

seems to be reasonably secure for several years. Support from the Welsh, the Scots, and the Liberals should be forthcoming on some issues, but far more important is a national desire not to have another general election for some time.

Unfortunately, the Common Market issue could fracture the unity of the Labor Party and lead to a return of a Tory government. Charles de Gaulle vetoed a Conservative attempt to join the Market in 1963 and a Labor venture in the same direction four years later. Not knowing quite what to do about the country's profound economic problems, British governments believed that entry into the Common Market might make them disappear. With De Gaulle gone, Edward Heath promptly brought Britain into the Common Market in 1972, even though it was clear that a majority of the nation objected.

Most members of the Labor Party opposed entry, but there was dissent from a significant minority led by Roy Jenkins, presently Home Secretary. Jenkins and his contingent are passionate Marketeers, while the vast majority of the Labor Party and the trade union movement advocate withdrawal. At the moment Wilson is renegotiating Britain's relations with the Common Market and has agreed to submit the results to the people in a referendum. This is contrary to normal British constitutional practice, where an omnipotent Parliament makes the decisions.

A split may occur when the Cabinet debates the renegotiated terms prior to the referendum set for June. The Common Market is essentially an attempt to reform capitalism through planning. Although it is conceivable that the six original Common Market countries may eventually consider planning for social justice and equality, it is not likely until the French and Italian Communist parties have been reintegrated into the political structures of their respective countries.

If the British were to vote themselves out of the Market, they would finally have exhausted all alternatives save one. The multiracial Commonwealth is, regrettably, in ruins; the "special relationship" with the United States is a farce; and the Common Market has revealed the inequalities and human exploitation that are an essential part of managed capitalism. The only choice left would be a serious attempt to construct a socialist society in the type of developed, urbanized nation in which Karl Marx had originally believed it should occur.

It staggers the imagination, but the top 1 per cent of Britain's population owns 42 per cent of the nation's wealth, and the top 10 per cent owns about 83 per cent. A massive redistribution is required. Private profits continue to soar while the working class struggles along on low wages and the elderly receive deplorably low pensions. Most important are the defects in the educational sys-

tem. It is geared to provide extra benefits for those with sufficient funds to buy advancement for their children. Working-class children are systematically discriminated against. They come from poor homes and go to poor schools. A vivid commentary on what life means for many British children is to be found in a profoundly moving poem by a thirteen-year-old working-class boy from the East End of London (*New Statesman*, May 4, 1973):

I am just a boy with a lot of dreams
but what's the point I won't get nowhere
I'm just ordinary nothing special
just...ordinary
Got no chance in the world unless
you're...clever
which I'm not.

This year will be absolutely decisive for British socialism. As the pugnacious absurdities of Heath are replaced by the reactionary whimsies of Margaret Thatcher, Conservative disarray will help. But Northern Ireland and the reemergence of the demagogic Enoch Powell in that unhappy region will require decisive action, perhaps even the removal of British troops. In the bitter months ahead Harold Wilson would do well to recall the words of his onetime political ally, the late Aneurin Bevan: "The first quality necessary in a revolutionary architect seems to me to be an irreverence for traditional ideas....If the past shouts too loudly in our ears, how is it possible to hear the first whispers of the future?"

Thomas J. Spinner, Jr.

Professor of History, University of Vermont; author of George Joachim Goschen: The Transformation of a Victorian Liberal (1973).

EXCURSUS IV

Hard-Nosed Utopianism

Most of what is published in these pages deals with ethics and social change within the existing power realities of national and international life. This, we like to think, helps prevent moral reflection from slipping into the easy moralism that mistakes what ought to be for what is. Assiduously sticking to "the realm of the possible" is not without its perils, however. Possible dreams and undreamed of possibilities have sometimes overwhelmed what passed for realism. "Realities" have crumbled as their foundation in fiction is exposed by an alternative vision. What is ain't necessarily so.

The reasons for discontent with advanced industrial society are such that it is no surprise that many restless souls are caught up in the search

for an alternative vision, an alternative lifestyle, another way of ordering our life together. Lanza del Vasto is such a soul, and many have responded to his quest, as is evident in the sympathetically critical article by James Young and Marjorie Hope in this issue.

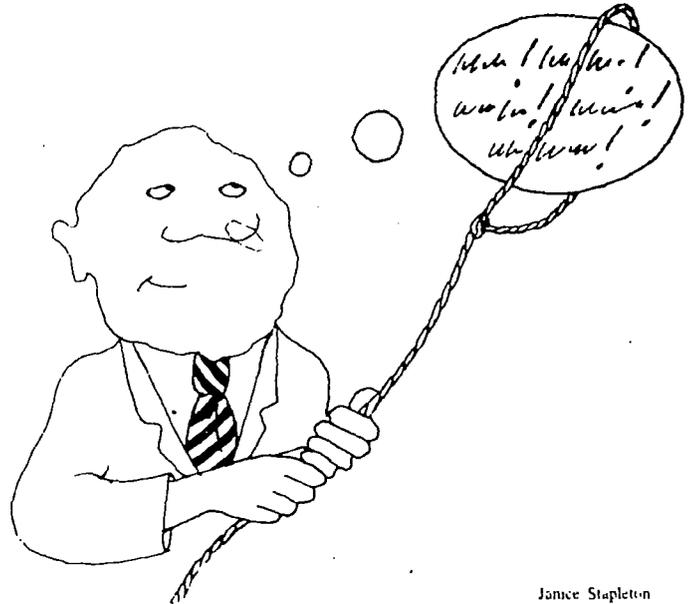
Shantidas (as Gandhi renamed him) was recently on a speaking tour in the United States, including an afternoon at our *Worldview* offices in New York. Responses to what he says and writes range widely. Some, as Young and Hope note, believe him a prophet challenging a dehumanizing technological society with simple but devastating profundity. Others see him as a somewhat addled old man assaulting what he does not understand with simplistic and potentially dangerous inanities. Obviously, people who have gathered around him in the Community of the Ark view him in the former light.

Those who have a healthy respect for the limitations imposed by our moment in history sometimes tend to dismiss Shantidas and his kind as self-indulgent and even cowardly escapists from the tasks at hand. That, one suspects, is a mistake. But in order to appreciate the significance of communal experiments such as the Ark, it is first necessary to be quite clear about what they are not. Only by discounting the inflated rhetoric associated with such experiments—and by which communards frequently deceive themselves—can one recognize their value, even necessity, in this and all social orders. Such experiments offer not an alternative but a critique.

The Community of the Ark is, to be sure, an alternative choice for some individuals, but even then it is a limited alternative. It is clearly not an alternative for modern society. Both in its quotidian existence and in times of emergency it is safely backstopped by the modern technological order of things. This realization gives birth to the modesty that prevents Shantidas (some of the time) from suggesting that the Ark is the precursor of a new global order. If Gandhi is right in saying one must first have power in order to surrender power, so the Ark and similar experiments demonstrate that one must first possess modernity before one can surrender modernity. Such experiments are inescapably the product of the order they would criticize. This does not invalidate the criticism, but it should induce an unwonted humility among those who proclaim their discovery of a radical alternative to the way things are.

The pertinent comparison is between classic monasticism and the communal experiments of various medieval and post-Reformation perfectionists. Monasticism viewed itself and was viewed by the world as "the more perfect way." *More perfect*—it was its genius to recognize that, in history prior to the Kingdom of God, even perfection

is relative. To use Lenin's phrase, monasticism "gave history a push," but, unlike Lenin and a host of others, it accepted no substitutes for history and its present limits. It challenged those limits, but had no illusions about its ability to abolish them. The social perfectionists, whether secular or religious, medieval or modern, "scientific" or millennialist, would extrapolate from their model of "the new man in the new society" to a new world order. They and their epigones have been the source of unspeakable tyranny and grief.



Janice Stapleton

A particular experience may anticipate something of the universal future. But in moving too rapidly and forcefully from the particular to the universal, experiments become oppressive regimes, and the insights of intentional community become the bars of yet another iron cage.

There is little likelihood that the Ark and similar communities, rooted in a religious tradition that espouses historical modesty, threaten a new tyranny. Except, of course, to individuals involved, who are then free to leave, which means it is no tyranny. There is the danger that others, more politically ambitious and less inclined to view the present in the light of eternity, will see such communal experiments as available alternatives rather than as necessary critiques. And there is the more common temptation of the resigned and worldly-wise to merely tolerate these experiments as necessary concessions to people who "go in for that sort of thing." Both the revolutionary and the resigned miss the meaning of these communal explorations of the possibly possible. They are of

necessity marginal, but marginality should not be confused with unimportance. Away from the center, truth is sometimes more clearly perceived.

At the end of his *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (New York, 1975), a study in models of world development, Peter Berger comes out in favor of "hard-nosed utopianism." It is a useful phrase.

RJN

QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Exactly Thirty-one Years Ago...

It is not only Great Britain, but the United States, that is interested in the oil of the Near East. For example, the American Government has decided to spend 130 to 165 million dollars on a pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, to convey oil for American use. This makes the U.S. Government and certain American oil companies partners in the preservation of American influence in Iran, Arabia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. The whole project would be incredibly wasteful except on the assumption that policies approved by America will prevail in those regions after the war.

—Bertrand Russell, writing in *The New Leader*, February 26, 1944

On Being a Liberal Christian

I am convinced that liberal Christianity has little future unless it can articulate its stance to itself in such a way as to differentiate itself from the activist, mystical, and psychological movements toward which it gravitates from time to time. Theologically it cannot exist as a watered-down form of conservative Christianity. If we liberal Christians are unable to state the authentic Christian gospel meaningfully and relevantly in our own terms, there is little value in our survival. Unless it is the Christian gospel that makes us liberal, and not simply an erosion of faith, we are not in any serious sense liberal Christians. I am personally troubled by the extent to which we have lost our centeredness in the gospel, but I remain quite sure that the gospel requires of us that we be liberal.

—John B. Cobb, Jr., *Liberal Christianity at the Crossroads*

Re:Guilt

**Do not stop. Go back three
Worldview issues.**

Last spring, a 71-year-old professor emeritus at San Francisco State University was shot by a gunman in the men's room of a campus building. As the assailant fled, two faculty members pursued him, and one, Theodore W. Keller, stayed close to him. The gunman threatened Keller, but the 43-year-old professor of international relations was undeterred: Just as the gunman was about to commandeer a car driven by a young mother accompanied by her two small children, Keller's shouts alerted a policeman, who captured the fugitive.

For preventing the gunman's escape, Keller was publicly praised as a "hero" by the university president. The professor carefully typed up his own report of the event for the police and later testified before the grand jury, which indicted Michael J. Boyd, 25, on eleven counts, including assault with a deadly weapon against Keller. But last week, when Boyd went on trial Keller refused to testify against him, citing his own personal convictions. The U.S. social system, he said, is guilty of crimes like these, not any individual. "It's one thing to stop a man from doing something like that and another thing to testify against him," Keller explained later. "Eighty-five per cent of that kind of crime is done by minorities from the ghetto. We have to change the system. We all share the guilt."

—*Newsweek*, March 10

Fowl Discipline

General Ching the renowned General of the Chung Dynasty Trained the famous Hunan Army Chicken chunks with Tingling Hot Sauce.

—Menu item at an East Side New York restaurant

Schwein und Drang

If Willy Brandt quotes his political opponent, Franz Josef Strauss, again as having said West Germany is a pig sty, he will incur a \$213,000 fine or six months in jail, a Bonn magistrate ruled yesterday. The court said that Mr. Strauss, Bavarian aspirant to the Chancellorship formerly held by Mr. Brandt, had only compared West Germany to a pig sty—not the same thing as saying it was one. Spokesmen for Mr. Brandt's Social Democratic party demanded a review to allow testimony by linguistic experts.

—*New York Times*, March 28