

AN INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT?

THERE are, on the one hand, the facts, and on the other there are the meanings of the facts and their implications. Knowing the facts is called learning and acting on their meaning makes biography and history. Biography has at least the clarity of an individual life, but history seems largely confusion since there are so many conflicting views as to what should be recognized as facts and where we should settle along the course of unfolding meanings and begin our interpretations and plan our actions. When Columbus reached the Caribbean Islands the Indians greeted him with open arms and brought him gifts; after a few years they were either enslaved or extinct. Montezuma saw in Cortes and his men returning gods and became his submissive servant, until he and his people found themselves betrayed, when their resistance was futile. The Indians of the Atlantic coastal region of North America were regarded by the Puritan settlers as unworthy pagans to be displaced, converted, or killed off by righteous Christians, which took hardly more than a century, without either shame or regret, until the time of Thoreau and a few others like him.

Obviously, we now say, there are no "facts" worth talking about separate from their meanings, and in the light of history and what we hope is improved understanding these meanings continually change. So, in the present, increasing numbers of people have decided to study themselves as a more important field of investigation than the "facts," forces, and events of the external world. We are it seems evident, entirely governed in our behavior by our reading of meanings, and these, in turn, are controlled by our feelings about good and evil and the processes of life. In short, the intellectual development of the human race has brought us to the point where we see the moral necessity of becoming

philosophers, although this appears to be a most difficult undertaking. The best books of the time are concerned with this project.

Some of these books become almost best-sellers, one example being the annual produced by the Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World*, which presents a series of essays on the condition of the world, continent by continent and often country by country, as determined by current research. The range of worldwide interest in this annual volume is revealed by the fact that a recent Chinese edition numbered 59,000 copies, more than the corresponding English printing. The currently available volume—*State of the World—1986*—begins with a paper by Lester R. Brown, "A Generation of Deficits," an account of the extraordinary indebtedness of the United States by reason of expenditures for armament. Nearly all the countries of the world are weighted down by debt service obligations which drain away resources, including food. The chapter ends:

Deficits of many kinds plague the world in 1986. We have begun to recognize that Third World debts are not exclusively a Third World concern, and that solutions will require a partnership of debtors and creditors. Another key point needs to be acknowledged—that the many fiscal, ecological, and social debts we incur today come at our children's expense. We can begin to retire our debts by recognizing that policies that take seriously the interests of the next generation usually best serve the current generation as well.

Other topics considered include Ecological Decline, Water Efficiency, Rangelands, Moving Beyond Oil, the Electric Power Industry, Decommissioning Nuclear Power Plants, Banishing Tobacco, Investing in Children, Africa's Decline, Redefining National Security. (W. W. Norton is the publisher, the price is \$9.95 in paperback.)

One could call the Worldwatch annual *State of the World* reports and the papers published by the Institute recitations of the facts about the condition of the world, but they are also anticipations concerning the world that will be inherited by our children and coming generations, so that they are really recitations of meanings that seem inescapable. But there are now writers who take these facts and their immediate meanings for granted, partly by reason of personal experience, and propose remedies. A number of ecologists perform this service, so that various movements for change have sprung up around the world. One such movement in West Germany is *die Grünen*—the Greens—which achieved political identity in 1983, taking a handful of seats in the Bundestag as the first new party to be elected in more than thirty years. The Greens include, as Capra and Spretnak say in their book about them, "ecologists and peace activists, holistic theorists and anti-nuclear-power activists, feminists and Third World activists, value-conservatives and converts from radical-left groups."

A clear expression of what and how the thoughtful and articulate members of the Green movement think is presented in a recent book, *Building the Green Movement*, by Rudolph Bahro, who was released from prison in East Germany in 1979 and came to West Germany where the Greens were in formation. In his book (issued by New Society Publishers, \$9.95), he makes it plain that he and most of the Greens want to turn the world around, starting with their own country, and are opposed to reforms, half-measures, and compromises with the system that is moving in the wrong direction. As Bahro puts it:

Above all, in this the richest industrial country of Europe we must not just try to carry out repairs and shift our problems elsewhere. Those involved must unite their strength in order to force a restructuring different from that which is likely to result from the new international division of labour and the shift towards a new phase of super-industrialism. Then it can even become a gain to abandon the old advantages of the strong economic position by

making use of them to start along a completely new course. . . . The workforce must demand power of disposal over production plants which no longer have any market, they must win the right to use the capacities and resources for any purposes they consider worthwhile—including dismantling them in favour of completely new, decentralized enterprises. . . .

It is not only the economy, which wants to make its profits in the customary way, but also the entire institutional system—the state, the legal system, the political parties, the trade unions and the other traditional interest groups—which taken as a whole is committed by its history and constitution to continuing along the same path and can aim at nothing more than at best adjusting externally to the new demands. We shall oppose this force of inertia, which rests upon a multitude of habits in the general consciousness, is preserved and strengthened by the media, and also has a share in our own personal interests.

Our parliamentary practice, following the example of the extraparliamentary practice (the peace movement, the citizens' initiatives, the alternative movement, the women's movement, and so on), must concentrate on preventing any steps which continue in the same dangerous direction. This means in particular all investments in the expansion of the Big Machine, i.e. any military installations, any installations of the nuclear industry, any projects to extend heavy transport infrastructure (airports, motorways, trunk roads, canals, river straightening, ports), all large industrial projects, as well as all large projects in the school and university system, in the health service, and in public administration, the police, computerized control of society, etc. . . .

People will then ask us how our economy is to maintain its position against international competition, where it is after all dependent to the highest degree on imports and exports. Our reply is that we want to withdraw from the world market and believe that as a result our standard of living will not quantitatively deteriorate but will be qualitatively changed. We have in mind an economic order of the greatest possible self-sufficiency at a local, regional, provincial and national level. . . .

The specific response of the Greens to the challenge of mass unemployment is the use of our political influence to facilitate departure from the industrial system into a positive new way of life. Only if there is a genuine provision of start-up assistance will we be able seriously to test, not only how many of the unemployed, but also how many

people who are still employed and perhaps even relatively successful functionaries, are already prepared or inclined to change their general perspective. . . .

The Greens set themselves the goal of diverting one thousand million marks into the alternative sector, to make possible there a kind of primary accumulation for the new social formation. On this foundation a comprehensive network of autonomous base communities can emerge, which will subsequently support and reproduce themselves. . . . To build this up, we shall pick up on the uncertainties and the new attitudes which the ecological crisis has already aroused in almost everybody in our society. There will soon be two souls dwelling in almost every breast, and the process is leading slowly but surely to the general upheaval which will enable us to start out on a new overall course. Psychologically the exodus from the capitalist system has already begun, and the same process is already beginning to reach across to our Eastern counterpart. . . . Decisive in all developments inside the so-called "formal" sector are the social learning processes which transcend the horizon of the labour-divided and bureaucratic industrial society of both Western and Eastern types and in which the subjective preconditions of a new culture are maturing.

Can the Germans actually be ready for thinking of this sort? Why not? Two million of them voted for the Greens in 1983. In another chapter Bahro goes on to say:

We don't want a restoration of full employment. Those for whom the industrial system has no more work should found a new society outside the industrial system. That is quite important in distinguishing us from the old left stuff. He also says:

We aspire to a Germany newly unified out of the ecology and peace movement on both sides. The unqualified recognition of the GDR as presently constituted will open the way to a German confederation.

By this we do not mean the restoration of that centralized nation-state with which not only other peoples but also the Germans themselves had such terrible experience. There will be no new edition of the Bismarck Reich.

We have in mind rather a "Germany of regions" in which municipalities have precedence over districts, districts over the *Länder* (or the regions in the GDR) and finally the *Länder* (or regions) over the

federal government. We conceive of the whole as a gentle, non-violent, green republic without armed forces for use either externally or internally. . . .

We Greens consider it one of our most important international obligations to get rid of the disastrous model of the "good life" here at home, which lures the rest of humanity into a tunnel without exit. Unless we are prepared to dismantle and transform our industrial system all our sympathy remains nothing but empty gestures and phrases.

Like some others, Rudolph Bahro has been doing some reading, looking at the ecological disaster in Germany, seeing where present-day industrialism is taking us, and recognizing what is happening to his own country as well as the other industrial powers. He sees them all moving toward ruin, as do observers in other lands. He knows what ought to be done, saw the potential for making a beginning in the Green movement and became one of its advocates. One could say that he is active in politics, but it is politics with a new meaning; his real activity is spreading ideas, giving reason and impetus to a movement of human beings. If its political arm compromises and mistakes its mission for a drive to power and position, he will walk away from it. Actually, the last thing in his book is his letter of resignation from the Green party, because of mistakes of this sort, or compromises of principle. But this will hardly affect the educational work he is doing.

Bahro is one of a growing number of men and women—women are as much the leaders of the Greens as men—who are acting on their foresight into the future, who see the kind of future the world is making for itself and who are pointing to alternatives and calling for a halt in the things we are doing. They are, you could say, prometheans. Why, one may ask, does forethought almost inevitably develop into adoption of the Gospel rule, "Love your enemies"? Because, as Eric Havelock shows in his essay on Eschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus saw the future and therefore knew what to do. Without forethought, "Science cannot long remain science," Havelock says.

In the old Greek myth "Afterthought" was not only a fool; he became the agent of transmission of miseries to man. But "Forethought," on the contrary, is what it is because it represents the ability to visualize the end beyond the end beyond the end. It is always shaping and then reshaping the means to embrace an objective which becomes wider and wider. Short-range effort fastens on the thing nearest to one's nose; this thing becomes one's own utility of the immediate moment, something private to oneself. As the time range extends, so does the orbit of persons and interests. The mind enters into a calculation. What will this momentary utility mean to my further utility the day after tomorrow; Then if necessary the first utility is remodeled to suit the second, but the second meanwhile is remodeled to suit a third, till the process is pushed to that point where "utility" takes on the meaning of a common denominator between "myself" and an expanding range of other men's interests. This common denominator automatically involves a harmonization of interests, because the task of predicting what "I" will need, at a further and further stage of foresight, can be carried out only by trying to imagine a hundred other relationships in which "I" will be involved and in predicting a thousand actions of others on which "my" needs in turn will depend. The perspective extends, if pushed far enough in time length, to the point where it takes in city and state and family of states, and the estate of the unborn.

The reason for Bahro's rejection of the political drive to power is also dealt with by Havelock:

If power is to be treated as an absolute, any diminution, even for temporary purposes, is to be rejected, and hence the elasticity of long-range calculations is lost. . . . Therefore the will to power, unless it mitigate itself by other considerations altogether (and it often does), cannot calculate at long range. Its drive is to hold the allegiance of servitors by present success, which always has to be continued in the successive moments of the present. It cannot postpone an issue, and therefore is prevented from pushing thought from means to ends, and so to further ends. It therefore cannot take in that increasing area of interest, which converts itself into the area of philanthropy, where the forethinking intelligence is in charge.

What reason have we to think that the modern world is in any way prepared to put "forethinking intelligence" in charge? The pain of

bitter experience is one reason, and the growing sense of hopelessness around the world. Another reason, equally important, is the gradual spreading around of the foresight of the ecologists and of the new economists such as E. F. Schumacher, and some others of like mind. What the ecologists and these economists say *fits* with our experience, and fits also with the gradual impoverishment of the middle class all over the world. Moreover, we are beginning to disbelieve the old rule that peace is maintained by preparing for war. Many of the younger generation are already convinced that nuclear destruction and death will surely overtake all the world—within a few years, they say. Gandhi's teaching has begun to make sense to more and more people. The ecologists predicted that industrial practices would pollute our lakes and rivers, poison the air, exhaust essential raw materials, deplete our soils, and we are now beginning to experience these effects and read about them in the papers. The serious books of our time are all concerned with the necessity for radical change. A recent book, *From the Roots Up*, (\$15.50), by Peter Usher and David Ross, published by the Bootstrap Press in Croton-on-the-Hudson for the Intermediate Technology Group of North America, in cooperation with the Canadian Vanier Institute of the Family, contrasts the "informal" with the "formal" economy. Bahro, it will be recalled, made this distinction, calling for much more of "informal" production. The authors of this book say:

A century ago, a much higher proportion of our total economic output was derived from the informal economy. This shift is also associated with the transformation from a rural agricultural economy (and in the North, a hunting and gathering society) to an urban industrial one. We commonly think of that process as modernization and the result as economic development. Conventional economic development theory claims that any substantial increase in national and per capita output requires a shift from informal to formal economic relations—that contracts, individualism, mobility, centralization and specialization should replace kinship and status, solidarity, stability, the local community and organization. According to conventional theory, a

primary position must be allocated to the key institutions of the formal economy: the market, industrial organization and money. Are modernization and progress thus leading inevitably to a complete formalization of the economy? Should they? Are there inherent merits to this process? Is there an optimum balance that we should strive for?

The initial promise and results of industrialization were an incredible supply and variety of goods for the masses at low cost. It seemed that toil and poverty could be eliminated. More recently the real bill for this cornucopia has been presented: pollution, resource crises, massive unemployment, inflation, unstable communities and households, meaningless jobs, unimaginable poverty in the Third World, complex and remote institutions—and the bill keeps getting higher. Was it worth it? Perhaps we no longer want the formalized industrialization process to go on unchecked. People want more satisfying lives, but it seems less and less evident that this satisfaction is derived from industrially produced goods and services.

These are some of the realizations which are becoming common, joined with a growing individual sense of responsibility to other human beings. Meanwhile, the Green movement has spread from Germany to other parts of the world. As a political movement it may not count for much but as a source of education, of a grasp of the meaning of the facts of our time, its ideas are here to stay and may little by little take charge. If humans, as responsible thinkers, begin to take charge of their own lives, the political accommodations will come of themselves. It has always been thus.

REVIEW

A GOOD BOOK, A VERY GOOD ONE!

THE story of a very decent but incredibly naive man, Arnold T. Elkins, an associate history professor in an Iowa University, is told by Gina Berriault in her novel, *The Descent*, first published in 1960 and now reprinted by North Point Press (\$7.95 in paperback). Elkins, who is forty, with a wife and two adolescent daughters, is both bewildered and flattered when he receives a letter from the President of the United States inviting him to fill the newly created cabinet post of Secretary for Humanity. Why, he asks the smooth young man appointed to be his assistant—"Why me?" Given a lengthy but to him plausible explanation he enters what he conceives to be his assignment with trust and confidence, although his bewilderment continues. He is absolutely committed to peace-making, which for him starts with disarmament by the United States. Nuclear weapons must go, he believes, and he is puzzled when he is placed under the guidance of the Secretary of Defense. It takes a long time for him to realize, through a series of practical disasters in his life, that he is entirely surrounded by suave politicians who all have an opposite point of view. The Defense Secretary, in their first conference, lectures him on the difference between U.S. intentions and those of the Russians, saying:

"You must remember that for the Russians a disarmament conference is *not* that. They think of a conference as an opportunity to weaken us. We therefore hold to our spectrum of weapons, hold to our freedom to experiment with them, and hold to our right to develop any new weapons that may prove advantageous, and we hold to these things with the passion of a nation whose life depends upon them." . . .

"We are convinced," he said, "that the Russians are prevented from attacking us and our allies by their fear of retaliation, of massive retaliation, by their cognizance that a nuclear war might destroy both sides, a war with no victors. The peace is preserved within the Defense Department, in other words. And that's where you come in. The Secretary for Humanity, by locating himself with us, makes that fact even more apparent."

Elkins does not see, but resolves to do what he can where he is. The rest of the book is the story of his disillusionment and personal ruin, as event after event shuts him out from being heard by anyone in the country. The account of his career as Secretary for Humanity is a doleful tale of embarrassment and fiasco which comes to a practical end when his sixteen-year-old daughter, Bernice, solidly behind her father, wrote a letter to the *New York Times*, on her own, in which she declared: "The first nation to destroy its bombs will prove that it is the wisest of them all. I would like to see my own country to be the wisest." This was picked up by a politician opposing the party in power, who charged Elkins with being an "infamous traitor" who had inspired or himself written the letter. He was universally attacked in the press and the President repudiated and fired him. Elkins was out of a job, and the university would not hire him. He ended up pouring concrete as a laborer constructing underground shelters, which he had hated and opposed, for people to take refuge in when a nuclear attack came.

This is a good book to read; it would be a very good book if everyone in it weren't what seems plain stupid and everything obviously set up to make its point. As the *New Yorker* said years ago, it is the story of "an honest man in a dishonest world."

* * *

The Clearing, by Alan Arkin, actor and author, is a wonderful fable about a cougar, a lemming, a bear, a duck, a deer, and several other animals who are dissatisfied with themselves and gather at an open space in the forest where the bear occasionally presides and offers help in odd ways. The bear, apparently, has things figured out and feels an obligation to give some hints to the other seeking animals, who have come to revere him. (*The Clearing* is published by Harper & Row at \$12.95.) The lemming has wandered away from the other lemmings because it seems foolish to him to go along with the crowd and

jump off a cliff into the sea, where they are all invariably drowned. If he stays with the lemming tribe, he will, he feels sure, be overcome by the impulse to mass behavior and drown like the others. He wants to live, which means living his own life, so he takes off by himself, and at the beginning of the story is hungry, tired, and emaciated, when he is found by the cougar, grabbed by the scruff of his neck, and carried to the clearing, as the bear had instructed him to do.

After the lemming had been around in the clearing for a while, he had an interview with the bear. The bear questioned him, and he realized that the bear actually *understood* him—why he had left home and the horde of other lemmings, and that for some reason he couldn't fathom wanted to stop being a lemming—a most unnatural desire.

The lemming was past wonder at this point. He sat nodding at each point the bear made, his mouth open wide and his body slouched over, glued to every word the bear uttered.

The bear was explaining what he would do if he had the same feeling—if, in short, he was a lemming.

"I think what would happen is this," said the bear. "I think I would recoil in horror at the whole idea of being a lemming. I would reject all lemmings. Anything connected with lemmings. I would deny that I'd ever been a lemming. Ever knew one. . . ."

"I'd turn away from the sea and the madness, and I'd point myself in some direction that couldn't contain lemmings. That never saw a lemming. Never heard of them. I'd start a brand new existence as something completely different, or try to. That's what I would do, I'd try to erase the memory of my family, my friends; I'd try to blot my mother, my father, my sister, who were foolish enough to have been born lemmings, with lemming instincts, and who lived and died as lemmings; I'd try to erase the memory of all the faces and patterns of behavior I'd grown up with, some of which weren't so terrible; and I'd try to carve out a new existence. That's what I would do. What about you? What would you do?"

"That's what I would do," said the lemming, softly. "And it would be the right idea, too, in a

way," said the bear, but it would be very hard. Very hard indeed. Because what would I be? I would be unlemming. That's what I would be. A non-thing. I'd have to eat un-lemming food. I'd have to sleep in un-lemming places. I'd have to go in un-lemming directions and think un-lemming thoughts. Wouldn't I?"

But there was a sort of way out, not one that left him hopeless and unhappy. The bear explained:

"Run *toward* something!" the bear said, with a huge smile and his arms spread wide. . . . What do you want?" the bear asked, and his smile was gone.

"I want not to be a lemming." . . .

"What are you?" the bear asked gently. . . . "Are you a lemming?"

"Yes, partly, but also I'm something else."

"What is it?"

"I don't know what it is."

"When are you a lemming?"

"When I do lemming things. Mindless and stupid things. Following instincts I know will kill me."

"When are you not a lemming?"

The lemming looked deeply into himself, into places he had never examined before. "When I think. When I trust. When I feel there's a future. . . . I want to know the part of me that's not a lemming. The part of me that I can trust. . . . Can you help me with that?" asked the lemming. "Is that why I'm here?"

The bear went back into his cave, humming to himself. And the lemming learned that all his friends in the clearing were working on the same project, slipping and falling, but always getting up again, and comforting each other.

There was a second step each one could take when he or she was ready—go back to their original tribe to see if there were other candidates for original research of this sort.

Editorial note: Reviewers for MANAS have certain problems that may not afflict other writers. They don't review books they think are not really worth reading, or find reason not to like

themselves. If we start to read a book, then put it down after getting into it a way, we lay it aside and look for something else. This week, for example, we had a hard time with *The Descent*—so much bare-faced hypocrisy matched with so much innocence became quite a weight to bear. Yet we had to finish it, undressed irony and all. So we reviewed it. *The Clearing*, on the other hand, claimed attention from the beginning, revealing itself gradually and producing growing delight. So of course we reviewed that too, hoping our readers would want and get it. Occasionally there are books that readers need to be warned against, but not often, so usually we simply ignore the bad books along with the indifferent ones. Actually, good ones do come out from time to time, and we go on hoping that they will come to us, or that a reader will tell us about them. If we don't have anything that seems good enough to write about, we go to our library for a book we have saved because it needs regular rereading, which means re-reviewing. So we never really run out of books.

COMMENTARY WAYS OF LEARNING

WHILE there are gradually forming research institutions which are helping to shape the thinking of the future, so that in time more and more people are beginning to recognize their need to take part in responsibilities for the welfare of the world, there is a far more reaching effect. Rudolph Bahro, like some other Germans, is thinking more in terms of regions rather than nation-states and regarding intermediate technology instead of the technology of "more and more."

Why are the Germans beginning to think this way? It seems evident that the Germans have suffered sufficient defeat in war and some of them, at least, are beginning to work out another way of life. While the Greens may not be able to work out a sufficient political program, new attitudes may be forming and in time a spirit of cooperation may eventually affect more and more people.

More recently Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican novelist and diplomat, has written of the renaissance of the Spanish Republic since the death of Franco, in the *Los Angeles Times* of Aug. 3. While Franco, for a time, as Fuentes says, made the Spanish government ruthlessly reactionary, "That most generous of Mexican Presidents, Lazero Cardenas, received almost 200,000 refugees from Franco's Spain."

These men and women represented the flower of modern Spanish culture: poets and film makers, architects and philosophers, publishers and critics, lawyers and doctors. They revitalized our culture, renewed our universities, they established our modern publishing houses. They taught us that Spain had another tradition: a democratic tradition, which was formed throughout the Middle Ages, manifesting itself in an independent judiciary, townhall meetings and charters of municipal freedoms throughout Aragon and Castille. . . .

The Spanish Civil War . . . Spain's interrupted democratic trends and in the more immediate fact that Franco was never able to capture the culture of Spain, the way Hitler did in Germany. . . .

The Spanish Civil War was really the Battle of Spain, the first episode of Europe's war against fascism.

We are now learning, learning from the other countries of the world.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves ON PAUL GOODMAN

REMARKS by George Woodcock, Canadian essayist, in a book that has just come out—*The Anarchist Papers*, edited by Dimitrios Roussopoulos, with contributions by Murray Bookchin, Noam Chomsky, and a number of others, published by Black Rose Books, Montréal, Canada, at \$12.95, paperback—deserve attention here. Woodcock writes on Paul Goodman, "The Anarchist as Conservator." Time was when anarchists were regarded as bomb-throwers and assassins, but today, after the generation of anarcho-pacifists produced by conscientious objectors to World War II has come to maturity, modern anarchists seldom preach violence, having learned the folly of "total revolution," but work for the gradual establishment of self-rule. And it is increasingly recognized that they are among our best social critics. Anarchists, moreover, were never taken in by the Marxist thrust for power in the name of freedom and justice.

Woodcock writes and quotes from Goodman mainly as an educator. He finds him to be both radical and conservative—radical in working for simplification in education, and therefore against the multiversity; and conservative in seeking to give life to the continuity of the good in our cultural past. Watching the development of the Free Speech movement on the campus at Berkeley early in 1962, Goodman, Woodcock says, realized that, "for all the anarchistic elements in the student revolt. . . many of the activists did not know enough about politics or history to prevent their sliding into authoritarian, neo-Leninist political stances, while the rest of the students revealed themselves as—in his view—virtual philistines because of their unawareness of the tradition he treasured and in which he had grown up." A few years later Goodman wrote in *The New Reformation*:

When I speak at a college, I pepper the discussion with references to Spinoza, Beethoven and Milton, hoping that the students will learn that former great men were real human beings, but the poignant effect is that they regard me wistfully because I seem to have a past, and they are more forlorn than ever. If I try to analyze a text in its own terms, to find a human spirit coping with its particulars and *therefore* relevant to us, it is taken as an irrelevant exercise in order to avoid present gut issues. Naturally, inability to read a book is cumulative. Since there is no belief in the tradition or habituation in its ways, it becomes a chore to read the sentence, and why bother?

Woodcock makes this summary of Goodman's outlook:

What Goodman really proposes is that education should once again be an extension of activities that normally take place in a healthy society outside the schoolroom, and therefore, for the majority of children (those with no aptitude for scholarship or the arts) of learning by experiencing and doing, which means being an apprentice more than a student in the academic sense, and in the case of town children, learning the processes of cultivation and growth by living and working for long periods on renovated marginal farms. The desystematization of education, the breaking up of the learning process into a multitude of improvised responses to particular situations, would allow such a flexible approach.

An implication of such a concept of education is that the functions of the scholar and the artist are detached from the role of teaching the young, as they were in the medieval universities, and consequently one never encounters in Goodman's writings that bogus cultural democracy which denounces as elitism any regard for high culture or for the literary tradition. The culture and tradition are there for those who wish to pursue them, but the elimination of compulsory education would make it a matter of free choice. It is true that as an artist Goodman was not notably experimental, and he was inclined to identify with Wordsworth's "simplification of vocabulary, and the connection of this with the speech of unsophisticated people and the expression of feeling." But he also remarked that the great thing about Wordsworth was something much more recondite, his "exquisite syntax," and he added a remark about the great romantic poet that is germane to what I have been saying about his own views on the nature of libertarian education: "In my opinion, his idea of pedagogy is true and primary; it *is* the beauty of the

world and simple human affections, that develop great-soured and disinterested adults."

As for Goodman's hope, in social terms, for the future, Woodcock selects this jewel of a sentence from Goodman's *Drawing the Line*: "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of the social life." Woodcock continues with this comment:

And often freedom can involve a stepping back rather than a stepping forward so that it becomes appropriate to consider how the medieval universities operated without the crushing superstructures of modern academic institutions, and how the guild systems of apprenticeship produced not merely good workmen but also well-rounded intelligence, so that we owe to the free cities of the middle ages so many of the innovations that led to the enlargement of life during the modern era.

Being well-versed in American history, Goodman recognized the habitual self-rule which provided order to the early years of the United States. In *Creator Spirit, Come* he wrote:

During the first thirty years of the Republic only 5 to 10 per cent were enfranchised and as few as 2 per cent bothered to vote. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is not necessarily that society was undemocratic. On the contrary, apart from the big merchants, planters, clerics and lawyers, people were quite content to carry on their social affairs in a quasi-anarchy, with unofficial, decentralized and improvised political forms. It was in this atmosphere that important elements of our American character were developed.

Elsewhere he sketched the loose network of social forms created by the people to replace the official apparatus of British rule:

When the revolution of 1776-83 removed the top structure of British authority from the American colonies, this country was fundamentally organized as a network of highly structured face-to-face communities, each fairly autonomous; town-meetings, congregational parishes, gentry families and yeoman families. These had hierarchical structures: master and apprentice, indentured servants, family slaves, professionals and their clients, pastors and parishes;

but each person was in frequent contact with those who initiated and decided.

For the first twenty-five years of the republic, in important respects there was virtually a community anarchy with regard to the central and state governments.

For immigrants and for the poor who felt too disadvantaged in the existing structured communities, the frontier was an open area for independence. (*Drawing the Line.*)

Woodcock concludes his essay by noting the spirit of conservation and gradualism in Goodman's thinking—

. . . in his advocacy of decentralization, meaning the breaking down of structures too large for the human scale, his demands for a readjustment of the balance between rural and urban ways of living through repopulating the country, reviving village life, bringing the marginal land back into cultivation through new forms of mixed farming; in his many proposals for the humanizing of city life, in his preference for the guild over trade union ethics; in his preference for the college over the university, for the storefront school over the massive modern educational plant, and for apprenticeship over the barren perversion of academic education that turns schools into detention places of young people who would be better off and of more use to the community if they were put to work. All these proposals involve piecemeal changes, major or minor, and in most cases the idea is to return to a simpler state of affairs in which a freer form of action can be initiated.

We strongly recommend a reading of this essay by Woodcock, which he ends by saying:

Goodman saw it [anarchism] as part of the personal struggle of day-to-day living, permeating everything he did and said and wrote, and nourished by all that remains natural and free in living. It was this that made him, by any standards, so interesting and stimulating a social critic. He was never afraid of the apparent contradictions of his position; he knew that in our era the anarchist and the true conservative must live within the same mind and work upon each other.

The address of the publisher, Black Rose Books, is 3981 Blvd. St. Laurent, Montréal, Quebec, H2W 1Y5 Canada.

FRONTIERS

A View of Nicaragua

IT was something of a shock to read in *Environment* (January-February of this year) the story of "Nicaragua's Revolution in Pesticide Policy." While they threw out Somoza in 1979, he looted the national treasury before taking flight and left the Sandinistas to cope with a bankrupt economy and the results of his mistakes. One of these was a land which stank of pesticides, most of them bought from the producers of chemical poisons in the United States, and some of which were banned from use in this country. But the shock came from our ignorance of our Central American neighbor—what the people of Nicaragua produce, how they live, and what they are up against. This article, by Sean Swezey, Douglas Murray, and Rainer Daxl, says at the beginning:

Nicaragua, like many other countries in the developing world, has been subject to dramatic episodes of environmental disruption in part because of its relationship with the economies of the industrialized world. Three aspects of this relationship are important to understanding Nicaragua's environmental problems: an economy oriented primarily toward export markets, a heavy reliance on imported technologies to maintain this export orientation, and a social and political culture resistant to alterations of this historical order.

Nicaragua's heavy reliance on chemical technology is rooted in the production of cotton. While the cotton-based pesticide problems represent a classic example of the dilemmas facing agro-export economies dependent on costly and hazardous imported technologies, the social transformation taking place in Nicaragua offers unique opportunities, as well as obstacles, for reducing pesticide dependency through use of a broader, biologically based program of Integrated Pest Management, and for reducing human exposure to pesticides by instituting regulatory reforms. . . .

Intensive cotton agriculture developed in Nicaragua in the mid-twentieth century in response to the raw-material needs of the post-World War II economic boom. It quickly became the new basis of the agro-export economy, displacing coffee, which

had accounted for about 50 per cent of agricultural exports before 1950. The area of cotton cultivation rose from 15,000 to 250,000 manzanas (10,500 to 175,000 hectares) between 1950 and 1973 [one manzana is .7 hectares, an acre is .405 hectares].

By 1971 Nicaragua was the fifteenth largest producer of cotton in the world, ranking fifth in average yield at 947 kilograms per hectare (almost twice the average production per hectare of the United States). Cotton constituted over 40 per cent of the total value of Nicaraguan exports, the largest proportion of exports for this crop in any Central American economy. This pattern was being repeated throughout the region as Guatemala, and to lesser degrees El Salvador and Honduras, joined Nicaragua in the expansion of cotton production. Central America turned into one of the primary cotton-producing regions in the world.

This meant that wherever small land-holders and peasants had land suitable for growing cotton but which they were using to grow subsistence crops—food they could eat—they lost their land to the large cotton-growers, through foreclosures and fraudulent seizures in a program called "agrarian reform." Tens of thousands of landless laborers were the result—useful to harvest cotton on *latifundistas*. In the fifteen years from 1959 to 1967, food grain production in cotton-growing areas dropped more than 50 per cent. By the mid-sixties, 40 percent of all cultivable land in Nicaragua was given to cotton. This, of course, meant more chemicals fed to the land. In 1967 Somoza set up an agency to test pesticides and charged less than testing facilities in the U.S., and was more tolerant of highly poisonous chemicals than the U.S.—such as endrin, dieldrin, kepone, leptophos, lindane, and DDT. The first imported chemicals came from the German multinational, Bayer—parathion powder used against the boll weevil, in 1951. Parathion is very toxic and soon field workers ignorant of how to handle it died by the dozen. It was finally banned by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Agriculture, but the big cotton-growers were powerful enough to have the ban lifted. Meanwhile, for a time, production figures went up, but not for long.

The Nicaraguan *latifundistas* soon became trapped on the "pesticide treadmill," a syndrome re-enacted in pesticide-dependent cotton cultivation throughout the world. After relative prosperity in an "exploitation" phase from 1950 to 1965, cotton production passed into a "crisis" phase of falling yields and continued pesticide use. Several cotton pests had evolved resistance to the insecticides, while populations of beneficial predators and parasites (natural enemies of insect pests) were devastated by the mounting insecticide applications. . . .

Yields fell by a total of 30 per cent 1965 to 1969 at an annual rate of nearly 16 percent, principally because of losses from insect pests. The average yearly number of insecticide applications had risen from between five and ten in the mid-50s, to a calendar schedule of 28 applications in the late 1960s (literally an application every 4 days). In extreme cases fields were being sprayed as many as 35 times a season. Costs for insect control were more than 32 per cent of the total production costs for the year 1968.

There were other effects. The breast-milk of mothers in the agricultural regions was contaminated by DDT up to 45 times the "safe" content set by the World Health Organization. "Between 1962 and 1972 more than three thousand acute pesticide poisonings occurred annually among Nicaraguan farm workers."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, helped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FAO, some Nicaraguan technicians developed an Integrated Pest Management (IPM), program for Nicaragua, using natural insect controls and reducing pesticide applications. The result was the highest seed cotton yield on record. But meanwhile, more land was turned to cotton production, and the training of technicians for the program lagged. Moreover, some of the big growers held major financial interest in pesticide distributing firms and related operations. After the Revolution regional IPM programs were begun in 1982. More than 180 scouts were trained and several hundred workers were trained to survey and control the boll weevil in the field. Millions were saved in this way, through reduced

pesticides. New regulations concerning pesticides were passed, aimed at worker safety. However—

The contra attacks have had a major impact on the Nicaraguan productive sector and the economy. This impact has recently become particularly acute as the attacks have shifted from military objectives to the disruption of production and delivery of state agricultural services to rural areas. Attacks on cooperatives and state farms in the rural north appear to be part of a strategy of economic destabilization focused on agriculture, with professionals singled out as contra victims. According to the head of Nicaragua's union of professional organizations, 175 civilian professionals—including agronomists, ecologists, teachers, and health-care workers—have been killed by the contras since 1982.