. When their petition for a reversal of this policy was rejected they announced their intention to noncooperate. "We're not fighting Israel," they said. "We cannot. We're not against Israel's security interests."

> Israel can do whatever it wants to us: they can confiscate our land. They can kill us. But they cannot tell us who we are. They cannot change our identity.

The Druze workers in the area struck, "crippling industry in the north of Israel for several weeks." Kennedy describes other forms of nonviolent action and continues:

> One village took advantage of being home on strike to complete a major sewer project. They had been refused funds and permits for years by Israeli authorities. A "strike in reverse" resulted in trenches being dug and pipes installed; and villagers began developing cooperative economic structures, such as sending the entire community out to spray trees with the understanding that the crop would be shared by all. They also began plans to set up their own schools.

"The Druze," Kennedy remarks, "can scarcely be charged with pacifism—Syrian Druze were among the leaders in the struggle against French colonial rule," and they are "a key element in the Lebanese National Movement, a coalition of leftwing groups which continue to fight the Phalangists in the Shouf Mountains," adding, however: "Yet the Druze villagers of the Golan Heights recently engaged in a courageous, protracted, and effective nonviolent campaign." Of this struggle a Palestinian lawyer, Jonathan Kuttab, has said:

> Here is a modern-day example of a nonviolent campaign of a people very small in number, facing incredibly powerful odds militarily, saying, "We don't have a military option. It doesn't pay for us to throw rocks or stones. We can never outviolence the Israeli army. But we can through unity and cooperation, taking a principled stand, and accepting suffering, just refuse to cooperate and withhold our consent, and reasonably come to a solution that reserves and preserves our own rights and interests, at least in some measure."

For a number of reasons the Israelis wanted to settle these difficulties and adopted a conciliatory policy. Yet a climax of the struggle came first:

> On the day the government effort to force citizenship upon the Druze was supposed to end, the

Israelis escalated the pressure to outright repression. On April 1 an estimated 15,000 Israeli soldiers swarmed into the area, sealed it off from Israel and the other territories, and from the Israeli press, officials and international observers, and imposed a state of siege for 43 days. Electricity and water were cut off. Some homes were destroyed. At least two people are claimed to have died because ambulance service to nearby Israeli hospitals was denied as part of the blockade. Israeli troops went door-to-door. They forced entry, confiscated the villagers' old ID cards, and left them Israeli ID's. The next day the town squares were littered with the Israeli ID cards.

Finally, the Israeli government relented. They diluted the strike's effect by withdrawing the soldiers, taking away the check-points and just leaving them alone. The Israelis agreed to accommodate Druze sensitivities. They were told they would be issued special identity cards, listing them as Druze by religion rather than nationality. They would be exempted from military service and guarantees would be made against their land being confiscated or water seized. These guarantees would be printed on the new identity cards if they would only accept them.

The Druze agreed to suspend their strike. The end of the strike coincided with Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Some say the Druze did not want to take unfair advantage of them while they were fighting elsewhere (if so, an astonishing echo of Gandhian generosity). Others simply believe the Druze knew they could win no further concessions while war was in progress.

Why were the Druze successful in this campaign? Scott Kennedy suggests several reasons:

There were of course unique factors contributing to the success of the Druze. Few populations have so distinctive a community identity as the Druze, enabling them to act largely as a unit, as though by virtue of group instinct. The action was conducted on a relatively small scale—four villages of less than 13,000 people. Application of the same methods to a larger and less tightly-knit population would be an entirely different proposition.

. . .

Decisions were arrived at by a consensus process that, as one Palestinian remarked, would put a lot of Quakers to shame and surpass our best town meetings. . . . The Druze also demonstrated the vulnerability of military force to nonviolent means of struggle. They made an early decision to talk to the Israeli soldiers, but not to curse them. They actively sought soldiers out and engaged them in conversation in their native tongue which they had been forced to learn in school. According to one observer, "The soldiers were really being torn apart, because they couldn't handle that type of nonviolence." . . . the division commander complained that the Golan situation was ruining some of his best soldiers.