

THE FOURTH WORLD

Reports from the Balkans speak with increasing frequency of a spirit of unrest among several national minorities or groupings. In addition to support for *Serbian* nationalism (*Economist* January 20th) and "An upsurge of *Slovak* nationalism" (*New Statesman* January 12th), there is now further trouble between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia over the status of *Macedonia* (*Times* February 2nd). There are doubtless similar stirrings among the Macedonians in Greece and Albania and perhaps the time is not so remote when the call "Macedonia for the Macedonians" is heard. At any rate, one report concludes "Undoubtedly Macedonian nationalism is a force to be reckoned with" (*Times* February 2nd). Another report speaks of new stirrings against Soviet oppression of, this time, *Ukrainian* culture, with a number of leaders imprisoned for "anti-Soviet" activity. One may infer from this, that despite the official silence on the subject, that similar stirrings are agitating Georgians, Armenians, Kurds and numerous other nationalities inside the Soviet Empire.

In the Iberian peninsula, voices from *Catalonia* are heard describing *Gibraltar* as relatively free, compared with the plight of the submerged *Basques* and *Catalans*, who have suffered colonization for centuries yet still retain distinctions of language and culture: "Catalonia alone would never have allowed a dictator like Franco." (*The Times*, Jan. 2).

From India, where friction over central government language policy adds its mead to the general discord, Southern resistance to "Hindi imperialism" is leading to talk of secession—"in *Madras* coffee houses" (*New Statesman*, Jan. 5). And after 14 years, Mohammed Abdullah, former prime-minister of *Kashmir* has been released. Does this mean that Kashmir independence, which he called for, is still a possibility? Meanwhile "the voice of the Naga people . . . grows daily more insistent." (*New Society*, Jan. 4).

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SANITY Formerly the viewspaper of Canadian C.N.D.. Sanity is now the leading independent peace magazine of Canada. Published ten times yearly. Annual subscription \$3.50 (Air mail \$5.50) from 3837 St. Lawrence Boulevard, Montreal, Canada.

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SMOKY HILL REVIEW 1 Poetry, fiction, reviews. Ed. Robert Day, Fort Hays, Kansas State College, Hays, Kansas 6701. \$1.00.

SMALL PRESS REVIEW Features, scenes, book reviews and a dictionary of the little mags. Price 7/- (1 dollar) quarterly from European Editor Cavan McCarthy, Location Press, 4 Hornby Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

SOIL ASSOCIATION NEWS Short Practical articles on farming and gardening together with news for those who care about food and are worried about chemical cultivation. Available monthly from The Soil Association, New Bells Farm, Haughley, Stowmarket, Suffolk, price 1/-.

Back in Britain, the 1500 people of *Alderney* have joined other outlying areas in demanding more autonomy—in the face of the threat of forced entry into the Common Market (*Observer*, Dec. 17). *Welsh* nationalism struggles with the language issue, while *Scotland* wants Home Rule and an international airport—and the North of England wants at least the airport). The party politicians have begun to get in on the act and Conservative candidate for Falmouth-Cranbourne, David Mudd, is a member of Mebyon Kernow, and favours more economic and cultural autonomy for *Cornwall*. The sub-division of England into more autonomous regions is fully discussed in *The Economist* (Jan. 6), as is the need for a serious consideration of the limits that should be placed on technological development, another aspect of Fourth World thinking.

Liberal M.P., Jo Grimond, in recent *Guardian* articles (Jan. 8-10) extolled the experiments of Yugoslavia in decentralizing power, and suggested a move in that direction here: "When the sphere of government was smaller and simpler it was not so easy to be blinded and bemused by expertise, assumed or real. The public could keep track of what was going on. A series of decisions did not easily pre-empt the future . . . The next step should be to introduce a more democratic element into the political structure in accordance with the realities of life today."

The scaling down of monster organizations can extend to other institutions than the governments of nation states. At the University of California, a faculty-student commission issued a report saying that in the large university "instruction" tends to usurp the place of inquiry; specialized 'training' gradually commences at ever earlier stages . . . The result is that instead of the warmth and cordiality which are the natural accompaniments of learning, relationships tend to be remote, fugitive and vaguely sullen". The commission proposed autonomy for each of the university's nine campuses, and a further subdivision of the campus at Berkeley (*Newsweek*, Jan. 22).

R. F.

TALKING POINTS Cyclostyled sheets of news, views and details of projected peace action from Peter Cadogan, National Secretary, Committee of 100, 5 Acton Way, Cambridge. No charge for this: Peter will add you to his mailing list for free but of course he won't refuse your donation.

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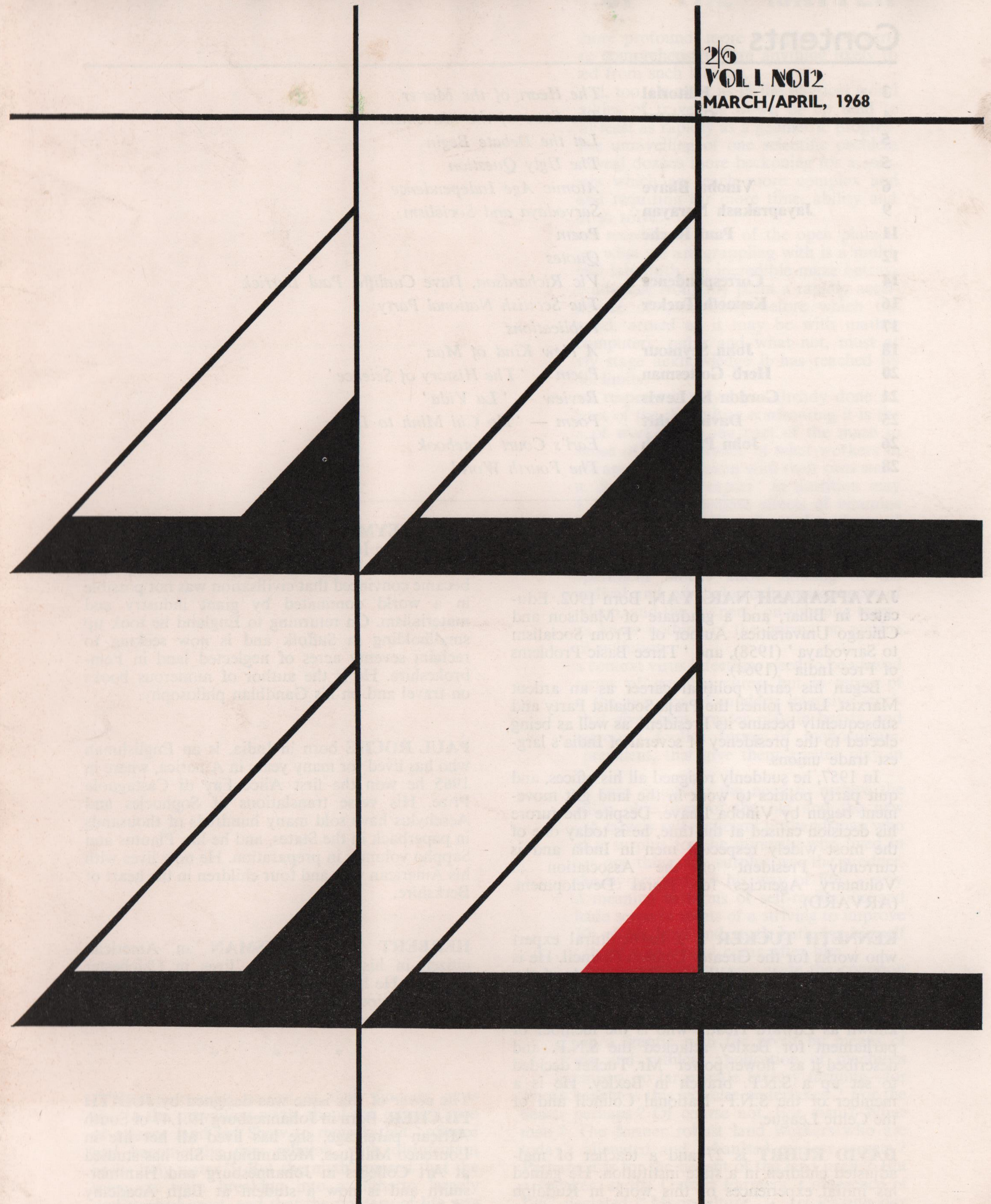
VOLUNTARY ACTION (Formerly AVARD) Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development. Gives a useful and detailed picture of development work on Gandhian lines in India. Available from Housmans, 3/- post free.

WAR RESISTANCE Quarterly of the W.R.I. Price 1/6. 88 Park Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex.

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This Issue

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN. Born 1902. Educated in Bihar, and a graduate of Madison and Chicago Universities. Author of 'From Socialism to Sarvodaya' (1958), and 'Three Basic Problems of Free India' (1964).

Began his early political career as an ardent Marxist. Later joined the Praja Socialist Party and subsequently became its President, as well as being elected to the presidency of several of India's largest trade unions.

In 1957, he suddenly resigned all his offices, and quit party politics to work in the land gift movement begun by Vinoba Bhave. Despite the furore his decision caused at the time, he is today one of the most widely respected men in India and is currently President of the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development. (ARVARD).

KENNETH TUCKER is a horticultural expert who works for the Greater London Council. He is a founder member of the London branch of the Scottish National Party and was its Secretary for more than three years. When a sassenach politician known as Edward Heath, who is the member of parliament for Bexley attacked the S.N.P. and described it as 'flower power' Mr. Tucker decided to set up a S.N.P. branch in Bexley. He is a member of the S.N.P. National Council and of the Celtic League.

DAVID KUHRT is 27 and a teacher of mal-adjusted children in a state institution. He gained his initial experiences of this work in Rudolph Steiner schools here and in Germany.

JOHN SEYMOUR is much travelled in Africa and Asia. In India, he gained first hand experience of the Khadi (handweaving) movement, and became convinced that civilisation was not possible in a world dominated by giant industry and materialism. On returning to England he took up smallholding in Suffolk and is now seeking to reclaim seventy acres of neglected land in Pembrokeshire. He is the author of numerous books on travel and on his Gandhian philosophy.

PAUL ROCHE born in India, is an Englishman who has lived for many years in America, where in 1965 he won the first Alice Fay di Castagnola Prize. His verse translations of Sophocles and Aeschylus have sold many hundreds of thousands in paperback in the States, and he has Plautus and Sappho volumes in preparation. He now lives with his American wife and four children in the heart of Berkshire.

HERBERT H. GOTTESMAN an American citizen in his early thirties, lives in Chichester (Sussex). He has been a freelance journalist and a public relations consultant and now works in the field of further education.

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The cover of this issue was designed by **JUDITH PILCHER.** Born in Johannesburg 19.1.47 of South African parentage, she has lived all her life in Lourenco Marques, Mozambique. She has studied at Art Colleges in Johannesburg and Hammer-smith and is now a student at Bath Academy of Art.

EDITORIAL

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

'Foot and Mouth' is not a new disease and the evidence suggests it must be as old as stock farming itself. What is new is the importance that this and kindred forms of disease is coming to acquire in the modern farming scene. It is probable that in former times it had little effect on the general level of food supplies, if only because modern forms of intensive stock rearing were largely unknown, and it is probable that other types of disease, due to malnutrition, indifferent breeding and other forms of careless husbandry were more common. Yet ignorance and carelessness then had at least this in their favour, that by and large they allowed the immediate effects of nature's checks and balances to operate freely and thus to preserve a balance which did not seriously impede the business of food getting for succeeding generations. Few townsmen, and those who live in the iron grip of technology are mostly townsmen, have more than the haziest conception of the extent to which modern farming is producing their food by means which constitute a sustained and needlessly ferocious assault on the natural balance of life. In the nature of things this assault will fail, and in the long run, despite the antibiotics, despite the pesticides, the fungicides, the herbicides, the wonder fertilisers the 'enriched' feeding stuffs and other marvels, nature will reassert itself.

The recent epidemic of foot and mouth disease is simply one sign that this is already happening and that man is reaching well beyond his immediate powers, and not least his knowledge. It is, after all, a virus disease, and virus infections of many kinds in plant and animal life have come to possess a well-earned aura of being 'mysterious'. They are mysterious simply because an understanding of them is beyond the present frontiers of knowledge and it is part of the naïve, mechanistic, townsman's view of life to suppose that 'science,' and even more, 'research' will yield an answer to such problems as a matter of course.

This is to ignore some aspects of the advancement of knowledge which ought surely to be part of the basic elements of any realistic philosophy of husbandry, and to ignore a dangerous incompatibility in the objectives of modern farming and those of farming as it was formerly practised.

The journey to the virus frontier was charted largely by 19th century medical scientists by way of advances in our knowledge of germs, bacteria, fungus, blood circulation, cell structure of tissue and so forth. A scatter of largely untrained researchers, using ludicrously cheap and primitive equipment achieved these results, and the extensiveness of their discoveries arose as much as anything from the fact that perhaps for the first time some men were concentrating their acute intelligences in a systematic manner on the problem before them.

The spectacular nature of their findings gave rise to the prevailing myth about the omniscience of science (and led Shaw to remark that 'science had become the new religion, with disinfectant as its holy water'). But the myth ignored that the scientists were breaking into a hitherto largely undisturbed crust, and that the mystery of life was

at once more profound, more complex, and certainly more comprehensive than anything likely to be revealed from such labours.

It ignored, too, that just as in the physical world the difficulties of travelling down or up tend to multiply at least as rapidly as a geometric progression, so the unravelling of one scientific problem tends to reveal dozens more beckoning for a solution, others which are each more complex and difficult and requiring far more time, ability and equipment to solve.

The ever receding frontier of the open plain is an illusion, what we are grappling with is a multi-dimensional labyrinth, an incredible maze betraying as we advance from any point a rapidly accelerating degree of complexity before which the human mind, armed as it may be with mathematics, computers, radar and what not, must at some early stage acknowledge it has reached its immediate limits.

In some respects it may have already done so, for not least of the difficulties confronting it is the readiness of workers in one part of the maze to lose all sense of the relevance of what workers in other parts are doing, or even with their own starting point. So that the 'expert' in nutrition may know all about the immediate effects of vitamins and nothing worth recording about the effects of factory processed foodstuffs on successive generations of beasts or men, the 'expert' on multi-storey apartment blocks know nothing of the social, medical and psychological consequences of living in them, and the 'expert' on shipping transport costs know nothing of the impact on marine life of oil pollution.

In this context virus infections need to be viewed not in terms of possible cures, but in terms of changing the practice of modern intensive stock rearing that give them greater play in beasts, and the dangerously foolish forms of monoculture, now so prevalent, that give them greater play in crops.

This in turn points to the need to resolve the incompatible objectives of the old and the new farming. A largely self-sufficient husbandman who produced a surplus for the minority who lived in towns was one thing, the surplus was the product, indeed the by-product, of his way of life, a way that had meaning in terms of self-realisation and which made sense in terms of a striving to improve the health of his land and stock both for himself and for those who would come after him.

But a process which throws aside the common sense, to say nothing of the wisdom, of centuries, which destroys the significance of labour on the land, which indeed expropriates the small farmer himself in a frantic rush for profit by means of the crude and ruthless application of machines and chemistry to large scale factory farming—for whose benefit is this exercise undertaken? For the beasts perhaps? Of course not. For man? What men? The former robust land workers who are today's alienated and urbanised nuclear targets? Perhaps it is for the benefit of the land itself? But a speaker, at the Oxford Farmers' Conference of 1967 declared "Monoculture . . . is leaving our

land worse than at any time in its history."

Clearly, and the recent foot and mouth plague merely serves to underline the grim fact, farming today is for money profit, and every other factor in the equation is subordinated to that end. Good husbandry and a monomaniac quest for profit are quite incompatible objectives, and that the latter is leading to satanically short-sighted and crimin-

ally self-defeating expedients both Rachel Carson and Ruth Harrison among others, in their respective books have made clear. But it was an earlier writer who expressed the heart of the matter more pungently; Goldsmith was perhaps being wiser than he knew with his famous couplet:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where weath accumulates and men decay."

COMMENT

The State of the Movement

Recently several dozen people met in London and decided to disband one of its peace organizations, in this case the London Committee of 100. The decision pinpoints the difficulties which afflict any organized quest for peace at the grass roots level, difficulties which have dogged such efforts now for more than a generation.

Much of this work has been concentrated in staging public protests against war, and in one important respect it has yielded useful results; it must be very difficult for anyone today not to be aware of the real nature and the probable consequences of a full-scale modern war, and for this the demonstrators and protesters deserve far more thanks than they are apt to receive.

But this method of seeking to counter war runs into two obstacles. First it appears to have no measurable effect on government policy, and this may well be the reason why so few outstanding people in various walks of life, especially outside politics, are identified with, or members of, peace organisations, and why these bodies have such a considerable turnover of membership.

Secondly, a continued harping on the horrors of nuclear and germ war produces its own brand of psychological resistance. "Well," says Mr. Everyman, "if it's got to come it's got to come, so let's enjoy ourselves while we can." And there must be few peace activists who have not run into one variation or another of this scarcely concealed death wish.

It is not surprising then, that in view of its manifest political ineffectuality and the deeper levels of resistance it encounters among the public at large, the peace movement, when it is not responding to the challenge it has set itself, retires into a curious form of seemingly industrious quietism; that it sometimes gives the impression of starting a great many small quarrels rather than contributing to the containment of larger ones, and that the emphasis of its work frequently appears to be concerned with individual or group, rather than with social therapy.

When an organisation is afflicted with internal dissension, the apparent cause is frequently only tenuously related to the real one. Officers may be blamed for failings which would, were the organization achieving results, attract no attention, and so on. In this case the real difficulty of all forms of peace activity derives from an inability to define what its activities are seeking to achieve. It is true that some organizations can achieve good results from a campaign against a particular evil, such as capital punishment. But war is not a particular

evil, it is part of a general process of decay in modern society and a failure to spell out the kind of society that will not produce war as a matter of course is merely to remain trapped in the kind of society that does.

At this level what is affirmed is of far greater importance than what is denied. This is the real rock on which peace activity repeatedly founders, for once the simple front of anti-war activity is breached, it reveals every kind of difference and confusion, from the power-seeking parliamentarians to the angry anarchists who seem ready to destroy every form of government power and organisation at the drop of a hat.

There is no answer here except to proceed with the task of elucidating those aspects of our situation which promote war and to use such insights as we may gain to press for a reconstruction of society on lines which will reduce the pressures on men to conform and to fight. That such a reconstruction is necessary is now no longer a matter for argument; what does need the most rigorous clarification is the kind of social goals on which a war-free society needs to be based and how those goals may best be reached.

Many peace activists will be aghast at the suggestion that the need for this debate must assume at least equal precedence with the day-to-day grind of peace action, but a generation of ineffectuality is surely evidence enough that until they know themselves what it is they are seeking to affirm, and are able to communicate it with that expedition that comes from conviction, they are unlikely ever to evoke effective action against the evils they are seeking to deny.

Two days ago when speaking to five hundred people Vinoba had stressed the need for urgency, had even quoted my own sense of time. But today his message to me was 'patience'.

So I asked: 'Are you telling me not to press for quick results?' He did not answer this directly, but asked: 'Do you know the formula for water, H₂O, two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen? I give you another formula: M₂A. Do you know what it means?' I shook my head. 'Two parts meditation, one part action. Meditation though must come first, double in proportion to action. You know the proverb 'look before you leap'? I say, 'think before you act.'

ERICA LINTON.

Let the debate begin

This was the concluding sentence of an article which recently appeared in the "Economist". The writer was calling for an examination of the assumptions which underlie the scope and function of Government in the U.K. The appearance of this article, following as it does similar soundings in other established journals, represents a significant shift of emphasis, if not of opinion. When the established pillars of orthodoxy begin to question their own basis in this way, we have clearly reached an important watershed in men's thinking and one which once crossed, can have consequences of far-reaching importance.

The ideas of national and centralized imperial power have alternated as well as conflicted with those of small-scale, regional or city state forms from a very early date in the record. The monolithic power of the early Egyptian civilization was doubtless preceded by smaller-scale forms of government; it was the smaller scale that prevailed in Greek city states of course, and which achieved an outpouring of culture which has only rarely since been achieved. (It certainly makes modern Greek politics look remarkably tatty by comparison). It may be thought that Roman Imperial power contradicts this assessment, and that its monolithic nature served to ensure a kind of order and stability for centuries that made a fair degree of culture and creative fruition possible. But the durability of Roman rule owed a great deal to its sheer incapacity to rule remote provinces with a tight rein, and its relations with its own provinces contained a far greater degree of permissiveness and flexibility than an imperial power would tolerate today. As a Roman pro-consul, General Douglas MacArthur would not have been sacked for wanting to attack China, he would have confronted his nominal superiors with a *fait accompli* months after the event, and they would have wooed him accordingly. But Rome was an empire and its rulers *did* rule from one centre, and in the end it was the over-centralization which destroyed non-Roman forms of culture where they existed or showed promise of appearing, and which ensured that when the centre crumbled, even if it took six centuries to do so, the rest would crash down finally with it.

It was Britain, under the Tudor despotisms, which set the new pattern of powerful, centrally dominated nation states, and Henry VII's destruction of medieval castles destroyed something more than a source of potential threats to his own power, he destroyed the prospects, in the event for centuries, of any real power of local assertiveness or of local culture, and to this day England is oriented towards London and dominated by it—as even a railway map makes clear.

But now, at last, and very late in the season of true need, something is stirring. As Wales and Scotland begin to act more strongly for their rights of self-rule, the long dormant spirit of regional identity, and one no longer confined to cookery and handicrafts, begins to awaken. A whole new field of discussion and action begins to open up and in a multitude of ways people begin to be aware of their roots and to grope for fresh bearings.

There will need to be talk of money arrangements, and transport, communications, trade, social welfare and a host of other problems in an

entirely new (for Englishmen) frame of reference. Whether the outcome of all this is that an independent Gloucester will have sufficient power and folly to make war on an independent Oxfordshire remains to be seen. But even such folly would be less mischievous than for England to attack one of its Continental neighbours.

Let the debate begin indeed.

The ugly question

Is the Vietnam war now going to be resolved by negotiation, or is it going to be transformed into the Third World War? It is difficult to see any other alternative, certainly not one that assumes it can simply drag on, for to assume this is to misconstrue the dynamics that are promoting it and to ignore that as far as the Americans are concerned a military solution is no longer possible.

Fundamentally, it is a war of almost total unreason; the U.S.A. is not protecting or advancing 'its' supposed interests, it is gratuitously undermining them and, if one pursues the logic of its own assumptions, leaving them exposed, to an extravagant degree, at numerous points around the world. It is another and more important question whether those interests are coincident with the interests of the peoples of the world, or even with the interests of the American people themselves. Of course they are not, that is part of the unreason of this nightmarish situation.

It began, as far as the U.S. leaders are concerned, because an important source of raw materials and a substantial consumer market (what official statements describe as its 'vital interests') looked like being denied them as a result of the establishment of a national government with a communist complexion. Its leaders argued the 'domino' theory; that if Vietnam went 'red' then the whole of S.E. Asia would follow and the current world dominance of large-scale corporation capitalism would be threatened. It is true they called this dominance 'freedom,' and it is painfully true that millions of people like Bernard Levin, unquestioningly accepted this terminology.

From this facile and inaccurate assessment the march to madness may be said to have begun. In the defence of 'freedom' an enemy in a remote, South-East Asian country had to be identified and attacked; if he failed to surrender then more men and more war materials had to be poured in until he did.

It does not matter if the 'enemy' country has to be devastated and its civilian population massacred by methods which led some protagonists in an earlier war into the dock at the famous Nuremburg trial; it does not matter if the economy of the country is destroyed beyond prospect of recovery for a generation or more; neither does it matter if its unique cultural monuments are reduced to heaps of pulverised ashes and rubble. Nor does it matter that beneath the shadow of the power that creates such effects a local government is established which is so sunk in corruption as to become a byword even among governments—a government that can create no confidence or indigenous support for itself, its policies, or its intentions, and which is helpless before a rising flood-tide of refugees, physical destruction, economic collapse and monetary inflation.

—continued on page 10

Atomic Age Independence

Whatever course the fighting takes in Vietnam, assuming it does not lead to World War III, the real pivot of future developments in Asia is likely to remain centred in India. It is here that the greatest possibilities for good or ill exist, it is here that pressures of population, communalism, hunger, poverty, disease and illiteracy are heaviest, and it is here that a more hopeful prospect for humanity can emerge if these problems are overcome without resort to despotism or war.

In these articles, written by two outstanding men, and on whom more than any other, the mantle of Gandhi may be said to have fallen, one catches a vivid glimpse of the temper of mind and spirit they are bringing to these problems. They are projecting something that is neither capitalist nor Marxist, nor, in any sense that Fabian or social democrats would accept, is it socialist. It is emphatically orientated however to both the immediate and long term interests of the people of India, and is concerned with those interests to an extent which would be quite impossible if it were conceived on lines of class or sectional interest.

It cannot be gainsaid that India has achieved considerable industrial growth during the last two decades. However, we have been enfeebled in basic matters. We could not have provided worse education than we have and defence has been weakened. Small irrigation schemes have not received the attention that they should have. Every acre in India must have a well. There must not be a farm without a well. We go on accumulating debts. Swadeshi has dematerialised into thin air. The Rupee is devalued. Instead of the benefits expected of it, the country had only to bear the costs of it. I had insisted upon having in reserve food-grain stocks at any given time, sufficient enough to carry us through two bad years in succession. Pandit Nehru had pledged his word to see that the country became self-sufficient in food-grains within a span of five years. When I criticised the First Five Year Plan, someone came to see me on behalf of Panditji. He asked me as to what could be done if self-sufficiency was not attained within 5 years, as was pledged. I told him that Pandit Nehru should immediately tender his resignation in that case and this was duly conveyed to him. He then invited me to Delhi and I went there on foot, in my own fashion. I stayed there for 11 days, discussed matters with the Planning Commission for three days and placed before them my point about self-sufficiency in food. It was contended that if I did believe in One World, how could I then insist on everything being produced everywhere. If such crops were produced where natural conditions best suited to them existed, production would surely be maximised. I said to them that even in One World, I did not at all like to depend upon others so far as basic necessities were concerned. We must become self-sufficient with regard to basic needs. I consider the following to be the basic needs of man: (1) food, (2) clothing, (3) housing, (4) tools, (5) health, (6) education, and (7) means of entertainment. Having once provided for these basic needs, various other things may then be produced at different places in the world according to the availability of best natural conditions. But there too, it cannot but be assumed that there would be a free flow of international trade, ensuring an equitable distribution of such commodities.

Percolation Theory

I am not thinking about Khadi and Village Industries in an exclusive manner at all. I rather

consider them as constituent aspects of the totality of our rural economics. We should provide as many industries as possible to supplement our farm-incomes. Khadi would be one of them. Providing food to the people is now considered to be one of the basic obligations of the Government. When they were asked about the target date by which a 'national minimum' would be made available to the lowest strata according to their pet 'percolation theory', the Planners had indicated that it would not be before 1985. Now, in the process of 'percolation', supposing there is a hard rock just beneath the soft earth, how will the water reach the strata lying under it? Just as Tolstoy says about a high ideal that it recedes further as we approach it, may 1985 recede to 2000 A.D.! Tukaram has said that rescue could not be a matter of a postdated promise. One who is drowning needs an immediate rescue, not a promise of future salvation.

It is the paramount duty of the Government to the people either to provide jobs to them or food. One or the other is an inescapable obligation. If the grants for Khadi exceed the obligatory expenses of free food, then you may close down Khadi activities. If not, give full aid and support to Khadi. No doubt, the productivity of our tools should be augmented, but expenses must certainly be minimised.

I also want to make one more thing quite clear. Let all industries other than Khadi be considered first for eradicating unemployment. I would go out of my element to say that you may include even the biri industry. But I for one am convinced that after all possible industries are brought into full play, you would even then stand in need of Khadi and Village industries. With the growth of population, the per capita land ratio would go down, and therefore, growth of industries for the people is an inevitable imperative under the given conditions of our country.

You may apply any and every kind of 'power' to energise these industries. In fact I am waiting for atomic energy to be available in abundance, so that every household could have it for use. As far as power is concerned, I am in favour of it, provided it is not used for exploiting others. I am not against science. I want its full development. But science is a blind force. So it is the business of spirituality to give guidance to it. As far as I am concerned I am deeply interested in those who are making a bid for landing on the moon and mars, for I look forward to their meeting with

some form of life there, which has six senses instead of five that we the earthlings possess. In that case, it will add an unprecedented dimension to our sensate perception and thus open up fundamentally new vistas of knowledge for us.

When I talk about the village, I have in view the whole world. The village industries I refer to would be linked with agriculture so that the village people derive an added income out of them. To the extent that our villages find it possible to support industries alongside agriculture, their invasion of the cities, that is gathering momentum now, would be arrested. Panditji's planning was defective because he aimed very high in his eager haste to make India vie with the advanced countries of the world in the shortest possible time. But he too realised after 13 years' of experience that India cannot advance unless we take to Gandhiji's methods.

Village Self-reliance

Our approach to economy is to have the village stand on its own feet. Khadi has to be viewed in three ways—(1) as a defence measure, (2) as a developmental measure, and (3) as a relief measure. Khadi and Village Industries, in combination with agriculture, would enable the village to stand on its own. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government to support free weaving, improved tools, training and the capital needs of Khadi and Village Industries. I consider this to be a permanent scheme, because the Government has some fundamental responsibilities towards the tax-payers, which it must shoulder. I hold the above to be among the permanent responsibilities of the Government towards the people. The yarn that the present Charkhas turn out is not of the proper tensile strength. To remedy this, I want the one-spindle Ambar Charkha to reach the villages as quickly as possible. It should prove more useful. Dhebarbhai says that the new Ambar Charkha would replace all the old Charkhas in the villages in about 10 years. I would be satisfied if this is done. About the new Ambar Charkha, we should see that repairing and servicing of the machine is made available everywhere.

Education should impart knowledge that is useful for life. Just as in England, swimming and boating are deemed essential components of education, so too in India spinning should be considered an essential of education. Centralised industries are unsuitable from the point of view of defence in this age. Pandit Nehru himself once pointed out that if China could survive, it was because it had spread a variety of industries in its villages. That Gramdan is a defence measure was underlined by me at the Yelwal Conference some 10 years ago, when war was nowhere on our horizons. I also view Khadi and Village Industries as our essential defence measures. When the rural raw materials are made into finished goods in villages themselves, then alone our goal of 'Gram-Swaraj' or the independence of rural India can find its true fulfilment. For me, Khadi is the vehicle of Gram-Swaraj.

Education is the Culprit

Answering the question what the future of Khadi is in the new generation which has now taken to terelyne, Vinoba said:

The far bigger question before me is what will be the future of India? Studiousness and thoughtfulness are fast evaporating, while indiscipline and indulgence are on the increase. Cigarettes have now thrived and milk intake has dwindled from 7 ounces to 5 ounces per capita, since Independence. The Planners shall have to confront all these undesirable developments. They will have to stake their lives on it. It will not do, if they abdicate their function and tailor their planning according to whatever the popular trends may be for the time being.

I do not hold the younger generation to account for what is happening today. The real culprit is the education that is being given to them. These last twenty years have been witness to the worst that we were capable of doing by way of educating the new generations. And all these troubles on our hand are merely the logical consequences of that education. What we have to learn from the West is science. But so far as education is concerned, India has her own great past. Tagore has sung the glories of Indian education dating back to the Vedic traditions. Scholarship and studiousness has roots in the hoary past of this land. The

"What is the universal language?" he asked. This is Vinoba, I thought, what answer would he expect? "The language of the mind," I faltered. Vinoba only shook his head. "Esperanto," prompted a voice from the back. I wasn't going to repeat that. "If I said English," I ventured at last, "I am sure it will be the wrong answer." Vinoba simply smiled, lifted his hand and rubbed his tummy. "The language of hunger," he said.

ERICA LINTON.

Sarva Seva Sangh.

Snataka or the Graduate of old, on having finished his studies, used to take a ritual bath and utter a mantra to assert his confidence that all the four cardinals would stoop before him. The student then was an incarnation of manly endeavour. He was referred to as 'Ashishtho, Dradhishto, Balishthah' which means he was ever optimistic, he had an iron will, and he was capable of achieving his purpose. Compare with him the student of our days who completes his studies to emerge almost devoid of any capacity to face the world. The education that is given to him has nothing in it to equip him with optimism, enthusiasm and the capacity to strive. If it has prepared him at all, it has prepared him only for submitting applications for jobs. The problem of the younger generation should cause far greater concern than you have been referring to. Every aspect of our national growth hinges upon the actual achievements of our education. Therefore the very first requisite for the nation's development is a radical reorientation of our educational system.

As it is, every kind of waste-making goes on merrily in this country without anyone to cry halt to it. For example, if we make proper and economic use of human excretions alone, our per capita income could be easily increased by Rs. 25 per annum. Moreover, food production would receive a sizeable fillip. In Japan they have realised the importance of this source of wealth to such an extent that they would not allow even a guest to attend the call of nature outside the house he is visiting. They make full utilisation of human

excretions in their farming. Now, this indeed is a matter for national education.

Uneconomical Government

On being questioned that continuance of Khadi is resisted on grounds of its being uneconomic, Vinoba said:

If Khadi's being uneconomic may be deemed sufficient reason for closing it down, we shall have also to consider that fact that **the present Government is the most uneconomic thing in India. If you scrutinize what the country is getting in return for the huge expenses on our Governmental machinery, you will hardly find a single element of economy in it. Let us try an experiment. Let the Governments be put on one years compulsory paid holiday, then let us see if the country loses anything at all. The Governments unnecessarily assume that they are carrying the country on their shoulders and the people have been needlessly dazzled by the glamour of the administrative set-up. I trust that everything would go on mighty well without all the goings on of our Governments. The great cobweb of a myriad problems that entangle the nation is purely the creation of the Government's own apparatus. Once the Governments disappear, problems too would resolve of themselves.** So, if you would shut down Khadi industry on the ground of economy, first of all, why not shut down the Government? There is no institution in the world that is as useless and functionless as the Government. They frighten us with the bogey that without a government, there would be nothing to ensure our security. In fact, all the bad elements in the world have found a snug shelter in the Government. Therefore we have to go forward with fortitude and show the Government the correct approach.

The spectre of a rising population is haunting all governments these days. Frantic efforts are afoot to check it through artificial contraception. **The Earth is never burdened, I say, by the number of people inhabiting it. England and Denmark, for instance, have far greater density of population than we have. If God has given one mouth to man, He has also given him two hands. Let us understand one thing perfectly well. The Earth is burdened by sin. Therefore, irrespective of whether it is an increase or a decrease in population it will be burdensome if it has come about through sin. On the other hand if the population increases through virtue, it would never be a burden, and no burden at all, if it indeed decreases virtuously.** I hold, therefore, that all attempts to control population must be steered towards self-control. Let not married life extend beyond 20 years. After that, let people formally take to Vanaprasth-ashram (retirement from selfish and carnal pursuits). Efforts have to be directed towards increasing the moral content of human life.

Khadi for Self-reliance

The number of those who make Khadi for personal use is very limited at present. Viewed in relation to the total population of India, you would hardly find one in a thousand practising self-reliance in Khadi. I guess the village people might be using on average 12 yards per head per year; maybe the city people consume a little more to give us an average of 16 yards for the nation. So I am ready to accept an average limit of 12

yards per head for village people in so far as free weaving scheme grants are concerned. My arithmetic revolves around averages with the village and not the individual as the unit. According to my calculations, 12 will have to be multiplied with 20 crore of people, that is, free weaving will have to be provided for approximately 250 crore yards. This would be the quantum of the endeavour. There is no objection whatever to running the Charkha with the aid of electricity or power. I have already permitted the inmates of my Brahma Vidya Mandir to energise the Ambar Charkha, for the purpose of self-reliance in Khadi. At the same time I have asked them not to receive the benefits of the free weaving scheme, though I would not have that kind of ban extended to others. My only condition for electrifying the Charkha is that the Khadi so produced would be consumed strictly for local self-sufficiency and that it would not be used for exploiting others. We have already permitted the use of electricity for making 'tapes' for Ambar-spinning, because that process is not within the ken of every individual spinner.

This raises the question as to how far we should go by way of increasing the productive capacity of the Charkha, because with every increase in the productivity of the machine, its capacity for providing employment is reduced. It is necessary to consider the issue carefully. Even as it is, the production of Khadi becomes more practicable where the railways have not yet reached and where poverty and illiteracy prevail. **Khadi is no companion for wealth.** As to electricity, it is made available first in the cities and then at some eventual point it percolates to the villages. Exploitation is inherent in such an order of things. Therefore till such time as electricity is made available to villages on parity with the cities and the present maldistribution is corrected, it would be difficult to undertake the use of power.

Non-Congress Governments

Khadi has nothing to fear from the Government formed by any political party. For, the problem of unemployment beleaguers even non-Congress Governments and our stand is that you may first try all other means of doing away with unemployment. Then only if you feel the need of it, take to Charkha. If some political parties consider it proper to oppose Khadi just because it has been historically associated with the Congress, they may do so. But if they see the irrelevance of such a ground, they would see that there is no case for opposing Khadi. Moreover, there could be some people who oppose it on principle. Such people exist, not only in the non-Congress parties, but also in the Congress itself. **The objective before Khadi is Gram Swaraj or independence for our rural masses.** Therefore, we have no fears about resistance from any political party.

[Adapted from the original report in Hindi of the discussions Vinoba had with members of the Sub-Committee for Production and Organisation of the Khadi and Village Industries Committee of the Government of India, Ministry of Commerce, in September 14-15, 1957 at Pusa Road. Translation by Probadh Choksi.]

GLOSSARY

SWADESHI—home produced
KHADI—homespun cloth
BIRI—locally produced cigarettes
CHARKHA—spinning wheel
CRORE—10 million
PANCHAYATS—council of five Elders

Sarvodaya and Socialism

Along with Socialism, Acharya Nerendra Dev laid equal emphasis on democracy. So did Dr. Lohia and all other socialists. Angered at the existing conditions, they might at times have said that if it was not possible to achieve socialism through democratic means, they could adopt other means too, which implies 'undemocratic means.' But that is beside the point. If we talk of democracy and socialism together, we must know what we mean by democracy and appreciate the stages involved in a socialistic transformation of the democratic set-up or the impediments in the way of such transformation. We should also identify the locus of power. Apparently today, there are two loci of power in India—the Central Government and the State Governments. Theoretically, we have representative democracy and power is vested in the representatives of the people, but it may be different in practice. Power has come to be vested in the hands of a faction, or a coterie; in the name of democracy, a polyarchy has emerged. Whichever party it be, the patterns of leadership are such that the followers form themselves into groups around a dominant leader. These groups might clash on different matters from time to time, but the decision-making power rests with the dominant group.

What I consider true democracy is where the decision-making powers are effectively in the hands of the people—the individuals, their primary groups and the community.

I have some experience of the way the new government of Bihar is functioning. They may be eager to quicken the speed of development which has to take place in the villages and in the homes, but this cannot be done merely by enacting laws, opening departments, appointing block development offices, or say, creating a machinery and allotting to it specific tasks. Experience has confirmed that **unless you prepare the very people for whose development all these measures are meant, no development can take place.** In its absence, the panchayats too have degenerated into small **hakims** (masters). No development can proceed without people's participation and this participation is not generated today.

Planned uprooting

This raises some fundamental issues. I feel that no national leader other than Gandhiji has understood its significance. If Gandhi had been spared, and if he had brought the resolution moving for dissolution of the Congress, I would have opposed him. I would have told him that it was time for national reconstruction and there was no wisdom in proposing the dissolution of the Congress! But Gandhi knew that the network by which the Indian people exercised power had been systematically destroyed by the British rulers during their century's rule over the country. Theirs was a scientific

administration and they could discern the bases of strength of the Indian society. They realised that unless they destroyed the loci and channels of indigenous power, a handful of British administrators from 7,000 miles away could not rule the country. So they tried every possible method to destroy the sources of initiative of the people and turn them away from the spirit of their society, culture and history.

Duly Returned

I think nobody could do so much harm to this country as did Lord Macaulay. The system of education introduced by him had its sole aim to produce black 'sahebs' to help the handful of white 'sahebs' to rule the country. This aim of education still remains. We have not been able to break this legacy. However we are one of the few people in the world having a continuous culture over several thousand years. There were sudden breaks in other countries, but not so in India. What Macaulay did with us was to apply a sudden brake, to rupture abruptly that continuity, though he did not fully succeed. I do not believe that if our Sanskrit and Persian schools had continued, they would have remained isolated from the world currents. However, Macaulay's English education cut us from our source. And now our M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s who are educated here or abroad are uprooted people. They are neither here nor there. They do not understand either Indian or Western culture, for they tend to take only superficial things and fail to go deeper into the sources of strength of a culture.

In India, we had a village management. **In olden days when there was a famine, the village chairman went and borrowed money from the Sahukar or Mahajan for the village—even a lakh of rupees—and spent that money on public works and relief.** He signed an agreement on behalf of the village that the amount would be returned on such and such a date—there are copper plates to testify this—and the money was duly returned—every pie of it. Today, can any village panchayat get a loan for the village? Now, it is dependant on the Government. Gandhiji understood this fact. He realised that this strength of the village community had been lost and mere independence will not regain it for the village. But just think that if we had decided on 16th August 1947 to regain this strength and had worked to revive the village community, what progress we could have achieved, what power would the country and its people have had? But even today, after 20 years, the people only look to the government.

Now, some socialists are in office. They will learn in course of time that demonstrations and crowds demanding their rights from the government are one form of people's strength, but even the rulers have to rely upon the people. Our Ministers in Bihar are realising that without

awakening the people at the grass roots, nothing can be achieved.

Mutually Reinforcing

Way back in 1954, when I decided to withdraw from politics, my mind had started forming along these lines. I would not say that I had made up my mind. To some extent, my differences with my party colleagues and the resultant events might have forced my decision, but my own thinking and the opportunity for devoting my energies on a wider scale, which the Bhoodan movement had opened up, quickened the process. The Panchmari Session had adopted land redistribution as one of the main programmes and that was what the Bhoodan movement had also aimed at. **Socialism is a complete philosophy; it does not mean a special kind of politico-economic structure only. It means a socialist civilization, building a social man. And these cannot be achieved by legislation. This calls for value-change—change of social values and human values. Gaining control of the state would not achieve such change of values.**

The Ugly Question

continued from page 5

Even at this late hour millions remain convinced that such a process has some relation to freedom and that the United States must continue to pursue this dreadful course. But if events in Vietnam are not enough to persuade otherwise, neither, at present, is the deepening malaise that is affecting American society. Never outstanding for its toleration of dissenting opinion, the pursuit of such an extreme course as the Vietnam war is bound to promote increasing restrictions on liberty, for either the voice of dissent will undermine the war effort, or the war forces will subjugate that voice.

But who in fact is really running the United States? Eisenhower's famous warning about the dangers of a link-up between the military and the industrial interests is now proving only too apt, and the ugly question rears its head whether President Johnson can defy this complex, for example, by refusing to sanction the use of nuclear weapons and by insisting on a negotiated settlement on the basis of whatever face-saving formula can be salvaged from the present shambles, without incurring the same fate as befell his predecessor.

Kennedy's assassination is still mysterious and still largely unexplained. Given, however, the enormous power of the forces operating behind the bland façade of American government, given the fact that Kennedy was highly unpopular with these forces, and not least with the Pentagon, the C.I.A. and the higher reaches of the industrial complex, given too that the animosity between him and them was increasing, given the immensity of the issues at stake, and the fate of General Douglas McArthur on a previous occasion when military opinion was sharply at variance with that of the White House occupant, the odds that Kennedy's death was not occasioned by political

This has not happened in history and will not happen in the future.

When my socialist friends tell me that I should assume their leadership, I do not know what they mean. Have they ever tried to know what I have been doing all these years and what is the objective behind all that I have been working for? They desire that I should agree to be their leader on their terms. I do not know if anybody would be interested in that sort of leadership; at least, I am not. But if they are serious when they say that I should assume their leadership, I would do so on my own terms. **I did not leave politics to run away to take refuge in the forests or in some caves in the Himalayas. I have been working among the people, probably more extensively than ever before.** Those who are interested in my leadership must try to understand what I have been doing and see for themselves if it is anything different than what the democratic socialists should have done. If they understand what socialism should mean in the Indian social context, I am sure, they will realise that the Sarvodaya movement and Socialist movement are mutually reinforcing.

[With acknowledgements to B. N. Juyal and The Editor of Sarva Seva Sangh].

extingencies seem appallingly long. So long indeed that if his removal was indeed inspired by a lone man's dementia, it was surely one of the most fortuitous political windfalls since Harold's death at the Battle of Hastings.

Forces that do not scruple to engage in genocide in the defence or pursuit of power are scarcely likely to be ruffled by the need, on the same reasoning, to eliminate one man who happens to be a president.

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On Devouring a Small Roasted Battery-Reared Milk-Fed Chicken

Unhinging now your little wishbone from its anchorage
I have a twinge at last of breaching someone's personality.
Even as I decarnate this unresisting box—
Pink and ochre—of your unconvincing flesh
It comes upon me with a shock that you were real:
A small puffed bird, beadily peeking out beyond
Its machine of animality, the speck of pineal brain
Bussy with the wants of birdhood and a fowl's entelechy.

Were you really something with a running spark
Igniting quick sensations to the brain, and actually
More than vegetable and mineral? . . . Oh, how few
Sensations did they give you in your cardboard life—
Poor little rich bird in your milk-fed battery!
No ovine memories of a mother to untag
Those early clockwork days in which you darted jerkily
Among the amœba of your peers: not once hungry,
Not once cold or wet—you little fluffy bag
Of fattening test-tube chemicals!

And now that I unpick these soft insipid shreds
I have to force myself to think that God infused in you
The thing that made you bird, despite your mealy prison
Underneath your ceiling without sky. You were
A person after all.

The Infinite be praised

That self in form of poultry and of chickenhood
Could still impose itself on so much plump sterility.
Like a bird you must have cocked that hatchet of your head
(Halucinated) at a worm, listened, scratched and peered
Into the eceptive useless chaff upon your chromium board;
You must have rustled through your feathers with your nib
Of opaque yellow bill, and with a crooked heel
Vibrated non-existent mites around your pinhole ears.

There is no proof of this, alas! Your present tasteless
Birdless form is more millenia away from me
Than monoliths of pterodactyls in Siberia.
I'd rather you had been a plastic vegetable
Mocking the greeny-eyed with waxy subterfuge.

Yes, vast deceit—the cheating of a life—
We need no consciousness to say what we miss:
Your neck and feet and eyes, your untried remex quill,
Your legs that never ran and had no space to jump,
Your mash-fed beak that never pecked on hard,
Even the proboscis of your little cushion-hidden sex,
Were themselves the consciousness of loss, something stunted, missed.

Therefore, with your half-formed wishbone in my hand
I flense these elements from you, your last,
And see you only as a thwarted dish—
Your wishbone in my fingers . . . yes, unconvincingly—
And wish.

PAUL ROCHE

Quotes . . .

" . . . I must help myself out from twilight and sleep . . . exert myself to arouse and shape halfgrown and halfdead faculties in myself. If I am not in the end to escape into a sad resignation, where one consoles oneself with other unripe and powerless beings, lets the world run its course, with the falling and rising of truth and justice, the flowering and dying of art, the death and life of all that interests man as man, and, when a crisis comes, confronts the demands of humanity with one's negative virtue. Better the grave than such a state."

HOLDERLIN - 1794.

The 1968 Peace Calendar :
"Out of the War Shadow"
—War Resisters League.

"It is not the life of knowledge, not even if it includes all the sciences, that creates happiness and well-being, but a single branch of knowledge — the science of good and evil. If you exclude this from the other branches, medicine will be equally able to give us health, and shoemaking shoes, and weaving clothes. Seamanship will still save life at sea, and strategy win battles. But without the knowledge of good and evil, the uses and excellence of these sciences will be found to have failed us."

PLATO.

"Freedom to become a whole person is far more important than freedom to become rich. In all the civilisations that have left their mark in recorded history creative activity, from fertilising the earth and erecting serviceable and beautiful buildings to painting pictures and writing poetry and music, has been the secret of their greatness, the foundation of which was human wholeness and neighbourly functioning in an organic society. In contrast, at every stage in the process towards automation throughout the Industrial Revolution, the status of the machine has risen while that of man has fallen, as has also the quality of his life."

WILFRED WELLOCK.

Not By Bread Alone - 1955

" . . . the mistake of the Western Socialist-capitalist world is to believe that man is simply an economic animal. And now to the belief in economic necessity we are threatened with the belief in technological necessity."

JO GRIMMOND.

The Guardian, January 10th, 1967.

The tempo quickens. Poste and riposte. At last the establishment grasps the fact that our opposition is for real. What has persuaded them? Simply that we're willing to spend time to "do time," to give substantial portions of our lives for the cause of peace.

So long as we met one evening a week, conferred one day a month, marched one day a year, they knew they could treat us as puppies barking at their heels. But the activity and commitment involved in braving jail for months or years is something else. This tells them plain that we will not stop with a conscience-relieving act now and then. We mean that their murderous system be changed, whatever the cost to us.

EDITORIAL

Vigil Voices, January, 1968.

Correspondence

INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY

I wish to take issue with the authors of at least two papers appearing in the November/December number of your journal.

No doubt the learned Dr. Schumacher in "Man need not starve," had to be careful not to offend the tender susceptibilities of the audience (Cornish farmers?) to whom his paper was originally addressed; it was a pity however that your republished version could not have been revised and had to be published missing the one dimension—the political and social framework—which is vital to an understanding of the problem of hunger in the Third World. Presumably you would have been willing to widen Dr. Schumacher's "present terms of reference" to allow this. We are told "the only way to fight hunger in the hungry countries is to involve the entire rural population in a kind of *agricultural renaissance* . . . (my italics) and there are numerous genuflections to that other sacred cow of the liberal apologists "education".

Fortunately however one man's agricultural renaissance is another peasant's social revolution, and we pose the problem incorrectly to suggest that by educating the peasant (those "custodians" of the soil) to increase his productivity, the problem of Third World starvation will be solved. This is a *necessary* precondition, but it is not sufficient. Even the question of an agrarian reform law may be necessary, but not sufficient. The road to revolution is paved with abandoned, revoked or unimplemented agrarian reforms throughout the Third World. In parts of Latin America a liberal regime's attitude to land reform can be used as an indicator—the more determined it is the more likely it will be pushed aside by the Military. Why should an Asian or Andean peasant produce more when over half his produce goes to a landlord or money lender? And it is easy to picture decaying countries full of stupid illiterate peasants "somehow" fallen from a golden past in which they used to do something well which they are now doing badly. Like Dr. Schumacher I am no historian, but coming as I do from the Third World, land robbery, slavery, racial extermination and all the other horrors of Empire are historical causes which I recognize as being responsible for the present situation in many parts of the Third World.

It is not that I dispute the validity of Intermediate Technology, one of Dr. Schumacher's main themes, though too often its protagonists make of it a dogma to replace that other dogma "heavy industrial development." It is quite true that in many factories and manufacturing processes, the factor proportions of labour and capital are not the optimum, even viewed in the *harsh classical economic sense*, i.e., taking account of the prices of labour and capital, and disregarding the social context, the need to maximise employment, etc., of the developing country. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is a passive imitation by local managers and technicians of processes and procedures justifiable in developed countries. But while essential truths can be found in the ideas of intermediate technologies, it does

not follow that you can dismiss officials as merely favouring "glamorous technology" which is "something to boast about," etc. There are many stupid, corrupt or inefficient officials in developing countries (as anywhere else) but their problems are not brought any nearer a solution by ignoring the whole social political and economic context, and the contradictions inherent within (problems of the dual economy, the consumption now or later question, a small unionized proletariat, a large peasantry, partially democratic forms, foreign investment, available aid, revolution or reform, etc., etc.).

Your correspondent Dave Cunliffe makes his own value judgment about vegetarianism. It is a pity Dr. Schumacher did not explicitly do the same, but confused this issue with that of factory farming.

It may be true that "when feeding stuffs are turned into poultry or veal in Factory Farms, some eighty to eighty-five per cent. of the calories contained in the feeding stuffs are lost," but certainly when poultry is bred "naturally" the percentage lost is greater. Unless one wishes to advocate a pure vegetarianism this argument is useful only in *support* of Factory Farms. Further, logically an egg eating vegetarian concerned with efficient food production and other egg eaters in poor countries should advocate Factory Farms—their egg output, feeding stuff input ratio is higher, i.e. productivity per acre is increased.

In parts of the Third World, big peasants/small entrepreneurs have been able, within a wide span of technology to increase output and reduce prices to a significant extent. It may be that the moral authority of Pius XII was placed against Factory Farms as Dr. Schumacher suggests—it is a pity some of this piety was not expended against the Italian rape of Ethiopia during Pius's apprenticeship and that his authority to excommunicate was only used against liberals and communists rather than against the many racist Catholics in South Africa and Portuguese Africa. But tender hearted liberals in the prosperous West have nothing yet to fear about cruelty to animals in that largest country in the Third World: your obscurantist cults find vivid reflection in India. The famine in Bihar was illuminated by the religious outcry against the slaughter of a few of the millions of sacred cows, and no doubt Hindu holy men will continue to keep morality upheld while millions starve within their sight. Besides, these holy men live in an *organic* relationship with their people: as parasites, and there is no "alienation". Never mind about such *unnatural*, scientific, modern methods of animal husbandry such as selective breeding and slaughter or that horror of horrors artificial insemination.

The bankruptcy of your soggy liberal position is clearly exposed by the author of "Comment," who has no use for "wars of liberation". Because of the H-Bomb, you dearly wish to embrace the status quo, or to wish away the contradictions upon which your society is based. You say, in effect, no guerrilla war is justified, no help should be given to such causes but should be concentrated on your own doorstep (in Europe). Can you suggest some way in which exploitation by British capital in Rhodesia or South Africa may be stopped? Or some small scale enterprise by which that portion of the dividends taxed in Britain can be used for the people in these two countries?

How much effect have your boycotts of South African goods had (apart from the glow of righteous self-satisfaction in the liberal breast)?

You speak of the Guevara's romanticism and rather pedestrian quality of mind. His book "Guerrilla Warfare" did not concern itself with vegetarianism, or Factory Farms, or the cosy myths and fantasies of a prosperous (yes), permissive capitalist society or with whether your alms were being used "properly." It was addressed not to sophisticated liberals with "advanced" views to the just literate, to the Asian, African and Latin American peasant who no longer looks for a "change of heart" of the foreign oppressor on his land. This will never happen—the oppressor on his neck has to be pushed off by the peasant, when he exercises his initiative, with as much force as is necessary, notwithstanding "the cool, thermodynamic-conscious, coexistence of the Russians? When one has neither bread nor freedom, what is there to lose? How many years did your liberal Christian darling Luthli delay the start of the African Freedom Movement? To a man struggling for his freedom, instructions for making the Molotov cocktail for use against British-built tanks or armoured cars are not pedestrian, and a better form of aid would be a copy of "Guerrilla Warfare" rather than a pacifist/vegetarian tract.

VIC RICHARDSON.

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Palatine Road,
Manchester, 20.

Dave Cunliffe comments:—Vic Richardson's arguments are symptomatic of simple European exoteric Christian reasoning. His conclusions are fragmentary, undeveloped and partial. By "pure vegetarianism" I assume he means veganism and total abstention from eggs and dairy produce. Alternately, pure or ethical vegetarianism permits egg consumption but, rejecting or transcending such brutal indulgences as the cruel exploitation of animals, is utterly opposed to battery egg production. Furthermore there is a substantial difference between quantity, albeit with higher "feeding stuff input ratio," and quality. Irrespective of probable toxic chemical residue, such factory farming practice exerts a brutalising and thus regressive influence on its consumers.

Orthodox Hindu religious protests against sacred cow slaughter certainly helped illuminate Bihar's famine but hardly in the way Vic Richardson presupposes. India is presently ordering modern slaughter-house equipment and attempting to persuade traditional vegetarian areas to experiment with flesh food. Scarcely the way to combat progressive famine. Cattle require eight times as much land as human beings to sustain them. A mixed diet user needs 1.63 acres and 1.3 acres of this is taken up by flesh cultivation. Conversely only .6 acres are necessary to provide an abundant and varied vegetarian diet.

It is understandable that a mind unable to grasp the complexities of diet, morality or environmental misuse should seem irrevocably addicted to self-destructive, if actualised, violent fantasy. Historical evidence suggests "wars of liberation" to be a

terminological contradiction. The hypothetical man making and using a molotov cocktail would probably get a bullet in the belly or worse for his trouble. A copy of Guevara's "Guerrilla Warfare" may persuade such a man to make such a desperately futile gesture. It will undoubtedly promote many a "war of liberation" from life.

OXYGEN

Dear Sir,

You are concerned about the possible exhaustion of the world's supplies of coal, oil and natural gas in a few decades, perhaps by the year 2,000.

But there is a more alarming prospect. The amount of oxygen in the atmosphere is limited and has been declining significantly in the last few decades.

Until the industrial revolution there were large quantities of coal, oil and natural gas locked in the earth, large amounts of carbon in solid or liquid form. This carbon is being burned in the atmosphere to form carbon dioxide; and the proportion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising significantly.

According to a recent report in the *New York Times* it will, by the end of this century, have reached such a concentration that the atmosphere will contain insufficient oxygen to support life. The calculation is based on known reserves of coal, oil and natural gas; on the rate at which they are being consumed; and on the rate at which the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is increasing.

This threat appears to be as potent as that from the radioactive effluent from atomic power stations. Perhaps we should not be too much concerned about the government's closing down of coal mines. Perhaps the government is being short-sighted in welcoming the discovery of North Sea Gas. It may help to solve our balance of payments problem but it will add to other and more intractable problems.

Yours faithfully,

PAUL DERRICK.

30 Wandsworth Bridge Road,
London, S.W.6.
February 4, 1968.

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From:

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The Scottish National Party

*What force or guile could not subdue
Thro many warlike ages
Is wrought now by a coward few
For hireling traitor's wages
The English steel we could disdain
Secure in valour's station
But English gold has been our bane
Such a percel of rogues in a nation*

ROBERT BURNS 1759-1797.

It may seem rather strange to start an article on a political movement with a song, and to a non-Scot the reverent adoration of the Scots for Robert Burns may seem incomprehensible. Yet in this song is contained much of the reason and the explanation of this adulation and the deep division in Scottish politics. Burns of course was not responsible for this division but he described it and made it clear for all to see, for he was on the side of the Scottish nation and completely against the Unionists, the traitors of the song.

This Union with England in 1707 has always been at the centre of Scottish politics and remember that Burn's song was written three quarters of a century later. He had no personal recollection, any more than Scots today, of an independent Scotland. Yet what he felt is felt today just as freshly, the 260 years of Union feel to many as bondage. Revolts, executions, transportation slavery, imprisonment have not altered it except to add martyrs to independence, and to the powers of the Unionists. Yet even in the Scottish people's deepest torpor, they have never discarded the beliefs of their greatest patriot poet or their greatest patriot martyr Sir William Wallace. These two men who to them represent the best and greatest in the Scottish nation nor ever in their worst hours lost their affection for them. Sir Walter Scott may have influenced literature more but he was a Unionist, Adam Smith may have affected the world's economics, he also was a Unionist. This has always been the test.

On November 3rd, 1967, this gulf became apparent to the world at Hamilton, Lanarkshire. Here in the cradle of the Scottish Labour Movement, Labour was toppled in the most remarkable political result in post war years. Labour were toppled by the Scots people whom they had betrayed, the people to whom James Keir Hardie, a native of this area, and the apostle of British Socialism had promised self government. The symbolic justice of this defeat is very evident. Earlier in the century before the First World War the Scottish Liberals had betrayed self-government and they had been annihilated by Labour. So that for over a century the movement towards independence had been thwarted and diverted by Unionists mouthing independence.

The peak of Unionist influence came just before the 1914-18 War, at the zenith of Britain's imperial might, its influence declined steadily afterwards. In 1924 George Buchanan, Labour M.P. for the Gorbals presenting his "Government of Scotland Bill" warned English M.P.'s "Unless they concede this

mild meagre measure for which we are now asking, forces at work that neither we nor anyone can stop will soon demand not this measure but a bold and bigger measure" 10 years later after more abortive self government bills, an unequivocal political vehicle for self government was founded, the S.N.P. and as he had warned it did not want a regional Scottish Parliament, it's purpose was a Dominion Parliament.

Kilted Eccentrics

Their task was a daunting one, a people split into hardline doctrinal segments in politics and deeply divided over religion, who very often determined their political allegiance by their spiritual allegiance. The Unionists had an almost ideal condition of divide and rule. The S.N.P. grew slowly, but its influence was out of all proportion to its numbers, for there was also occurring one of the great renaissances of Scottish poetry and art and most of the people concerned, including Hugh MacDiarmid, the greatest poet since Burns, were fervid nationalists. For the first time the Unionists had to defend the Union openly, this they did ably and projected on the S.N.P. an image of eccentric, poets and dreamers which was to take a quarter of a century to alter.

This propaganda caricature image stuck until 1945 at a bye-election Dr. Robert MacIntyre was elected at Motherwell, though at the General Election shortly afterwards he was defeated. Yet this Scottish nationalist success and defeat was to set going another type of nationalist movement, the non-political plebiscite Scottish Convention. Although it achieved 2,000,000 signatures for self-government, the Unionists disregarded it politely, it had proved to be a nationalist cul-de-sac.

In 1949 Atlee's Labour movement finally betrayed Kier Hardie and discarded Scottish self government from their programme and the Liberal Party once again took up the mantle for a limited Scottish Parliament. The Liberals had some success and gained some seats in rural and Highland Scotland, but without making the slightest impression on the core of Scotland, the industrial Central Valley. But in 1962 the picture started to change, the S.N.P. now started to gather strength doing rather better in bye-elections, and its membership numbers started to jump, doubling each year to date. 1962, 2,000; 1963, 4,000; 1964, 8,000; 1965, 16,000; 1966, 40,000; 1967, 82,000, making it by far the largest political party in Scotland. It had discarded the kilted eccentric image in the eyes of the Scottish electorate, though not in the eyes of the Unionists, whose inventive resources seems to have temporarily left them.

Today the Unionist opposition to Europe's fastest growing political party can be divided into three categories.

- (1) The hardliners who detest and fear the very idea of an independent Scotland, the great Scottish financial interests tied to the City of London, and the large Anglo-Scottish landowning group of absentee and feudal

landowners, who have sterilised much of Scotland, and their political vehicle the Scottish Conservative and Labour parties with their vicious mouthpiece the "Glasgow Herald".

- (2) The careerists in public life who see Westminster as a wider and more rewarding platform for their ambitions, in this category are most of the Labour and Liberal M.P.'s and the pseudo internationalists who cannot see the mote in their own eye and only take up these foreign nationalists it is in their interest to deal with.
- (3) The third and largest category, for the others though powerful are relatively few in numbers, consists of those who are afraid of independence; this would include a great number of Labour and Liberal supporters and some Conservatives. They desire an affluent Scotland but delivered to them on a plate and on balance since the U.K. is larger and outwardly stronger, they will opt for that. Not out of conviction but from the fear of the consequences of independence. It is also the group whom the hard line and careerist Unionists realise are most open to a radical and convincing S.N.P. programme and whom they are now strenuously trying to influence. On this depends their own continued existence and their efforts, though not evident to the English public, through mass communications repression, has become in recent weeks herculean.

Yet the reason I believe this effort will be in vain, is the almost complete capture of the Scottish youth by the S.N.P. and the desertion from the 3 Unionist parties. The evident corollary to them of British rule is material and cultural poverty, unemployment, indescribable housing conditions, emigration, a criminal lack of opportunity, educational facilities at Scottish Universities denied to them because of the steadily increasing percentage of English students in universities, now over 50% in some cases yet there are only 300 Scottish students in English universities. Perhaps 50% of the youth supporting the S.N.P. are under 21, a large percent-

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age are under 16. This can only be seen as a formidable omen for the Unionists who are mainly in the over 40's group. The desertion of youth and idealism from a political party is the abandoning of the motive power which drives it. Increasingly the Unionists are coming under pressure and criticism from within their own organisation, the Liberals as the smallest, have virtually ceased to exist except in their Westminster representation.

A recent poll carried out by the Thomson group after Hamilton shows that the S.N.P. has come from bottom to second place in only two years and only a margin of 3% separates them from the Labour Party which had 45 seats out of 71, with the Conservative and Liberals together in the poll attracting less than the half of the support for the S.N.P. They have been virtually reduced to protest groups.

The youth of Scotland have brought to the S.N.P. a élan which is the envy of the Unionist parties. Folk-singing, song-writing, one of the best loved of Scottish arts has been reinvigorated and taken over. University Nationalists have been spending their holidays digging ditches, building roads in the crofts of the Western Isles among the most depressed section of the Scottish people under Westminster rule. They have taken up the Gaelic, that almost vanished but oldest living Indo-European language. They have refurbished Scottish life with a courage and panache it has not seen for many a long year.

The obscene denial and perversion of nationhood by the Westminster parties was struck at Hamilton its first blow, it will not be the last in this session of Parliament. The reaction against centralisation and the colonial policy that has impoverished a nation that was per capita at the close of the last century, the richest in the world, joined with the reaction against the cultural poverty of the London establishment that drives and denigrates, the history, the literature and the music of Celtic Scotland will ensure that the next General Election in Scotland will not be about the Common Market, or Britain's economic position but the one thing that the Unionists fear above all other. Whether or not Scotland shall be a whole and a free nation.

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Continued on page 27.

A New kind of Man

Once you come to believe that Man is a part of Nature and not apart from her, you find yourself changing your beliefs about every question under the sun. Above all you find it quite impossible to accept the rightness of human society as it is today. You cannot accept its ruthless exploitation of the biosphere, its gross materialism, its commercialism, its death-wish, its frantic search to relieve an unreleivable boredom: its lack of any transcendental belief or philosophy.

You then start wondering what to do about it.

Most people, unfortunately, who come to the Organic Philosophy never do anything effective about it at all.

They may join the Soil Association (it costs them a guinea or two a year), or the Peace Movement, or become Vegetarians, or Vegans, or Roman Catholics, or Humanists, or Hindus, they may take up Yoga, or Krishna Murti, or drinking raw carrot juice, but they remain completely and hopelessly enslaved by the thing they are trying to get away from. For everything they eat, for everything they wear, for everything they use, for every house they live in—they are beholden to the Monster that they are trying to turn against. They talk of the evils of soil-exploitation—but they would starve without the products of the exploited soil. They talk against Belsen-houses for hens or for calves or for cattle—but without the Belsen-houses they would have no meat and no eggs. They say that politics is bunk—but the only method they use against it is the political one. They condemn big industry—but, directly or indirectly, they work for it. They are Pacifists—but pay taxes. They say they are Decentralists—and give as their address London W.1 or Brooklyn, New York.

And nobody in the world is going to take very seriously the arguments in favour of freeing ourselves from big industry, high finance, landlordism, land exploitation, or any of these evils unless they can see that the arguer has in some measure managed to free himself. In the end there is only one argument that people will listen to—and that is the argument of example.

Is it possible, then, to 'contract out' of the big business world—free ourselves from the grip of 'the Monster'—and still survive? Or are we, indeed, slaves, and bound to accept this slavery and make the best of it for ever, even though we talk about making our escape? And after all, the Monster allows us to complain—until we're blue in the face provided we obey its rules and pay its taxes.

In England, the Gypsies escape, but only partially. They contribute very little to the Monster. They do not work in its factories, pay its National Insurance or its Income Tax, fill in its forms, serve in its armies. But they live off it just the same, if only parasitically. Their Bedford thirty-hundred-weights—their chrome-plated trailer-caravans—where do these come from? Their food is wrapped sliced pap from the Monster's 'bread' factories, their eggs come from the Belsen-houses. Maybe they could, if they would, live without the help of

the Monster: as it is they don't. Beatniks, 'Diggers,' 'New People,' Hippies, achieve even less real independence: they achieve none at all.

The dying race of traditional small holders and small farmers: they are freer than most of us. The Welsh hill and valley smallholders, the yeomen who still hold out against the 'company farmer' in South Norfolk, East Suffolk, the Welsh marches: wherever the land is too physically cut up or too heavy or too light, or otherwise unattractive for the bulldozer-farmer to be interested in—these men are still fairly independent. But they are on the way out—and they know it. Their philosophy is wrong, and they cannot change it. They cannot adapt to a changed world. Either they join the big-money scrabblers—or sell out and work for them—or they go to the city and the factories. If they hang on they become more dependent, not less, on the Monster's products. Exhorted by the 'agricultural economists' (who are as thick in England as fleas on a dog's back) they specialize and give up producing their own milk and butter and cheese, and curing the bacon from their own pigs, and baking their own bread. All their energy goes into their 'cash crop'. The 'cash crop' market slumps—and out they go. They sell out to the big farmer next door. But still some men survive, and are oblivious to all the propaganda that would make them believe that they are doomed, and these are happy men, and we should learn from them.

The Homesteader

But there is a third kind of man who is trying to escape from the Monster—the modern Homesteader.

Here and there, in an odd corner that the factory-farmers have not yet got hold of, you may find a member of this new race.

Sometimes, generally in Britain, the Homesteader lives alone with his own family only. Generally he is not in touch with any other Homesteaders: very often, indeed, he is not even aware that there are any others! The writer homesteaded for eight years before he realized that he was not unique. Occasionally, though, he lives in a community or a colony of other Homesteaders. In North America there are a great many such 'intentional communities'.

Homesteaders vary enormously. Some attempt to grow all their own food, to the extent of milling their own wheat, malting their own barley, and growing (very difficult) their own protein for feeding to animals. Some shear their own sheep, or grow their own cotton, and card and spin and weave. Some practice a craft and grow only a proportion of their own food. Some work for the Monster, and Homestead in their spare time; but—they are true Homesteaders—they intend, one day, to become free. The ones in communities are able to specialize—while one milks a few cows and provides the others with dairy produce—another will grow corn and provide the cowman with flour for himself and barley meal for his cows, while another

may produce little food but keep the others in building, in furniture, in cloth. 'From each according to . . .'

In North America the number of Homesteaders is considerable, and increasing fast. Two papers that they run (*Green Revolution* and *A Way Out*) have a readership of over a thousand, which may not sound much but which is a beginning, and their readership is going up while the readership of *Life* may well be decreasing! In Europe Homesteaders have no paper and few know that any others exist. But when I wrote a book, some five years ago (*The Fat of the Land* — Fabers) about Homesteading I received over three hundred letters, many of which were from Homesteaders, and many more from would-be Homesteaders. Many of the latter, I am glad to say, are now Homesteaders and 'would be' no longer. Some tried—and dropped out. It is a very hard road to travel.

How can a Homesteader be defined?

Is the stock-broker who grows a few cabbages in his Surrey garden, and whose wife perhaps keeps goats, a Homesteader? I should personally say not. Must a Homesteader be without a regular job in commerce or in industry? Maybe ones who still have to work for the Monster are apprentice Homesteaders.

For the essence of the matter is this: the Homesteader is withdrawing himself.

They never last

He fights the Monster—not by words or with bullets, but by quietly withholding his labour, his custom, and his support. He buys as little as he can from the Monster. He contributes to it as little as he can. He probably pays no taxes. He probably buys no taxed articles—or very few. If he smokes (and he often doesn't) he grows his own tobacco. If he drinks (and he often does) he brews his own beer, ferments his own wine. His money-income is deliberately kept small—far below income-tax level. He trades with the world as of course he must. He may sell surplus farm produce (if he keeps one sow she will present him with perhaps two dozen piglets a year—he can't eat all those), he may sell the products of a home industry (I know of one who makes wooden toys, another who makes furniture, my wife is a potter, I am a writer). He may sell some service (I know of doctors, plumbers, builders, carpenters, a tree surgeon). He may compromise, and work for the Monster at a wage or a salary and Homestead in his spare time, or else, more satisfactorily, work part-time for the Monster and have more time for Homesteading.

The community Homesteader is in a strong position in that he can specialize more, and enjoy the products of other specialists, in that he has help from his neighbours, in that he can pool plant and equipment (one bull, one boar, one tractor, one threshing drum, may do for a whole community). He is in a weak position in that, if he is strong, he must carry the weak (and brother—how weak your city-bred 'communitier' can be!) and whether strong or weak he must put up with his fellows' idiosyncracies. One is constantly being told: 'Communities never last—they always break up in the end!' Well the manorial communities, with their Open Field System, lasted for over a thousand years in England, and never broke up themselves: they were broken up by the greed of wealthy outsiders. In America today there are scores of communities which have been going for several decades and

which show every sign of lasting. The most successful are ones in which each family holds its own land, (*holds its own land*—nobody but God, or a robber can *own* land): generally a farm is bought, split up into a number of holdings, with only part of the land, some buildings, and some plant, held in common. The "hugger-mugger" type community, in which everybody mucks in together, generally breaks up owing to constant sexual uproar and to the divided interests between a man's family and his community. (John Middleton Murray's book *Community Farm* tells of the breaking up of a 'hugger-mugger' community). The Israeli *kibbutzim* still survive and flourish: exceptions to this rule. Monastic communities survive, unless broken up from outside, because they do not suffer from this in-built weakness: the monk's family is his Order.

The craftsman

The modern urban man has gone a long way from the soil, and it is extremely difficult for him to get back. This fact accounts for most failures among Homesteaders. So many would-be Homesteaders simply do not know how to do it, and haven't got the stamina to find out. But in spite of failures, Homesteaders are increasing, and they will continue to increase as the idea spreads by example. There is a satisfaction in this way of life that cannot be achieved in any other.

Another class of man who should be included among effective Decentralists is the independent craftsman. If civilization is to survive (or some may say *return*) then we must have manufactories, but there is still no excuse for Birmingham, or for Pittsburgh! When artifacts require 'units' of thousands of wage-slaves to produce them—then we should learn to do without these artifacts. There is nothing that mankind really needs that cannot be produced from the soil, taken out of the sea, or manufactured in a village or a small town. (Mind you, in Pakistan, I have seen diesel engines, and very good ones too, being built in a small village! I am not saying that we cannot live without diesel engines. I am merely saying that—if we must have them—they can be built quite effectively in a village).

And what should the scattering of pioneer Homesteaders and decentralized craftsmen do now, besides going quietly on about their business? How can we best consolidate our position and achieve a positive effect on society?

First of all, we must hear of one another. And then we must help one another. We must always, if we can, trade with other Homesteaders or Independent Craftsmen. Even if it costs more and is not so good I would rather buy an article from a small craftsman than from a huge factory—and surprisingly often it doesn't cost more and is much better! (After all, the small craftsman doesn't have an assistant secretary to the secretary of a Personnel Officer to pay!). And as more craftsmen and Homesteaders come to be, and as we hear about each other more, we will be able to obtain more and more of our requirements without troubling (or helping) the Monster.

The Americans have got a credit scheme going, whereby people can trade with each other without using currency. The Danes (in the Folk High School Movement) have developed a private money. If Homesteaders trade with each other in a private currency or credit scheme such as this, or more

simply by direct barter, they are cutting themselves off very effectively from the Monster and his almighty Dollar or Pound. If a fellow Homesteader charges me four bob a dozen for eggs and I can get Belsen-eggs in a shop for three-and-six I may be fool enough to buy the latter, but if I can buy with 'Homesteader currency' from my neighbour I will—and he may buy my wife's pottery, or my books, or my weaner pigs, or my home-cured bacon back.

In America Homesteaders are becoming aware of each other. They have a Movement, and it is a great help to them. They have their *School of Living*, which publishes *The Green Revolution* and *A Way Out*, and this is reaching out to the world. In the July issue of *G.R.* there were letters from the United States, India, Canada, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Australia and Denmark: all from Homesteaders. In New Zealand there are several 'Intentional Communities'. But there is one danger that this Decentralist Movement must avoid if it is to survive. And that is becoming a home for every conceivable kind of 'ism'.

Room for all

Members must not try to foist their own personal 'isms' on the Decentralist Movement. All right—you live on chopped nettles and sleep with your head to the North—don't bring that into it! By all means try to promote your 'ism' as hard as you like—but not in the Decentralist Movement. It must have one issue and one issue only: Decentralism. In farming, industry, government, culture, language, everything: Decentralism. And only Decentralism. Whether you are a raw-meat man or a yogi, a Flat-Earther or a Jew, has got nothing whatever to do with the Decentralist Movement. The Movement is already in danger of splitting on one rock only: the carnivore versus vegetarian controversy. This must be kept out of it: there is room for us all.

The reason for this is a simple mathematical one.

You might well, in England, find ten thousand Decentralists. Insist though that they should all be not only Decentralist but Vegetarian, say, and your number falls to a thousand. Add compost-culture only—and you halve that. Add Christianity and you're down to a very few hundred. Another 'ism' or two and you're down to one!

The issue must be kept clear. The other 'isms' are different issues and must be debated separately, otherwise the movement will fall to pieces and we decentralists will remain an unrelated scattering of disregarded cranks.

I am not suggesting that the only salvation for a man in this world is to work a Homestead. Civilization is a desirable state, and it depends upon specialization, and if we are to return to it we Decentralists must specialize: some must be farmers, some craftsmen, some artists, some philosophers, some dreamers. Shakespeare, of course, was a farmer as well as a playwright and poet—you can be two things. Too narrow a specialization is stultifying. But in his time, anyway, society was still organic: there was still a natural and proper relationship between country and town, townspeople knew where their bread came from—country people how their boots were made, and where the leather came from.

If we think that the world is over-centralized, and becoming more so, if we dislike a world ruled in effect, by Imperial Chemical Industries and its

faceless brethren, then surely the first thing we must do is to withdraw our support from these things. It is useless and feeble to criticise big industry and still be dependent on it for both everything we use and for our jobs. Before we do anything else we must break away—and stand on our own feet. And this boils down to either homesteading, or free-lance professionalism, or craftsmanship of one kind or another. Or, preferably, a combination of both. Each one of us is only responsible for his own actions. Each one of us must make this choice for himself.

One hears the argument—but if we *all* did it—there wouldn't be enough land in overcrowded Britain for us all to have homesteads.

Well there would.

According to the last 'June Returns' of the Ministry of Agriculture there were just under 25,000,000 acres of cultivable land in England and Wales. This is somewhere near half an acre for every man woman child and baby. Or, perhaps two acres for every family. Add to this the fact that we will never *all* become homesteaders—say half of us do—this gives us four acres per family—enough to support the family and produce a hefty surplus as well. And it must be remembered—the smaller the land-holding the more intensively it is likely to be farmed. Big farms make for a high output per man-hour but a low output per acre. Small holdings make for a low output per man-hour but a high output per acre, and in a hungry world it is output per acre which is important. The Monster, in every land, aims to herd nearly everybody into the new super-cities to produce mass-made goods and to have the agriculture done by a few machine-minders—each countryman supporting as many city workers as possible. This is the road to the ant-heap—not to a civilized community.

There is only one way to kill the Monster—and that is to ignore it. Contract out of its service—decline to use its products. As more and more people do this the Monster will wither and die, as the State is supposed to do, and so palpably isn't going to, under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The History of Science

Light falls through a system

of sorrow

that spreads and weds a number of

neutrons and particles

of gas

whose mass and volume will end

you may depend

upon some negative quantity.

HERB GOTTESMAN.

REVIEW

La Vida—A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty, San Juan and New York, by Oscar Lewis. Random House, New York, 1966; \$10.00.

This is the latest installment of the tremendous series in the study of poverty in the Western hemispheric world which Oscar Lewis has made peculiarly his own. The methodology employed, that of multiple autobiographies with observed typical days to build up, in massive detail, the family portrait of selected people in the slums of San Juan and Puerto Rican Harlem, is not, of course, as novel as it is sometimes made to seem: much of it was used by Dolci in his studies of Sicilian poverty, while to some extent it consists, as Lewis himself admits, of the traditional devices of anthropological inquiry. That Lewis, at the same time, has exhaustively refined the method is beyond doubt. And what is equally important, he has not permitted the method to become his master. He brings to the scene wit, compassionate sympathy, a rare understanding of what makes people behave, so that he makes of his work a truly imaginative sociology. Anyone familiar with the aid quality of the work done hitherto by the American social scientists on Puerto Rico, essentially dehumanized by the coma of research, will readily recognise the true measure of the sociological humanism of this volume. The remark with which the late Robert Redfield expressed his own fine disgust at the work, for example, of the Columbia University group, summed up in their *People of Puerto Rico*—"But where are the people?"—comes to mind. The distinction I seek to make here can be best understood by quoting another remark, that of Professor Alfred Zimmern, in once speaking about the administrative socialism of the Fabians: "The Webbs," he said, "are interested in town councils, Graham Wallas is interested in town councillors." So, while there is much in the Lewis volume that deals, quite properly, with the institutional environment, the real hero-figures of the social drama are the people of the San Juan slum-ghetto, not eccentric, perhaps, in an English sense but possessed, nevertheless, of a vibrant and intense personality all of their own.

In this richly observed tapestry, then, we watch the various members of the pseudonymous Rios family as they live out their daily lives, first in San Juan and then in New York. They inhabit a hostile world of "cops," welfare workers, urban Negroes and Italians, grasping employers (although there are occasional glimpses of humane Jewish employers). They are "pushed around" endlessly; so they hate bureaucracy, not least of all the exposure to the tyranny of rent which is involved in the transfer from the slum to the housing project. They live on their wits, although that does not preclude hard work, when they can get it, in the best spirit of the Protestant economic virtues. They have a real gift for tolerance, shaped ineluctably out of the struggle for social existence. They live, not avidly for money, but for the passionate intensity of the given moment. They are, many of them, brutalized, loud-speaking, gross individuals, constituting, in fact, as one Puerto Rican critic has

noted, a new breed of Puerto Ricans, the "neojet Puerto Ricans," far removed from the gentle folk-people of the traditional Puerto Rican literature. But it is not a depraved brutality, for it is ameliorated by the informal systems of mutual aid which the poor everywhere build up as defense-mechanisms against class society—although the lament of Soledad in the section "Nobody Loved Me" about the envy and the selfishness of her neighbors suggests that there might be some considerable mythology about that mutual aid as it is eroded by the murderous pressures of the life struggle. It is, above all, a nomadic life, with New York still playing the fantastic role of the New Jerusalem. Much of the book deals, inevitably, with the grim disillusionment of that dream; to read the section entitled "I'd Rather Be in Puerto Rico" is to be made to feel the full sadness of the terrible homesickness that afflicts the Puerto Rican migrant like a real sickness. For the Puerto Rican exile, clearly enough, hates the American experience, not politically but socially. He detests the rush, the absence of tranquillity, the indecent treatment of the aged, the racial discrimination, the incapacity of Americans, despite their wealth, to enjoy themselves. It is the final indictment of American life that these Puerto Rican visitors, as Oscar Lewis describes them, leave the United States as soon as they can and with little affection for it. They prefer the purgatory of San Juan to the hell of New York.

The real picture

Traditionally, as Lewis reminds us, the literature on the poor has seen them either, as in the Victorian eulogies of the "deserving poor," as acceptable candidates for graduation in the middle class school or as a depraved crowd, as is evident enough in that fear of the masses that infected the liberal creed, even in De Tocqueville and the younger Mill. It is the virtue of his own book that it condones neither view. It does not embrace, on the one hand, that sort of anthropological Rousseauism which so frequently mars even scholastic work on the life of contemporary peasantries; nor, on the other hand, does it see the world of the poor as a sordid and mean sub-culture that can only be rescued by the application of bourgeois virtues. The real picture, like all real life, is contradictory. On the one side, this is a harsh world of sub-classes which surely no one, had he the choice, would willingly elect to live in. Many of the Lewis character-types are, it is true, content to live in it. But many of them speak admiringly of middleclass values, of the "better things"; they spend money, even squander it, on furniture and clothes; when there are children and they live in settled fashion with some man, many of the women work hard at a job; there is even the figure of the "respectable prostitute" like Felicitia who demands "respect" even from her men clients and who dreams of a new world of education and marriage for her children. Clearly enough, the tragedy of such individuals is that, exposed to the larger affluent society, they are doomed forever to aspire to values they can never fulfil because they, quite literally, possess no bargaining power in the acquisitive society. To romanticize their life-style would be the final insult; they would reply, if they could, that it is only the person who does not have to work for a living who talks glibly about the "dignity of labor."

On the other side, even so, these people are not the scum of the earth, except to those new Puerto Rican middle-class groups whose own morbid fear of relapsing back into their own earlier poverty explains their shrill, frenzied reaction to the publication of the Lewis book. Every people, as Burke insisted, must have some compensation for its slavery. No one can read the book without an enhanced respect for the positive aspects of the Rios family life-style. The love of parent, child, and friend shines through. There is an eagerness for new experience in the face of endless disillusionment, a feeling for human contact, a survival of shrewdness and intelligence despite the pressure of ignorance, the presence of health and sex and the capacity to enjoy them, that has not given way to helplessness and despair. Indeed, it is the irrepressible optimism that strikes the observer in all this. There is a keen aversion to suicide as a way out, as well as a proper Catholic horror of it. There is, all in all, a Rabelaisian quality in this social portrait, and there are whole sections of the book that would have delighted, for example, Chesterton. The sexual act itself—even within the withering framework of prostitution—becomes, as it were, a hymn of praise to the life-happiness principle, and not an occasion for solemn analysis or an instrument of “beatnik” revolt. For those Puerto Ricans whose Catholic puritanism has been offended by the “immorality” of the book, indeed, the answer is the fine assertion of Chesterton, recently quoted by a West Indian progressive paper in defense of Trinidadian Carnival, that “if by vulgarity we mean coarseness of speech, rowdiness of behavior, gossip, horseplay, and some heavy drinking, vulgarity there always was wherever there was joy, wherever there was faith in the gods.” To regard the way in which the Rios family copes with its destiny, and then to compare it, say, to the portrait of the fictional East Indian family in Naipaul’s novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, in which the members live a passive life, unable to stand by any original Oriental conviction, incapable of making out of their traditional Hindu faith an effective defense against cultural assimilation, and vulnerable, because of their colonialist credulousness, to the latest mental or social fad that they encounter in the *picaroon* Trinidadian society, is to begin to appreciate the truth that the ownership of wealth in itself does not necessarily equip a minority group with the power of positive reaction in its general social role. The ghetto, all this is to say, has its positive as well as its negative features. It can be, as Kenneth Clark has recently pointed out in his remarkable analysis of Negro Harlem, a cocoon as much as a cage; for it gives its denizens an inner power to meet the massive contempt of the outer society, a contempt, in the Puerto Rican case, compounded by the contempt with which the language of the Puerto Rican migrant is treated by all other New Yorkers, including the other minority groups. From this viewpoint, then, slum clearance becomes an act of war against the minority group, for it robs the group of a vital emotional base. It is not for nothing that the lengthy Lewis book ends with an epilogue describing the incredible loneliness and boredom that descend upon a Rios family member as she seeks to settle down in a new

housing project to which she has almost been forcibly removed by the Puerto Rican welfare agencies.

What are the theoretical implications of all this? Lewis seeks to state them within the framework of what he terms the “culture of poverty.” As defined here, in his introduction, this means, among much else, a sub-culture of poverty-stricken people characterized by a “lack of effective participation in the major institutions of the larger society.” Seen thus, it is not unlike the concept of the “pluralist society” which the West Indian anthropologist M. G. Smith has recently borrowed from Furnivall to apply to the poly-ethnic West Indian society; it would have been rewarding if Lewis had told us how he sees the “culture of poverty” in relation to this concept of pluralism. Looked at in their own terms, however, there is reason to suspect that there is some discrepancy between the theoretical statement and the accumulated evidence of the documentation itself. For, clearly enough, to begin with, the world the documentation describes is not a strong normative sub-culture defending a strongly felt set of values against the top culture, not to speak of being, as it were, a contra-culture that is in open conflict with the dominant system. There is little sense of social fatalism, as already noted. There is little enough, on Lewis’s own showing, of strong psychological alienation. His people share in the Puerto Rican political value system. They even share in the American value system; one of the most moving episodes of the book describes how two of the Puerto Rican women factory workers in New York spent all they had to make a trip to Washington in order to pay their respects to the assassinated President Kennedy. In the vital field of religious belief, always among the first to carry signs of group revolt, there is again a general conservatism in which the slum poor, like most of working-class Puerto Rico, practice spiritualism and the cult of the popular saints. There is nothing here of the splendid shamanistic fervor of the Caribbean cult-religions, nor of the “back to Africa” ideology with which the Jamaican Rastafarian group express their conviction that, trapped in the Jamaica of the brown middle class, they are the victims of a new Babylonian Captivity from which they yearn to escape. Lewis notes the strength of the family in the Puerto Rican situation. As an anthropologist, he is entitled to his admiration for that testimony to institutional survival. But as a socialist he might sometimes wonder about the implications of the fact that throughout the history of socialist thought, from Plato through the radical aspects of the historical Jesus to Marx himself, there has been a radical skepticism of the family as a basically conservative force. Certainly, as one reads the lives of Lewis’s people, Fernanda and Simplicio and Benedicto, it is clear enough that it is their deep attachment to the family tie, for all of its bitter quarrelling, that keeps them from open revolt against the system of which they are the unwitting prisoners.

If, then, the “culture of poverty” concept is conceived to consist of a virulent sub-culture socially transmitted, intact, generationally, the case seems not proven for this book. What Lewis here conceptualizes as a “culture of poverty” is not much more than a bastard spurious culture, a halfway house between the lost original culture of the Puerto Rican folk-people and the massive American industrial capitalism with which the

Puerto Rican poor must learn, somehow or other, to come to terms. It is possible to document the rise of a growing class consciousness in the poor, as Thompson has done recently in his work on the British working class. It is open to doubt, however, whether there exists a culture of the poor, coherent, viable, separate, whose members possess a world-view fundamentally different from that of the larger society. To be sure, that there is a difference of quality is beyond doubt, as the literature from Dickens to Orwell shows. But it is not a quality of ideology. And I urge this not because the concept is difficult to fit into a socialist scheme but because the evidence to support it, in this book, seems at best inconclusive.

The evidence, as I read it, reveals a life of triangular loyalties—to class, race, and nation—with the loyalty to class constituting the weakest and that to nation (that is, to Puerto Rico) the strongest links in the chain. The slum poor hate the rich. But the gulf that divides them, as they see it, is a preordained destiny; and rich and poor only meet each other amicably in fairy tales. Any kind of racial alliance with the American Negro is likewise precluded because the Puerto Rican, although Negro, shares the more benign Caribbean racial classificatory system and finds the American black-white color scheme offensive; and even when he is sympathetic to the civil-rights movement, he will frequently feel that it is a strictly “American” struggle in which he is not obliged to join. It is, rather, the sense of national identity, of being distinctively Puerto Rican, that marks off the *dramatic personae* of the book from the rest of the poor in America. They express themselves most fiercely when they speak of themselves, not as members of a social sub-class or as Negroes, but as Puerto Ricans. They resent the incapacity of Americans to see them as such. They feel—and frequently say so with some fine dignity—that there is a quality of life in Puerto Rico that American life, with its frenzied haste and vulgarized commercialism, lacks. That this feeling is based, much of it, on an obvious romanticization of realities does not belittle its importance as a positive element in their general value system. Above all, they fight against the general American contempt of their culture, and especially their language: “If I could be Governor of Puerto Rico or the Mayor of New York for five or ten minutes,” one of them insists in a characteristic explosion, “I’d take a pistol and I’d shoot every Puerto Rican who has forgotten Spanish.”

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It is here, I suspect, that the Lewis interpretation goes awry. For the Puerto Rican, at this point, expresses something that has to do, not with his social, but with his colonial experience. At this point he does possess a strongly felt set of values. But they are values arising out of the one great wound that colonialism everywhere inflicts upon its victims, the ruthless destruction of the native cultures and the sense of shame and guilt engendered in the colonials by all the machinery of colonial rule, government, education, politics, religion. It is a process which, historically, both European socialism and American liberalism have connived at and frequently activated. It is not enough to refute Fanon, as does Lewis, by citing the absence of revolutionary spirit or radical ideology in the San Juan poor. Different peoples, even in the colonial world, work out their salvation by different avenues, and for the Puerto Ricans, as things now stand at least, it is the avenue of cultural *revanche*, of the affirmation, frequently only half consciously understood even by themselves of the sense of *puertorriquenidad*. The real cure for the cultural pathology he annotates, Lewis asserts, as in his brief remarks on Cuba, is socialism. But that is to imply that the key to an understanding of Puerto Rican poverty is that it is set within the framework of American capitalist society. So to argue is to overlook the colonial relationship. These people, in brief, are poor twice over: they are the poor in the American business-civilization, but they are also the poor in the American Caribbean colonialism. That the book tends to emphasize the first dimension and to underplay the second leads, I believe, to a fatal disproportion of emphasis which is not readily visible only because it is obscured by the author’s own humanist sympathy with the victims of the general situation.

It is another way of putting all this to say that, when all is said and done, what Lewis has put together here is a study in a dying colonialism. He himself tends to see it, however, as the price the poor have to pay for the victory of industrial civilization, in much the same way as the great investigations of Mayhew, General Booth, and the Webbs collectively portrayed the price in the case of that victory in Victorian England. The Puerto Rican poor accept that price, he seems to argue, because of the values inherent in the “culture of poverty.” As against that line of argument it is pertinent (1) that in fact they do not accept the price so passively in the particular area of a felt sense of separate national identity, as the book itself documents; and (2) that when they do accept it, it is not because of the power of certain forces inherent in the special concept that Lewis has made his own (forces, I think, that are never satisfactorily defined with any precision) but because of other forces, the ingrained docility that René Marques has described, for example, or the sense of collective inferiority complex which Ricardo Alegria has argued infects all Puerto Ricans in one way or another. Those other forces, moreover—and this is the crucial point—are the legacy of the Puerto Rican colonial experience. Even the very intensity with which the Puerto Rican asserts his *puertorriquenidad*, it could plausibly be argued, is itself an expression of the inferiority complex, for a social group that

possesses real self-assurance is under no felt necessity to announce it publicly. That is why, perhaps, Americans praise themselves whereas the English merely permit others to praise them.

Needlessly destroyed

It is, then, the chief and disappointing defect of this quite remarkable volume that, as a Catholic humanist critic has pointed out, it fails to fashion any really positive statement on the sins committed by the American social system against the colonial disinherited. It takes issue with those American academicians, like Tumin and Feldman in their blandly optimistic **Social Class and Social Change in Puerto Rico**, who lend their support to the official image merchants of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth Government; but it itself joins in the chorus of acclamation about "Operation Bootstrap," when in grim reality the evidence it unearths is a damning indictment of the heavy social cost (perhaps even heavier than Lewis suggests, if the recent findings of Puerto Rican social workers like Rosa Marin are to be believed) that many of the Puerto Rican people have had to pay for the alliance between American corporate business and the Puerto Rican colonial political class. The very success itself of the Lewis book indicates, in a peculiar way, how the colonial system works, for colonialism everywhere denigrates the local product and magnifies the metropolitan, so that books by the metropolitan authors receive vast attention whereas books by native authors—in this particular case, the work, for example, of Puerto Rican social scientists like Eduardo Seda on the processes of brutalization and deculturation in insular life—are passed by unnoticed. The reader, then, who wants a more total portrayal of the situation would like to see something more said than is said in this book about the particular Puerto Rican components of the situation. There is, after all, something special about popular social life in the Caribbean, the *specificæ differentia* of tropical existence, that helps to explain how and why the poor live. In the particular Puerto Rican case many of the characteristics evidenced in the Lewis documentary—the good humor, the pride in manners, the demand for "respect," the readiness to work in the system the mimic fighting which is not really destructive violence—are general traits which belong to most social groups as they flow, historically, from a common ancestry in the folk-tradition of the Puerto Rican people over the last two centuries. Nor are these just the idealized traits frequently to be met with in the Puerto Rican nationalist literature. They play a vital functional role as therapeutical defenses, as families like the extended Rios household learn the lessons of survival in the modern industrial state.

Lewis could argue, of course, that he has wanted the record to speak for itself. "My major obligation," he has said elsewhere, "is to give voice for the first time to these poor people." So we see them here as real flesh and blood persons, not the dehumanized items of statistical sociology; they speak for themselves; they express their impulsive, eudaemonistic lives in ways that Père Labat, the irrepressible chronicler of Caribbean life in the 18th century, would immediately have recognized across the centuries. All this is admirable as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. For social

experience, whatever its rich immediacy may be, requires ultimately some form of interpretative analysis. It requires, even more, a perception of the possibilities of change, of the possible avenues of escape from the present to the future, of what presently are available as the instrumentalities of change. The social pictorialist, that is to say, must become the social theoretician; but even more, quite frankly, he must seek to identify himself with those forces which, on the basis of the evidence he marshals, promise to lead the way out to a new and better world. (One thinks, by way of comparative example, of how the Hammonds, in their classic books on the life and mind of the English laboring classes between 1760 and 1832, interwove the detail of the record they described with their own awareness, based on their classical socialism, of how much of the pre-industrial community, for all of its own defects, had been needlessly destroyed by the victory of capitalist individualism). Nor is it enough to believe that the mere publication of a book of social exposure (for although Lewis denies that his volume is such exposure, that, in effect, is what it really amounts to) meets the issue. For books do not overturn social orders; a priest who has worked with the San Juan poor has recently reminded the readers of the Lewis book that when the earlier volume, Wenzell Brown's *Dynamite on Our Doorstep*, was published, the fear that it would destroy the "prestige" of the island was stillborn. All in all, Oscar Lewis has laid bare the sickness of Puerto Rican society. But he has done little to write a prescription of cure.

STUDENT RESURGENCE, 1968

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Dante,
had you lived today
your Eagle of Justice was not bound
by force of misfound vengeance
to drop cruelly from remote Heaven
on our impoverished land.
The embers of your stolen fires
still burn, but unfamiliar Eagles turn
upon promethean man.
Your Eagle's dead; no conscience bleeds
but our frail shoulders bled
under the legion tread of strangers
from the New World.

Our world is old.
The forests enshrine our past;
their enigmas preserve us;
the souls of bodhisattvas
share the silence in a world of leaves
where earth breathes perennially
new life. We have no names for God,
but in their world they celebrate
the feast of Love's incarnation,
observing the Sabbath,
before the week's hate moves off
to our land: in pillars of cold fire
Jehovah, in arrears of time, appears
to give new substance to the Law.
But Christ, whose second Advent
is expected to stagger the mind, comes
in no spectacular fashion, clothed
in rags, made homeless by war,
to wait for recognition.

He was wounded for our transgressions;
he was bruised for our iniquities;
but the chastisement of our peace
is laid upon mankind

DAVID KUHRT.

EARLS COURT NOTEBOOK

I have been looking through the 1968 Peace Calendar of the War Resisters' League. This year its special feature is poetry, not necessarily war poetry, but all of it at one remove or another is 'committed' and it makes impressive reading. The calendar is unusual in that I don't recall before seeing one that indicates all the main religious leaders' birthdays, which may be an indication of how parochial our outlook continues to be.

Another feature I find intriguing is that it commemorates a number of events related to peace, rather than the birthdays of presidents, monarchs and so forth. The task of selection here is one requiring a rather nice judgment. What are the chief events of peace and war over the last half century? The calendar wisely includes the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but omits the date of the 20th Soviet Congress and that of the Cuban missile confrontation, events which seem as vital to the peace climate as the execution in 1927 of Sacco and Vanzetti. I wonder, by the way, how many people under thirty know who these two people were? And what, save the pound, was the 'Haymarket Massacre' of 1886?

* * *

A group of people stood outside Earls Court station selling copies of the *Morning Star*, as the *Daily Worker* is now known. On an impulse we stopped to talk with one, a lean, dark haired and pale faced girl of about twenty five. No, she did not agree with the sentences passed on Synyavsky and Daniel, although it was difficult to judge as we didn't know all the facts, did we? And then, we had to remember, these things also happened in the West, look at the Greek Embassy demonstrators who had been sent to prison, I wondered what on earth Michael Randle and Terry Chandler would say on hearing that their sentences were being used to justify the greater harshness meted out to Synyavsky and Daniel.

We continued to ask questions, without arousing antagonism by being merely provocative, for I at least was curious to see how the party membership syndrome was weathering the battering it has received over recent years. As the girl earnestly explained how much living standards had risen in 'the Soviet Union' and how much more free people were than in the West, and how of course there have been mistakes but that these have now been rectified, and much else in this sad, familiar vein. I looked around at the other members of her group. They were mostly in their thirties and all of them, like our informant, had the dress and accent of middle class people rather than 'workers'. They had the easy assurance of people who either have no doubts, or who, if they do, display considerable psychological adroitness in stifling them. It struck me their lot was to be envied, they had a cause to live—and even perhaps to die—for, and an endless round of meetings and 'campaigns' to sustain it and them, they had comrade-

ship and no further need to evaluate what they were doing or where they were going. In these dubious days that surely is a great deal. As we left, some came over to our informant to verify the date of the next meeting, just such a meeting, probably in a local bedsitter over a beer, of the fraternal elect who had planned and manned this sales drive. I was overcome with a vague sense of being trapped in a time machine and fretted why this encounter seemed to summon up for me so much remembrance of things past. "That's it," I said suddenly to my companion, "It's all straight from Doris Lessing's 'Golden Notebook'." And so it was, and anybody who wants a compelling description of this syndrome in its heyday in the thirties and forties will find every facet of it memorably delineated, with the added curiosity of a colonial background, in these notebooks which helped to bring Miss Lessing fame.

* * *

To the world at large Earls Court signifies an exhibition centre, but as a matter of fact it is, or was once, a village. Barely a hundred and fifty years ago it was a market gardening centre and its produce was carried by horse and cart along a winding hedge-lined country lane to the meadow-banked Thames at Chelsea; there to be carried by barge to those distant cities of Westminster and London, passing as it did Cheyne Walk, where lived such notables as Carlyle, George Eliot and many others in terrace houses of a simplicity and harmony which makes them still such a breathtaking contribution to the development of domestic architecture and human culture.

The winding lane is now a motor speedway called Earls Court Road, the brooks are grey pavements and the hedges have been replaced with tall, grimy, cliff-like flats and shops. Even so, until recently the shops had a village character about them, there were family grocers, family bakers, family tailors and so on, and I recall my mind as a boy dwelt conjecturally on why one tradesman was so careless in announcing on his shopfront to every casual bystander that he was a 'family butcher'.

In time the shops came to serve the occupants of the tall Victorian terrace houses (each house a mansion really) which were built on the site of the old market gardens. Servants lived in damp, commodious basements; they slept in attics by night and spent their days in carrying coal and hot water up the innumerable flights of stairs, and in carrying ashes and slops down (when the latter were not tipped out of the window), for the houses lacked gas, electricity, lavatories and bathrooms.

Since then the houses have undergone a remarkable transformation. With the railways, and later the cars, London (of which by then Earls Court was a part) began to sprawl and the stockbrokers and other representatives of the bourgeoisie moved to Surrey and neighbouring parts of the stockbroker belt. Many of the houses were divided into

maisonettes, later the maisonettes were divided into flats and the two bell pushes at the front door became five. At the end of the second world war, as rents soared and the effort to get a quart into a pint bottle continued, the flats became 'flatlets,' each room being fitted with its own wash basin and gas ring, the occupant sharing the bathroom and lavatory on the landing. Now I suppose this trend must be reaching its ultimate stage, for cards in the local news vendor's window advertise beds to rent in what must be dormitories. At one front door the other day I counted thirty-two bell pushes.

The local services have not kept pace with this overcrowding. Dustbins overflow, old bits of furniture, especially mattresses, are thrown into the nearest suggestion of an open space (generally a basement area), or dumped in alleyways along with dozens of broken milk bottles and every other kind of rubbish and junk a city in decline can accumulate.

The 'family' shops have disappeared, to be replaced by what might be called sub-supermarkets. The customers serve themselves from the shelves with pre-packed foods, and all the mateyness and community life of a centuries-old tradition of personal service and communication is abolished by that one act at a stroke; they pay money to a stranger at a cash desk who then wraps up the goods again, and later all this packaging and wrapping becomes part of the burden of refuse and refuse disposal.

But if refuse and dirt is a bigger problem, so is noise, noise from the racket of overhead aircraft flying in to land at Heathrow, one giant jet aircraft every thirty seconds, flying low and, when there is a cloud ceiling, making outdoor conversation impossible. Noise, too, from the unending stream of twelve or fourteen wheel lorries which now take 'short cuts' through once peaceful residential streets in an effort to avoid congestion at main street intersections. With their noise, and the danger their passage represents to life and limb, they bring another evil, stink. They are diesel burning lorries, of course, and each one belches a black jet of sickening, smut-laden fumes into the street. This is nothing less than an act of war upon the local people by the battalions of commerce, although nobody sees it as such. If an invading army did the same to the enemy civilian population it would be described as a breach of the Geneva Convention or something.

In the ordinary way I would have taken a hand in organising local opposition to some of this, but Earls Court is now afflicted with another problem.

Continued from page 17.

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that of its shifting population. Most of its permanent residents have gone and it is now occupied for the most part by short stay lodgers. Many are South African and Rhodesian off-whites or pinks, but there are many Indians, Poles and Australians, so many indeed of the latter that the village is often dubbed 'Kangaroo Valley'. The area has really become a huge transit camp for students and for people on furlough from other lands, and its community spirit was the first victim of this development.

In any event all this is soon to be beyond my immediate concern, for a mysterious body called 'The Council' is proposing to demolish the houses on my side of the street in order to widen it. I was pleasantly surprised to discover how the value of my house had soared since I bought it more than a decade ago, at least I was until I discovered the cost of buying another. Now, heavily in debt, I decide with difficulty which books I will and will not take to the home we are going to make in St. John's Wood. In my more civilised moments I find myself in full agreement with Gandhi's attitude of non-attachment to property as a means to self-liberation. At least, I think so until the question arises of parting from some of my books; at that moment I become the least consistent of any of those who seek to harken to the spirit of his teaching.

Non-Gandhian wise, I will also miss the coffee bars that have sprung up around here in recent years. One called the 'Troubadour' is decorated with a bemusing collection of bric-a-brac; ancient musical instruments hang in serried rows from the ceiling and even more ancient farm implements and enamel advertising plates, (e.g. for Colman's mustard), vie for space on the walls alongside a portrait of Chairman Mao and of Che Guevara. The furniture is very primitive, the prevailing colour is black and the place is only lit with a few candles. Despite all this, the coffee is very drinkable (End of Commercial). The proprietor is one of that rapidly dwindling species, the Active Labour Party Member, who rails unceasingly about the follies and betrayals of Wilson and the 'right wing'. I ask him why he bothers and what he hopes to achieve in the party, but in all our discussions he has never given me an intelligible reply and I suspect that at one level or other of his mind he fully realises that there isn't one to be given—at least, not by him, yet, there isn't.

I gather he regards Resurgence as a disavowal of politics rather than a serious attempt at commitment. But he freely concedes he never reads it.

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