VOLUME XXXV, NO. 22
JUNE 2, 1982

THE CLAIM TO VALIDITY

WAR, like its opposite, human brotherhood, used to be a local affair. Until the wars of the twentieth century, armed conflicts between nations could be endured. They caused much suffering, resulted in injustice, but it took only fifteen or twenty years for the defeated to regain their balance, and perhaps some prosperity, and there was at least some need for recovery for the victors, too. Today the prospect of war is quite different. Actually, there is hardly any such thing as "peace," since virtually all peoples live in uneasy anticipation of a conflict that might involve practically the whole world. Those who study these matters point out that a "limited" war, if it involves the major powers, is practically certain to escalate to all-consuming dimensions. This means that the emotional unity within a nation, sought and usually achieved in order to fight effectively to victory, no longer has meaning or rational ground. The local brotherhoods which cement people into units to confront and defeat an enemy, as goals in national affairs, are without meaning for the reason that victory has lost its meaning.

The moral verdict on this situation is that brotherhood must become a universal ideal. Brothers who unite *against* some other partisan formation, similarly united, are not moving toward peace and freedom, but toward Mutually Assured Destruction; not thinking, or understanding, but blind habit, gives strength and animation to the limited unities of the present in national affairs. What is the foundation of this habit? We know the answer quite well: *They* are evil, *we* are good.

How can we recover from this delusion? First of all, perhaps, by candid admission that it *isn't* a delusion. Certainly not entirely. Human nature being pretty much the same around the world, the behavior of nations organized for both dominance and self-defense is consistently both good and evil. Serious historians, starting with Thucydides, have made that plain. Why can't we recognize this and then stop turning our argument with other nations into moralistic Armageddons?

The answer is again simple: Because we are in the egocentric predicament. The bad things we do are petty, the good things great. We know how *we* think, and how much sense it makes, but we are unable to understand how *they* think. They, it seems clear enough, are determined to make trouble for us and the rest of the world, and people who can't see that are just plain stupid or morally blind. This being the case—in a world where reason and trust don't work—we have to have more bombs.

We have the habit of thinking this way, and overcoming the habit is the project before those who are serious about working for peace.

This, as anyone can see who takes time to think about it, is a psychological problem. It is also, of course, a moral problem, but the psychological factors get in the way of recognizing the moral considerations. The sequence of reasoning is familiar. There is serious evil in the world, and the chief offender, just now, is that nation over there. They have done this and this (all true), and they will almost certainly do *that,* a possibility which cannot be tolerated. Therefore, more bombs. To the arguer, his logic is impeccable, his intentions righteous, his readiness to sacrifice a sign of good character. He is simply *right.*

A simple illustration at the everyday level should help in getting at the psychological factors of this situation. We found one in a book by a psychiatrist (Abraham Low's *Mental Health Through Will-Training*). Dr. Low gives the example of a woman, Mona, with neurotic tendencies, who had a relapse into a disturbed condition because, while waiting for service at the

meat counter of a market, another woman who had come there later was served first. The woman replied to Mona's objection by saying that Mona was "asleep."

It was discourteous, but was it *wrong?* Analyzing, the doctor said:

> Mona knew she tended to be preoccupied, inattentive dreaming. In the preceding five years she had amassed a prodigious record of tasks neglected, things forgotten, remarks not heard. She knew her defect of not hearing, seeing and recalling properly. When at the butcher's she missed her first cue her first thought should have been that something went wrong because of her nervous condition; that her attention had wandered again as it had on so many previous occasions. Instead, she jumped to the conclusion it was "that woman" who caused her to lose her "rightful" place. You see, even in this "clear-cut" case there are two sides to the story, and it would take a very wise judge to decide which was the right and which the wrong side. Mona looked at her own side of the story only. The part of the story which could have been told by "that woman" was thoroughly neglected. It is the distinctive mark of the so-called intellectual to emphasize or over-emphasize one side of an issue only, usually his own side, and to look away from the other side.

The doctor goes on to generalize from this example:

> The main pride of the average person is that his views, opinions, plans and decisions are right, sensible and practical. Essentially, this is a claim that the thought processes are solid, that they can be depended upon to prove true, in short, that their premises and conclusions are valid. This may be called the *intellectual claim to validity.* A parallel ambition of the average individual is to prove to himself or to others that his heart is "in the right spot," that he is emotionally responsive, ready to fight for his rights and to defend his convictions. His feelings and sentiments, he insists, are generous, noble, vigorous and vital. . . .
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> The abiding distress of the nervous patient is precisely his inability to trust the validity of his thoughts or to have pride in the vitality of his feelings and sentiments. . . . Then comes the temperamental spell. It works a miraculous transformation. All of a sudden he is aroused to a fit of anger. He fumes and raves, he is indignant and fairly panting for a fight. What else can that be but strength, vigor and vitality? And that insult that was hurled at him by "that rascal" was clearly and undoubtedly an injustice an unprovoked attack. That he is right and the other fellow wrong cannot possibly be questioned. In a "clearcut case" of this kind, who but a fool or a knave could challenge his premises and conclusions? The temperamental spell re-establishes as with magic his intellectual claim to validity and his romantic claim to vitality. . . .

The doctor's point is that being "right" is a small and insignificant matter compared to preserving one's mental health. Frustrated righteousness leads to overwhelming anger, and then to a fight—"war." The parallel is complete if you are willing to admit that the psychiatrist's account of the pattern of neurotic behavior applies to practically all of us. He has given an account of how wars begin. And we have reached the point in history where a war will not bring only measurable destruction and casualties—it will bring *annihilation.* So there is a sense in which being "right" no longer matters. Both the righteous and the unrighteous are sure to die.

Who are the doctors of nations, able to explain by clear analysis what terrible mistakes they are making, in their righteous outrage and zeal? There are many prescribers for the ills of nations, but the best are probably historians turned social psychologist. There is, for example, the discussion of "Outmoded Assumptions" in the March *Atlantic* by Henry Steele Commager. He begins with two assumptions made by American leaders: first, that "the world is divided between two great ideological and power groups, one dedicated to freedom, the other to slavery." The second assumption is that, being godless and immoral, and dedicated to the enslavement of men, "the Soviet Union can never be relied upon to keep its word; it is engaged in ceaseless aggrandizement; it makes a mockery of international law and human dignity, and trusts only force." It follows, therefore, that "to substitute diplomatic negotiations for military power would be to fall into a trap from which we could not extricate ourselves."

What is the "other side" of the story? Prof. Commager says:

> As for violation of international law, treaties, and agreements, and of the territoriality of weaker nations, the record of the Soviet Union is indeed deplorable. Whether it differs greatly from the American record depends, no doubt, upon the point of view. Little need to rehearse that record: suffice it to say that the CIA has at least tried to be as subversive as KGB in many parts of the globe, that intervention in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala was no less in violation of the law than the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and that a ten-year undeclared war in Vietnam, with casualties of some two million, both military and civilians, and bombardment with three times the tonnage dropped on Germany and Japan in World War II contrasts unfavorably with the much-condemned Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

He examines a third assumption: "that the Soviet Union is the mortal enemy of the United States and that her animosity is implacable." We react, he says, "with almost Pavlovian response to the real or imagined policies of the Soviet Union."

> In all this we rarely ask ourselves what the Soviet Union has to gain by destroying the United States. In the past neither czarist nor communist Russia has been an "enemy" of the United States, and in the twentieth century Russia was allied with or associated with the United States in two major wars. Nor do many Americans pause to acknowledge that the Communists have more ground for fearing the United States than we have for fearing them: after all, American military forces invaded the Soviet Union at Archangel and Vladivostok to prevent the Bolshevik takeover and remained on Russian soil for well over two years: had Communist forces invaded the United States in, let us say, Alaska or Florida, we would not be quite so forgetful.

A fourth common assumption—Commager calls it the "Dr. Strangelove syndrome"—is that "we could fight and 'win' an atomic war, that the loss of 50 million to 100 million lives would be 'acceptable,' that the Republic could survive and flourish after such a victory."

> An atomic war is no longer "unthinkable"; perhaps it never was: after all, we are the only nation ever to use the atomic weapon against an enemy. Now spokesmen of both our parties have declared that in an "emergency" we would not hesitate to use it again. In all this we are reminded of the moral of slavery: when a "necessary evil" becomes necessary enough, it ceases to be an evil.
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> This philosophy is a product, or a by-product, of a fifth assumption: that the most effective way, and perhaps the only way, to counter the threat of communism is neither political, nor moral but quite simply military, and that the mere threat of overwhelming military might well persuade all rivals to abandon the field. . .
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> The futility of reliance on superiority in nuclear arms should have been clear as early as 1949, when the Russians astonished most of the "experts" by detonating their own bomb a decade earlier than had been expected.. Certainly it should be clear by now that the Russians can produce anything that we can produce, and that the notion of "winning" an arms race is fantasy. The hope—perhaps the only hope—of avoiding a nuclear war lies not in adding another $1,500 billion to the $2,000 billion we have already spent on the military since the close of World War II but in mutual abandonment of that race, and a cooperative program of systematic reduction of existing nuclear arms.

The last assumption to be inspected is the idea that "the fundamental problems that confront us—and other nations of the globe can be resolved within the framework of the nation-state system."

> The inescapable fact, dramatized by the energy crisis, the population crisis, the armaments race, and so forth, is that nationalism as we have known it in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century is as much of an anachronism today as was States Rights when Calhoun preached it and Jefferson Davis fought for it. Just as we know, or should know, that none of our domestic problems can be solved within the artificial boundaries of the states, so none of our global problems can be solved within the largely artificial boundaries of nations—artificial not so much in the eyes of history as in the eyes of Nature.

We turn now to another historian-doctor, a man with a therapy as well as a diagnosis—Edward P. Thompson, British scholar and a founder of the European Nuclear Disarmament movement. Prof. Thompson wrote "A Letter to America," a portion of which appeared in the *Nation* for Jan. 4, 1981, and which was later

expanded into a book, *Protest and Survive*, issued by the Monthly Review Press ($4.95). We now have from him a lecture, *Beyond the Cold War*, which the BBC decided not to broadcast, but was given anyway late last year in Worcester, Prof. Thompson's home town. In this address he shows that both Russia and America have lost any rational basis for the Cold War, and that it continues only through its own self-generated momentum. "If," he says, "we ask the partisans of either side what the Cold War is about, they regard us with the glazed eyes of addicts." Virtually ignored is the fact that the Soviet Communists have lost Yugoslavia and Albania and utterly split with China. Meanwhile, the client states meant to be buffers on Russia's western frontiers are restive for independence (as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary), while the European communist parties are either weakening or critical of Soviet policies. The United States, in turn, has lost prestige, its economy has diminished in authority and power, while its military forces "suffered a catastrophic defeat in Vietnam."

> Only the overwhelming nuclear strength has been maintained—has grown year after year—-has been protracted beyond the moment of its origin. United States militarism seeks to extend forward indefinitely—to cast its shadow across Europe—a supremacy of economic and political force which existed thirty years ago but which has long ceased to exist. In one sense the present crisis in Western Europe can be read in this way. The United States is seeking to use the muscle of its nuclear weaponry to compensate for its loss of real influence. . . .
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> What is the Cold War now about? It is about itself. . . . The Cold War has become a habit, an addiction. But it is a habit supported by very powerful material interest in each bloc: the military-industrial and research establishments of both sides, the security services and intelligence operations, and the political servants of these interests. . . .
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> I don't mean to argue for an *identity* of process in the United States and the Soviet Union, nor for a perfect symmetry of forms. There are major divergencies, not only in political forms and controls, but also as between the steady expansionism of bureaucracy and the avarice of private capital. I mean to stress, rather, the *reciprocal* and interactive character of the process. It is in the very nature of this Cold War show that there must be two adversaries: and each move by one must be matched by the other. This is the inner dynamics of the Cold War which determines that its military and security establishments are *self-reproducing*. Their missiles summon forward our missiles which summon forward their missiles in turn. NATO's hawks feed the hawks of the Warsaw bloc.
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> For the ideology of the Cold War is self-reproducing also. That is, the military and the security services and their political servants *need* the Cold War. They have a direct interest in its continuance.

They need it not only because it serves their interest and privileges, but because the Cold War holds the nations together. "Rome required barbarians, Christendom required pagans, Protestants and Catholic Europe required each other." Patriotism means love of one's country, but hatred or fear or suspicion of others. Prof. Thompson goes on:

> I have argued that the condition of the Cold War has broken free from the "causes" at its origin; and that ruling interests on both sides have become ideologically addicted, they need its continuance. The Western hemisphere has been divided into two parts, each of which sees itself as threatened by the Other; yet at the same time this continuing threat has become necessary to provide internal bonding and social discipline within each part. Moreover, this threat of the Other has been internalized within both Soviet and American culture, so that the very self-identity of many American and Soviet citizens is bound up with the ideological premises of the Cold War.

A summing up:

> The United States is the leader of "the Free World," and the Commies are the Other. They need this Other to establish their own identity, not as blacks or Poles or Irish, but as free Americans. Only this pre-existent need, for bonding-by-exclusion, can explain the ease by which one populist rascal after another has been able to float to power—and even to the White House—on nothing but a flood of sensational Cold War propaganda. And anti-Communism can be turned to other internal uses as well. It can serve to knock trade unions on the head,

> or to keep dissident radical voices or peace movements ("soft on Communism") on the margins of political life.

The Soviets have similar need of the threat of the "Other" to hold its vast and vastly dissimilar population together:

> The bonding, the self-identity of Soviet citizens comes from the notion that they are the heartland of the world's first socialist revolution, threatened by the Other—Western imperialism, in alliance with 1,000 million Chinese. The positive part of this rhetoric—the Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary bit—may now have worn exceedingly thin, but the negative part remains compelling. The one function of the Soviet rulers which commands consensual assent throughout the population is their self-proclaimed role as defenders of the Fatherland and defenders of peace. . . . Hence the Cold War ideology—the threat of the Other—is the strongest card left in the hand of the Soviet rulers. It is necessary for bonding. And the card is not a fake. For the Other—that is, the Cold Warriors of the West—is continually playing the same card back, whether in missiles or in arms agreements with China or in the suit of human rights. . . .
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> Both adversaries need to maintain a hostile ideological posture, as a means of internal bonding or discipline. This would be dangerous at any time; but with today's nuclear weaponry it is an immensely dangerous condition. For it contains a built-in logic which must always tend to the worse: the military establishments will grow, the adversary postures become more implacable and more irrational.
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> That logic, if uncorrected, must prove terminal, and in the next two or three decades. I will not speculate on what accident or which contingency will bring us to that terminus. I am pointing out the logic and thrust of things, the current which is sweeping us toward Niagara Falls.

Here, spelled out, is the individual and corporate psychology which conceals from us the plain moral issues of war and peace. We cannot get rid of "nations" in a hurry—such great reforms take time—but we can, each one of us, deliberately stop thinking in *national* terms. We must think of people, not countries, and recognize that nationalism is a sickness—or, as Prof. Thompson says, an "addiction"—which has overtaken all the world. The good guys/bad guys equation is useless for putting an end to war. And being "right" has become irrelevant if it can only harden the addiction of the age, assuring that we will eventually reach the "terminus" of which Prof. Thompson speaks.

REVIEW

SCIENCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

MANAS is on the mailing list of a number of university publishers from whom, from time to time, we receive catalogs of new books, and also of clearance sales of remaining stocks. We always look through them and on rare occasions succumb to making a purchase. The latest arrival is from MIT Press—twenty-four pages listing scientific treatises, many of them so erudite that the descriptions are incomprehensible; for example, No. 290 in this MIT book sale is a work titled *Design of Lossy Filters*, which—

> Presents design parameters for filters having Butterworth, Chebyshev, and Bessel transfer functions for a specific but generally useful distribution of parasitic dissipation. These parameters may be applied to narrow band-pass filters realized as a cascade of coupled resonant circuits, as well as to the realization of lowpass and wide bandpass filters. In addition to the design data, normalized gain curves are given. Useful characteristics of the normalized, lowpass filters are also given, including plots of unit impulse and unit step response and attenuation, phase, and group delay. (List $20; now $8.50.)

One is both impressed and humbled by a paragraph in which the only word with meaning for the ordinary reader is "parasitic," which cannot here mean what it usually means, since electronic devices (a guess) are not likely to be infested with parasites. A great many of the entries are similarly obscure, although there are also titles such as *The Politics of Neglect* (on cities) and *Multicrises: Sea Power and Global Politics in the Missile Age*, and *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union.*

Actually, from the contents of this catalog, you get the impression that every technical aspect of our civilization is thoroughly covered by publications from MIT, and that these books also represent the growing tip of technological understanding. Their scope is awesome, even though, except for material on humanities and the social sciences, it is of interest only to specialists, and rather advanced specialists at that. But while much impressed by this vast wealth of technological information and know-how, one also recalls Ortega's declaration (in *Mission of the University*) that although we borrow from science what is vitally necessary, "Science is not something by which we live."

Science is not human culture; not even the physicist lives by the laws of physics in his everyday life.

> The internal conduct of science is not a *vital* concern that of culture is. Science is indifferent to the exigencies of our life, and follows its own necessities. Accordingly, science grows constantly more diversified and specialized without limit, and is never completed. But culture is subservient to *our* life here and now, and is required to be, at every instant, a complete, unified, coherent system—the plan of life, the path leading through the forest of existence.

But couldn't there be a science devoted to the service of culture? Willis Harman of the Stanford Research Institute believes there can, making the important distinction between science as "prediction and control" and science "to guide human development." It is the latter kind of science that we need more of. "Prediction and control" science may have put us where we are today, but, admitting this, we have then to ask: Where *are* we, in terms of human life? The question is enough. The inventory of our deficits in human terms is too well known to need repetition.

What about the other sort of science—as guide to human development? We have a book of substantial proportions—not quite encyclopedic, yet moving in that direction—which gives careful accounts of the practice of this science around the country. The title is *Resettling America.* the editor, Gary J. Coates, the publisher Brick House, in Andover, Mass., and the price (for a volume of 550 large pages) $14.95. The editor tells what inspired him to put this work together—a symposium at an eastern university, where—

> Given the extraordinary diversity of interests, life-styles, and values represented . . . there was a remarkable degree of consensus that the crisis of industrialism would not be resolved without a major cultural transformation based on a movement toward greater local self-reliance in the areas of energy, food, shelter, and other basic necessities. There was also shared recognition of the need for recovery of a genuine sense of community and the restoration of spiritual values and practices rooted in a sense of the sacredness of the earth and the sanctity of the person.

In short, a change in basic orientation for the human enterprise is on the way, and is already sufficiently rooted and active to provide material for an impressive progress report. The editor says:

> While much of the content deals with the development and application of solar energy and other non-violent, environmentally benign, and humanly scaled technologies, the intent is to present a much broader historical, cultural, and metaphysical framework for theory and action related to community building in an era of energy and resource scarcity. There is a growing tendency for people in the "appropriate technology movement" to become too narrowly technical and individualistic in their concerns. The autonomous house, self-sufficient homestead, and solar suburb themes which characterized much of the first generation of literature in this area, while valuable as explorations of new technologies and paradigms, often betray a "me first" attitude, a kind of new age, neighbor-be-damned ethos. If we are to overcome the legacy of competitiveness and narcissism we have inherited from our industrial past, we must begin to talk about strategies aimed at self-transcendence through community action. Issues of equity and energy, and the political and spiritual implications of the shift to a sustainable culture must become more prominent in the second generation literature related to appropriate technology and the use of solar energy. If this book contributes to the elevation of such concerns to a more central place in our efforts to reshape the mindscape and landscape of industrialism, then it will have succeeded in its main purpose. . . .
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> It is my hope that this book, by presenting a comprehensive vision of the kind of world it is in our power to create, will stimulate others to take an active part in the resettling of America. While it often seems that such a vision of possibilities must forever remain a naive and unrealized utopian dream, the incredible number, range, and variety of projects I have discovered over the last four years have convinced me that a better world is indeed possible. The same laws of exponential growth which underly the demise of industrial civilization seem to apply as well to the movement for its transformation. As the ever-expanding base of grass-roots change continues to build, it soon reaches such a large size that each future doubling represents an unimaginable increase in the total. I am firmly convinced that we will soon achieve the critical mass necessary to transform our finest hopes for the future into our everyday experience of the present.

What, specifically, is in the book? First, there is a long and informing foreword by Amory Lovins, physicist and articulate advocate of the "soft path" of appropriate technology and decentralization of every kind of power. Tom Bender of *Rain* writes on the necessities of a good society at the conceptual level. He is convincing, not merely persuasive. David Morris of the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance discusses the constructive changes going on in some of the big cities of the nation—where people in neighborhoods and communities within cities are recovering control over their lives. William and Helga Olkowski of the Integral Urban House (Farallones Institute) write about what they have been teaching for years—urban agriculture. Peter van Dresser, a campaigner for decentralization since the 1930s, author of *A Landscape for Humans* (a broadly conceived and interesting book on cultural and economic planning), writes on "Goals for Regional Development." Earle A. Bonhart of the New Alchemy Institute explores the requirements of a permanent (sustainable) agriculture, and Wes Jackson of the Land Institute in Kansas brings his knowledge of prairie soils and grasses to bear on the manifest food problems of the future. Finally, Murray Bookchin devotes himself to the human transformations requisite to any socio-economic restructuring worth talking about.

We have named the contributors whose work we know and admire. There are many more in this book, doubtless of equal value and

importance, and we should add that, as Amory Lovins says in his Foreword:

> There are certainly many success stories not reported here, ranging from Valerie Pope's major solar manufacturing and installing program in the Black community of San Bernardino [California] to the greenhouses in the San Luis Valley (Colorado]. But at least as exciting, because of their open-ended potential, are the nascent projects sprouting from Arkansas to Montana, Wisconsin to Maine, and in a cathedral close in Manhattan, that are now receiving their share of inspiration and that should soon bear fruits we can taste, plant, and compost.
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> This book offers a rich base for that compost, and at a critical time in the germination of our awareness.

A reader may feel that both the book and this sketchy review are pervaded by an insupportable optimism. Well, maybe so. But *a reading* of the book is in order before firming up this conclusion. What we felt, as we turned the pages, was that we were in the presence of an authentic rebirth of Yankee ingenuity. The driving quality of American determination, capacity for commitment, and hard work seems everywhere evident. Also present is the vision and subtlety of the country's "indigenous" philosophers—such, say, as Lewis Mumford and Wendell Berry.

One thing more. The universities of the country are often hosts and helpers in these pioneering efforts, and it is pleasant to say something good about centers of learning which, in so many other respects, seem to have lost both their inspiration and their direction.

The closing paragraph of Amory Lovins' contribution suggests the quality of the science now being practiced:

> Bill McLarney, co-founder of the New Alchemy Institute, was once berated by a critic who couldn't understand why he was messing around with fish and algae and green goo when the really important thing in the world was love. Bill responded: "There's theoretical love; and then there's applied love." This anthology offers us both in full measure; and love, just as much as truth, shall make us free.

COMMENTARY
HERE AND THERE

IN the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* for May 2, two columnists, an American and an Englishmen, give their views on the military encounter over possession of the Falkland Islands. The American, Richard Cohen, notes that the Islands are a rainy, coldly inhospitable place where about 1,800 Falklanders raise sheep and kelp. "For this British have dispatched the fleet," he says, adding: "What a lot of nonsense!"

The Falklands are British today because of an imperialist past. Still, the Argentines were wrong to use force to settle the dispute with England and the English would be just as wrong to use force in response. . . . It is time to settle this dispute once and for all. Let the Argentines have the islands. . . . The pride of Britain should be its morality, its dignity, its refusal to waste lives in some international version of a macho street brawl—to sink to the level of Argentine despots.

The British writer, Henry Fairlie, gives the history of the Islands, which is checkered, and speaks of the Falklanders as having "a complex and relatively prosperous economy . . . an organized and civilized community with its own free life," enjoying the "rights of Britons."

> Let us desert them now—throw them to the nation which is perhaps chiefly renowned for harboring Nazis after the war—and whom will we defend? I mean by "we" Americans as well as Britons. . . . We rightly hear a lot of the Anglo-American heritage of free and civil government. Here in the Falkland Islands is an English-speaking community which, by all accounts, is a model of the benefits which that heritage bestows. In defense of it, let the Royal Navy sail and sail with American support, and if the British then throw the Argentinians out, with all their trappings of privilege and corruption and violence, then I believe Americans will be grateful, that a lesson has been taught which they are today too nerveless to teach.

Apart from the fact that "lessons" administered with brute force are seldom learned by anyone, there seem fact and reason and principle on both sides of this argument, but no way of settling it. Letting the issue turn on "state" policy seems the basic mistake, since the self-interest of states—all of them—has made modern history into a chronicle of anti-human disasters. Acting on principles which ignore reasons of state seems the only possible solution, but people are hardly ready for that. Yet there are some beginnings, here and there. . . .

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

GOOD THINGS FOR YOUR BRAIN

IN *Psychology Today* for March, Anthony Brandt tells about a public school in New Hampshire (Atkinson) where six-year-olds read each other's "books." Phebe, a first-grader who had read a book aloud, was asked by a visitor who wrote it.

> "Barbara wrote it," she says matter-of-factly. Barbara is one of Phebe's classmates. Each of the six-year-olds in Mrs. Giacobbe's class has written five or six "published" books like the one Phebe was reading.
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> We have heard a great deal about the "writing crisis" in the United States. There is obviously no writing crisis at the Atkinson Academy.

Who publishes books by six-year-olds? Mary Ellen Giacobbe, the teacher, publishes them. To choose one for reading, a child turns to "shelves packed with a couple of hundred similar books, slim little volumes bound with dental floss and covered with brightly colored wallpaper samples." Well, shall we assume that an outpouring of child genius is going on in New Hampshire, or that *all* children, given the sort of attention these children are receiving, could do the same?

Brandt explains:

> The Atkinson children's proficiency in writing is largely the result of a fruitful collaboration between Atkinson teachers and Don Graves. Graves, an educator in his early 50s, is a friendly man with the low-key, reassuring manner of a doctor. . . . he has become an innovator in the teaching of writing and one of the leading researchers in the field.

After some years as a teacher of reading, he switched to writing.

> Graves says he became "sick of the field of reading" because it was hung up on reading materials and paid too little attention to the active acquisition of knowledge. The emphasis in both reading instruction and the literacy programs he was involved with was unbalanced, he says; too much weight was given to the taking in of information. He was interested in "what people could *do*, as opposed to what they could absorb."

Real education, he says, is a *process*—"the active process of reading and writing; knowledge must be manipulated and expressed," says Graves, "before a person can truly make it his own." His counsels, based on years of experience working with children, should be known to every parent:

> The important thing in teaching children to write, Graves says, is not to put too much emphasis in the beginning on spelling, punctuation, and grammar; those things come later, as the beginning writer gains confidence in his ability to express his thoughts and feelings and becomes more versatile in using that ability. A young writer with a developing sense of his own voice, a growing command of what he wants to say, will pick up spelling and good grammatical practice as he needs them. The research at Atkinson demonstrated this tellingly; these children were generally far ahead of their age level in their knowledge of mechanics, even though they had never been taught mechanics formally. Mechanics were taught as the occasion demanded, as aids to clarifying whatever a child wanted to say.
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> Most important, Graves believes in the power of writing as an activity, a process, a way of learning about oneself and the world. "Writing if nothing else teaches you what it is to know something," he says. Writing that gets things right, that says precisely what you want it to say, is a goal you reach only by mastering your material; for most people it's a struggle, but in the process of struggling you find out exactly what you know and don't know. Take kids through that process, says Graves, and "they develop a much deeper sense of what it is to know."

Could anything be much more important to a growing child—or an adult?

The teachers at Atkinson go over the children's writing, asking whether ideas are clearly expressed. This helps the children to realize that they are writing, not just for themselves, but for others. They are led to watch the reactions of their readers.

> And they began to revise. Previously no one believed that children could or would revise until much, much later, and in the standard writing curriculums the teaching of revision, if it is taught at all, comes at the end, sometimes in the middle grades or in high school. At Atkinson, first-graders began revising by the sixth or seventh month of school, and

> by the time they were in the third grade they were taking pieces they wrote through as many as 14 revisions. Why? Because they wanted to "get it right," to say exactly what they meant to say, and in such a way that what they meant to say came through clearly to their readers. . . . One result of this constant attention to revision is that the children become unusually sophisticated about how to get clarity and cohesion into writing. "The way some of these kids are talking about writing," says Graves, "you'd swear you were in a doctoral seminar."

One more point: In a 28-page paper summarizing his early research (*Balance the Basics: Let Them Write*), Graves speaks of the "writing crisis" in the United States.

> Graves notes, for example, that the volume of first-class mail is dropping, evidence that people are writing fewer letters. He found out from a sample of representative school districts that they were buying less lined paper, which is used mostly for writing.

This brings us to another aspect of the reading/writing situation in America, as represented in the 1,900 young men and women (between eighteen and twenty-three) who are working in the California Conservation Corps established by Governor Jerry Brown in 1976. Thirty-five per cent of this youthful force "cannot read beyond third-grade level," according to Mark Wexler, editor, in *National Wildlife* for February-March. They get the minimum wage, and—

> they also "gain the privilege," as B. T. Collins [CCC Director] put it, of learning how to sandbag hillsides during floods, smash boulders to repair High Sierra trails, clear debris from streams so fish can reach spawning habitat, and build recreation facilities for school kids. Each year CCC workers battle dozens of forest fires around the state. Other recruits install solar panels in state park facilities and plant trees in burned-out areas.

Nearly 700 of the CCC work force are women—"I'll take them over men anytime," Collins says. "They're better workers." He attracts these young people by advertising jobs with "hard work, low pay, and miserable conditions." They have to get up at 5:30 A.M., run two miles, then work all day, and if they need it, improve their reading skills in night classes. In addition, to carry out the edict of Richard Burkhardt Jr., deputy director, "Everyone writes every day," as a means of enhancing the literacy of the corps. Mike Ramirez, curriculum coordinator in the Los Angeles area (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 24), told sixty-four CCC workers in San Pedro that they would be writing "letters, poetry, essays, resumes and daily journals." They object, of course. They say, "I'm here to work, I'm not here to go to school." But then they are told: "If you don't want to better your education, then you're going to have to get a job someplace else."

With the job market the way it is, they don't have much choice. Ramirez says: "I think it's our responsibility as conservationists to conserve the greatest resource we have, and that's those kids." Burkhardt says: "I think regular writing will increase productivity, improve morals, develop character and, most important, enhance employability for corps members. . . . Writing does good things for your brain. It makes you think."

FRONTIERS

"We Know Now" . . .

THE industrial plant closures around the country, pushing up unemployment figures, have now begun in California. In the *Los Angeles Times* for Feb. 28, Richard Gillett reports that Kaiser, Lockheed, and Ford, along with other companies, are shutting plants down. He writes in particular of the closing in Ontario, Calif., of General Electric's metal flatiron plant, which throws a thousand capable men and women out of work. The plant was making money—and G.E. is far from going broke—but the company has apparently decided it can make more money with its new flatiron plants in Mexico and Brazil. and with a plastic iron produced in G.E. plants in North Carolina and Singapore.

This sort of thing, Gillett points out, is a "trend" in American industry. He asks:

> How many other plant closures might we similarly be seeing that are not necessarily the result of company losses or bankruptcies but rather the increasing global diversification of production in search of higher profits?
>
> It is time to begin seriously assessing the human and community costs of such corporate behavior. The bottom line in a just and humane society ought to be people, not profits. GE's Ontario plant had a work force composed largely of women, minorities and long-term workers, with three generations of some families working there. But that plant is now gracelessly discarded, not because of an economic slump but in the pursuit of still larger profits elsewhere. An entire community reels from the loss, calculated in terms not only of the pain and deprivation to the affected families but also of business revenue and tax loss, declining school enrollment and increased welfare caseloads.
>
> There is a serious moral issue at stake here: a clash between the demands of corporate capital on the one hand and the needs of people and communities on the other.

Is there any remedy for such disasters to human communities? Not really. Not so long as the American business philosophy continues to prevail. The executives of these big companies, if brought to moral confrontation, would undoubtedly explain that they have a primary obligation to their stockholders, who have bought their shares hoping to enjoy increasing income. So, in a sense, the executives are right. The stockholders would vote them out of jobs if they stopped seeking greater profits. We see, then, the *scale* of the change in thinking about "enterprise" required to alter the patterns.of industry in the United States. At issue is the essential meaning of life. Meanwhile Gillett says that a combination of churches has filed a stockholder resolution asking G.E. to "adopt a written policy on plant closures, including steps to reduce the effect on workers and communities." It is, he says, a mild resolution, but it "could help stir debate."

Are there any Davids getting ready to contest the power of the Goliaths of modern industry? A few. They are small but they exist. They are germs and seeds rather than noticeable economic organisms, but they exist, and are likely to grow, in order to fill the vacuums left by ruthless goliath operations. For example, in Oregon, according to a story in the *Journal of Commerce* for last Nov. 12, a cottage industry trade show revealed the increasing number of Oregonians "who make their living by manufacturing and producing goods in their own homes." A leader among them, Patricia McIlveen, "points out that more than half of the 700,000 women-owned businesses in the United States are operated out of the home." These people, and their children who will grow up in an atmosphere of economic self-sufficiency, are not likely to depend worriedly on the stock market for their economic welfare. They are learning how to live healthful lives. A change of taste and thinking is easily possible for them.

Meanwhile, there is, according to Thomas Brom, economic editor of Pacific News Service, an "underground economy" developing around the world. It has its shady side (drug dealing and illegal employment in sweat shops), but there is also a notable increase in barter. In *New Roots* (New Year 1982) Brom quotes Vito Tanzi,

director of the International Monetary Fund, who says that the underground economy "may represent 7.5 per cent of gross national product in Great Britain, 30 per cent in Italy, and employs over one million workers in France." The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta believes that "activity in the underground economy increased 80 per cent during the 1970s, and that productivity in unlicensed manufacturing shops was particularly high." In the *Los Angeles Times* for last Oct. 25, Patrick Lee reports on the spread of barter, enlarging the "cashless economy." During the past ten years, barter involving small businesses and computerized trade clubs has become "a multimillion-dollar sub-economy nationwide." The trade clubs have worked out a system for overcoming the practical limitations of barter, using credits. These clubs, an organizer of barter systems said, "are popping up now wherever there are people."

Ellery Foster, who established the Free Trade Exchange early in 1980—at 122 East 2nd Street, Winona, Minn. 55987—issues a People's Yellow Pages where would-be swappers and barterers list their wants and what they offer in exchange. He heads the application form: "Your entry into the modern revival of the kind of mutual aid that was America's social security system before the welfare state seduced people into dependence on government bureaucrats."

Foster appeals especially to retirees to help organize mutual aid centers. It is important, he says, to distinguish between mutual aid and the voluntary services movement. In voluntary services "the less fortunate are helped by the more fortunate, but in mutual aid everyone helps someone else, according to their respective capabilities and needs." Moreover, "no one need suffer the humiliation of feeling he or she is an object of charity."

Why are retirees good at this activity?

> Retirees in reasonably good health have more freedom than any other class of people, they no longer have to work for a living, and so can use their time to earn some self-respect (instead of having to sell their souls for a mess of pottage). The modest incomes of most retirees gives them an incentive to demonstrate to the world that a truly conservative lifestyle can be healthier and happier than one that is addicted to the expensive over-indulgences of the consumer society. And opportunity is readily at hand for retirees to start a movement that can redevelop voluntary (libertarian) mutual aid. . . .

Arguments for doing it:

> At the outset the achievements may not seem great. But they lead to a major transformation. They could bring about substantial increases in local production for local use, thus reducing present mounting costs for transportation, and make people less dependent on the over-grown giant corporations for things they need.
>
> By using hours of work instead of money as the measure of value, mutual aid networks would not be plagued by the inflation problem. Through libertarian mutual aid the process of teaching and learning could be done more and more outside of tax-supported schools. Eventually arrangements could be made to pay for public service work with credits in mutual aid clearing houses, thus reducing or eliminating the need to tax.

What does Ellery Foster call his Winona Yellow Pages? The *We-Know-Now Free Trade Exchange.*