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From time to time THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of critical issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Mailing No. 8.

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The Changing Scene

TELL me, a distinguished psychologist once said, what a people joke about, the songs they sing, and what they dream about, and I will tell you what kind of people they are. You could call this reading a culture according to the signs it reveals. Ivan Illich, in an article in *Gandhi Marg* for last September, makes a reading which is easier to follow, using visual materials.

What is "development"? It used to mean, Illich says, something fairly simple like "evolutionary" development, or projects undertaken by real estate promoters, but today it means "modernization," involving mass production techniques and raising consumer appetites. "Now is the time," he says, "to dig out the axioms hidden by the idea of development itself."

> Fundamentally, development implies the replacement of general competence and abundant subsistence activities by the use and consumption of commodities. Development implies the monopoly of wage-labour over all other work. It implies the definition of needs in terms of goods and services produced on a mass basis according to expert design. Finally, development implies the rearrangement of the environment in such a fashion that space, time, materials, and design favour production and consumption while they degrade or paralyze use-value oriented activities that satisfy need directly. And all such worldwide homogeneous changes and processes are valued as inevitable and good. The Mexican muralists dramatically portrayed the typical figures before the theorists outlined the stages. On these walls, one sees the ideal type of human being as the male in overalls behind a machine or in a white coat over a microscope. He tunnels mountains, guides tractors, fuels smoking chimneys. Women give him birth, nurse, and teach him. In striking contrast to Aztec subsistence, Rivera and Orozco visualize industrial work as the sole source of all the goods needed for life and progress.

Those great wall paintings, as we recall, were done in the 1930s, and often reprinted in color in American magazines. Stark and ruthless vigor was joined with revolutionary ardor in those sturdy peasant bodies, made into symbols of "liberated" industrial man. The "consumer" side of the imagery—which we have in *Good Housekeeping* and *Vogue* and *Better Homes and Gardens*—would come later, after the factories were built and were pouring out their delectable commodities in never-ending stream. But we didn't make such anticipations in the thirties—we just admired the primitive power of the paintings, feeling that Rivera had caught the spirit of the times. He had of course done just that.

Today the times have changed. As Illich says:

> . . . this ideal of industrial man now dims. Taboos weaken. Slogans about the dignity and joy of wage-labour sound dated. Unemployment, a term first introduced in 1898 to designate people without a fixed income, is now recognized as the condition in which most of the world's people live anyway—even at the height of industrial booms. In Eastern Europe especially, but also in China, people now see that, since 1950, the term "working class" was used mainly as a cover to claim privileges for a new bourgeoisie and its managers bent upon replacing the old. The need to create employment and stimulate growth, by which the old self-appointed paladins of the poorest have so far squashed any consideration of alternatives to development, now appears much less real.

In short, the case for "development" is losing its force.

> The challenges to development take multiple forms. In Germany alone, some 15,000 groups experiment, each differently, with what they believe to be alternatives to an industrial existence. The majority come from blue-collar homes. For most of them, there is no dignity left in earning livelihood by a wage. Like some slum-dwellers in South Chicago, they try to "unplug" themselves from consumption. In the United States, at least four million people live in the core of tiny and highly differentiated communities of this kind, with at least seven times as many sharing their lives —women seek alternatives to gynecology; parents alternatives to schools; home-builders alternatives to the flush toilet. In Trivandrum (South India), I have seen one of the most successful alternatives to a special kind of commodity-dependence: to instruction and certification as the privileged forms of learning. One thousand seven hundred villages have installed libraries, each containing at least a thousand titles. This is the minimum equipment they need to be full members of Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, and they may

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retain their membership only as long as they loan at least three thousand volumes per year.

I was immensely encouraged to see that, at least in South India, village-based and village-financed libraries have turned schools into adjuncts to libraries, while elsewhere libraries during these last ten years have increasingly become mere deposits for teaching materials used under the instruction of teachers. Also in India, Medico International represents a grassroots-based attempt to demedicalize health care (in Bihar), without falling into the trap of the Chinese barefooted doctor, who has become the lowest level lackey in a national hierarchy of bio-control.

There are other good signs: In a national referendum in Austria, the people by absolute majority "refused permission to Chancellor Kreisky, politically in control of the electorate, to open a finished atomic generator." Grassroots movements are challenging not only the idea of "development," but also the Western notion of "progress."

Illich's indictment of what these movements hope to put an end to is a rhetorical masterpiece:

> Development based on high per capita energy quanta and on intense, individual professional care looks in retrospect like the most deleterious missionary effort ever undertaken by the West. Investments for this project were guided by an ecologically unfeasible conception of human control over nature, and by an anthropologically vicious attempt to replace the nests and snakepits of culture by sterile wards for professional service. The hospitals that spew out the newborn and reabsorb the dying, the schools run to busy the unemployed before, between, and after jobs, the apartment towers where people are stored between trips to the supermarkets, the highways connecting the garages form a pattern tattooed into the landscape during the short development spree. These institutions, designed for life-long bottle babies wheeled from udder to udder, begin now to look as outdated as cathedrals, albeit unredeemed by any aesthetic charm.

All this, Illich's article implies, has got to go, and is on the way out. He writes to warn against the compromising hazards faced by those who are finding alternatives, choosing the soft path, who believe and practice subsistence economics, and who place use value far above commodity value. These dangers are several and complex, but cannot be considered here. See *Gandhi Marg* for last September: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 221/223 Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi, India 110002—single copy $1.25.

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The New Frontier for Arrogance: Colonization of the Informal Sector

IVAN ILLICH

TEN years ago I addressed a meeting of the Society for International Development (SID). It was in Ottawa, and SID then celebrated the beginning of the second development decade. I doubt that in 1979 anyone feels like celebrating the beginning of a third development decade. The concept of "development" must be either redefined or abandoned. To get at this problem for 1979, SID chose the theme of the interrelationship between end and means. In Colombo it wanted to explore the ways in which the choice of a desirable society and that of feasible policies affect each other. Ten years ago, the issue was something else. The goal of development was then assumed to be the installation of a balanced set of equipment in a society not yet so instrumented: the building of schools, hospitals, highways, factories, power grids, together with the personnel to run them.

Today, few people would take such an instrumentalist view of the desirable society. Many have changed their minds for at least two reasons. First, the synergy of undesired externalities has tended to overshadow the benefits that were produced by the operation of these means. Secondly, the counterproductivity of modern institutions—even though the concept of specific disutilities locked into an economic sector is not yet fully recognized by economists—has in fact become the constant frustration of the poorer majority of the clients of each institution. This counterproductivity is a daily, but also a new, experience. For

most people, schooling has compounded their native relative deficiencies with certified degradation. For large population groups, the medicalization of health has increased demand for services far beyond the possible, and undermined that organic coping ability which commonsense calls health. Transportation, for the great majority bound to the rush hour, has increased the time spent in the servitude of traffic, reducing both freely chosen mobility and mutual access. The development of educational, medical, and other welfare institutions has actually removed the majority of clients from the obvious purpose for which these institutions were designed and financed. Externalities demanding an increase in the production of scavenging services, and internalized specific disutilities resulting from the radical monopoly of institutional products over personal action—what I call paradoxical counterproductivity—conspire together to hit individuals and communities in less industrialized nations, and hit them in a class-specific way. In effect, this frustration and paralysis discredit the attempt to describe the desirable society in terms of installed production capacity. Now, defence against the damages inflicted by development has become the new privilege.

Ten years ago, most polititians and economists tended to distinguish political options exercised within the public sector from technical options left to the expert. The former were meant to focus on goals, the latter more on means. Even among those who accepted publicly Gandhi's views, only a few gave to the choice of other native means more than a marginal importance. Options about the desirable society were ranged on a speetrum that ran from right to left. Now, not only for people who speak of Gandhi, means become issues that the citizen wants to decide. The one-dimensional topography of public options proves insufficient. And the addition of only one new dimension to public controversy would not adequately reflect what has happened during the decade of dawning alternatives. At least two new dimensions of choice have become publicly available, and neither fits on the right-to-left array. I dare to represent each of these new classes of options as independent vectors, and think of the three intersecting vectors of public option as coinciding three-dimensional coordinate system. On the x-axis I place the issues related to class justice and ownership that are usually designated by the terms "right" and "left". On the y-axis, I place the technical choices between hard and soft, extending the meaning of these terms far beyond a pro and con atomic power. Not only goods, but services also are affected by a soft alternative; fossil fuels can be substituted by renewable energy forms, and institutional care through professional agencies can be replaced by community organization and self-care. A third choice falls on the z-axis of my typology. Neither ownership nor technique, but rather the nature of human satisfaction is at issue on this vector. I guess that

Erich Fromm would talk about *being* on top, or *having* at the bottom. May I dare to place Gandhi's view of a society made up of culturally distinct villages on a fan-shaped spread on top of the z-axis, and the view of India as a big industrial power made further down? Here, at the bottom, I place a society that results from the maximal growth of commodity intensity, where needs are increasingly defined in terms of packaged goods or services that are designed and prescribed by professionals and produced under their control. This societal ideal corresponds to the image of a humanity composed of individuals, each driven by considerations of marginal utility, the image that has developed from Mandeville via Smith and Marx to Keynes, and that Dumont calls *homo economicus*. At the top of the z-axis, I place the view of a modern society centered on subsistence activities, in which commodities and industrial production in general are considered valuable mainly in so far as they are either resources or instruments for the actions of subsistence. Here, the societal image corresponds to *homo habilis* equipped with modern, use-value oriented tools. Developing Polanyi, the top of the z-axis represents the societal attempt to re-embed the formal economic sphere into a consciously chosen limited cultural matrix. It corresponds to an image of man who derives more satisfaction from doing and making things for immediate use than from the products of subject labour done by slaves or machines.

The nature of work, its purpose, and its division are among the key issues on this vertical vector. The choice for or against the notion of man as a growth-addict decides whether unemployment shall be viewed as sad and a curse, or as useful and a right. In a commodity-intensive society, the goods and services corresponding to basic needs are produced by employed labour. Here, the work ethic assigns paramount dignity to those activites that are rewarded by salaries, while unpaid activities are not only degrading, but also divided into two kinds: the traditional subsistence activities which remain outside the market, but still directly provide for some peoples' livelihood (such are treated as marginal ramnants from a waning way of life), and a new kind of unpaid activity for which woman's serfdom in the domestic sphere is the most obvious example. Housework in the wage earner's apartment is not salaried. Nor is it a subsistence activity in the sense that most of the work done by women was such when, with their menfolk, they used the entire household as the setting and the means for the creation of most of the inhabitants' livelihood. Modern housework is standardized by industrial commodities oriented towards the support of production, and exacted from women in a sex-specific way to press them into reproduction, regeneration, and motivation of the wage-labour force. Well publicized by the new feminists, housework is only one typical expression of that extensive shadow economy which has everywhere developed

as a necessary complement to expanding wage-labour, and that is everywhere overlooked because the analytic concepts developed for the formal economic sector are not quite applicable to describe it. As subsistence activities disappear, all unpaid activities assume a structure analogous to housework: the market-specific commuting to work, preparation for educational certification, and especially the newer attempt to expand bureaucratic controls over life styles and informal activities that are carried out under the aegis of Chicago Boys or of admirers of Mao. Growth oriented work inevitably means the standardization and management of human activities, be they paid or unpaid.

A contrary view of work prevails in a subsistence-oriented society. There, the replacement of consumer goods by personal action is the goal. There, both wage-labour and shadow work are destined to decline as their product, goods or services, is valued primarily as equipment for ever inventive activities, rather than as consumer goods. There, the guitar is valued over the record, the library over the school room, the back yard garden over the supermarket selection. Useful unemployment is valued and wage-labour, within limits, is tolerated.

The shape of a society's ideal self-image henceforth will be the result of the ongoing choices along these three independent vectors. A polity's credibility will depend on the degree of public participation in each of the option sets. Example through this articulate self-image will, hopefully, become the determining factor of a society's international impact. For the first time in history, poor and rich societies would be effectively placed on equal terms. But for this to become true, the present perception of international north-south relations in terms of development must first be overcome. Even those of us who think that they have been guided by Gandhi's writings will have to become aware of the degree to which we have pressed his thought into a development-oriented paradigm.

The development paradigm is more easily repudiated by those of us who were adults on 10 January 1949. That day, most of us came to know the term "development" in its present meaning for the first time when President Truman announced his Point Four Programme. Until then, we used the term "development" to refer to species, real estate, and moves in chess—only thereafter to people, countries, and economic strategies. Since then we have been flooded by development theories whose labels are now keepsakes for collectors. We will remember, for example, growth, catching up, modernization, imperialism, dualism, dependency, basic needs, transfer of technology, world system, autochthonous industrialization, and temporary unlinking. Each onrush came in two waves. One carried the pragmatist who higlighted free enterprise and world markets, and other carried the politicians who stressed ideology and revolution. The theories deposited mountains of reports and

of mutual caricatures. And beneath these papers and strawmen the common assumptions of all the theories were buried. Now is the time to dig out the axioms hidden by the idea of development itself.

Fundamentally, development implies the replacement of general competence and abundant subsistence activities by the use and consumption of commodities. Development implies the monopoly of wage-labour over all other work. It implies the redefinition of needs in terms of goods and services produced on a mass basis according to expert design. Finally, development implies the rearrangement of the environment in such a fashion that space, time, materials, and design favour production and consumption while they degrade or paralyze use-value oriented activities that satisfy needs directly. And all such worldwide homogeneous changes and processes are valued as inevitable and good. The Mexican muralists dramatically portrayed the typical figures before the theorists outlined the stages. On these walls, one sees the ideal type of human being as the male in overalls behind a machine or in a white coat over a microscope. He tunnels mountains, guides tractors, fuels smoking chimneys. Women give him birth, nurse, and teach him. In striking contrast to Aztec subsistence, Rivera and Orozco visualize industrial work as the sole source of all the goods needed for life and progress.

But this ideal of industrial man now dims. Taboos weaken. Slogans about the dignity and joy of wage-labour sound dated. Unemployment, a term first introduced in 1898 to designate people without a fixed income, is now recognized as the condition in which most of the world's people live anyway—even at the height of industrial booms. In Eastern Europe especially, but also in China, people now see that, since 1950, the term "working class" was used mainly as a cover to claim privileges for a new bourgeoisie and its managers bent on replacing the old. The need to create employment and stimulate growth, by which the self-appointed paladins of the poorest have so far squashed any consideration of alternatives to development, now appears much less real.

The challenges to development take multiple forms. In Germany alone, some 15,000 groups experiment, each differently, with what they believe to be alternatives to an industrial existence. The majority come from blue-collar homes. For most of them, there is no dignity left in earning livelihood by a wage. Like some slum-swellers in South Chicago, they try to "unplug" themselves from consumption. In the United States, at least four million people live in the core of tiny, and highly differentiated communities of this kind, with at least seven times as many sharing their lives—women seek alternatives to gynecology; parents alternatives to schools; home-builders alternatives to the flush toilet. In Trivandrum (South India), I have seen one of the most successful alternatives to a special kind of commodity dependence: to

instruction and certification as the privileged forms of learning. One thousand seven hundred villages have installed libraries, each containing at least a thousand titles. This is the minimum equipment they need to be full members of Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad and they may retain their membership only as long as they loan at least three thousand volumes per year. I was immensely encouraged to see that, at least in South India, village-based and village-financed libraries have turned schools into adjuncts to libraries, while elsewhere libraries during these last ten years have increasingly become mere deposits for teaching materials used under the instruction of teachers. Also in India, Medico International represents a grassroots-bassed attempt to demedicalize health care (in Bihar), without falling into the trap of the Chinese barefooted doctor, who has become the lowest level lackey in a national hierarchy of bio-control.

Besides taking such experiential forms, the challenge to development also uses legal and political means. In an Austrian referendum last year, an absolute majority refused permission to Chancellor Kreisky, politically in control of the electorate, to open a finished atomic generator. Citizens increasingly use the ballot and the courts, in addition to more traditional interest group pressures, to set negative design criteria for the technology of production. These new options were not predictable ten years ago—and many men in power still do not recognize them as legitimate. All these grassroots-organized events challenge not only the recent concept of development, but also the more fundamental and root concept of progress—the notion which has characterized Western society for 2,000 years, and determined its relations to outsiders since the decay of classical Rome.

Societies mirror themselves in their transcendent gods, but also in their image of the alien beyond their frontiers. Development exports the dichotomy between "us" and "them" which is unique to industrial society. This worldwide reflction of a new attitude towards self and towards others constitutes the victory of a work mission inititated two thousand years ago in the West. A redefinition of development would only reinforce the Western attempt at hegemony. I would, as I shall show, complete Western economic domination over the shape of formal economics by the professional colonization of the informal sector, domestic and foreign. To eschew this danger, the six-stage metamorphosis of a concept that now appears as development must first be understood.

Every community has a characteristic attitude towards others. The Chinese, for example, cannot refer to the alien or his chattel without labelling them with a degrading marker. For the Greek, he is either the house guest from a neighbouring polis, or the barbarian who is less than a full man. In Rome, barbarians could become members of the city, but

to bring them into it was never the mission of Rome. Only through the Church did the alien become someone in need, someone to be brought in. This view of the alien as burden has become constitutive for Western society; without this universal mission to the world outside, what we call the West would not have come to be.

The perception of the alien who must be saved is part of a new view on the functions of institutions. The alien as an object of help comes from the attribution of motherly functions to the Church. Never before had any formal institution been called mother, nor its product understood as absolutely necessary for life. And this became the view held about the fourth-century Church. Without access to the milk of faith that flows only from her nipples, men could not be saved. *This* institution is the prototype of the present plethora of Western institutions, each of them providing an output considered a basic necessity, each guarded by a different, specialized professional clergy. The transfer of salvation, education, nurture, carriage and care from women to institutions governed mostly by males, and the recasting of needs into demands for institutional outputs constitutes the history of the West.

The perception of the outsider as someone who must be helped has taken on successive forms. In late antiquity the barbarian mutated into the pagan. He was defined as the unbaptized, but ordained by nature to become Christian. It was the duty of those within the fold to incorporate him by baptism into the body of Christendom. In the early Middle Ages, most people in Europe were baptized, even though they might not yet be converted. Then the Muslims appeared. Unlike Goths and Saxons, Muslims were monotheists, and obviously prayerful believers; they resisted conversion. Therefore, besides imputing to them the need for baptism, the further needs to be subjected and instructed had to be added. The pagan mutated into the infidel. By the late Middle Ages, the image of the alien mutated again. The Moors had been driven from Granada, Columbus had sailed across the ocean, and the Spanish crown had assumed many functions of the Church. The image of the wild man who threatens the civilizing function of the humanist had to replace the image of the infidel who threatened the faith. At this time also, the alien was first described in economy-related terms. From the many studies made on the wild man during the waning Middle Ages and up into the high baroque, we learn that he had no needs. This independence made him noble, but a threat to rising colonialism and mercantilism. To impute needs to the wild man, one had to make him over into the native. Spanish courts, after long deliberation, decided that at least the wild man of the New World had a soul and was, therefore, human. In opposition to the wild man, the native has needs, but needs unlike those of civilized man. His needs are fixed by climate, race, religion, and providence. Adam Smith still reflects

on the elasticity of native needs. As Myrdal has observed, the construct of distinctly native needs was necessary both to justify colonialism and to administer colonies. The provision of government, education, and commerce for the natives was for four hundred years the white man's assumed burden.

Each time the West put a mask of new needs on the alien, the old mask was discarded because it had turned into a caricature of an abandoned self-image. The pagan with his naturally Christian soul had to give way to the stubborn infidel to allow Christendom to launch the Crusades. The wild man became necessary to foster the need for secular-humanist education. The native was the crucial concept to push self-righteous colonial rule. By the time of the Marshall Plan was initiated when multinational conglomerates were coming into their own and the arrogance of transnational pedagogues, therapists and planners knew no bounds, the natives' limited needs for goods and services would have thwarted expansion and progress. More or less at the time of Gandhi's death the natives had to metamorphose into underdeveloped people. To continue to fit into the world of the "West" thus decolonization can also be understood as a process of conversion: the worldwide acceptance of the Western self-image of *homo economicus* in his most extreme form as *homo industrialis* with totally commodity-defined needs. Scarcely twenty years were since then enough to make two billion people define themselves as under-developed. I remember the Rio carnival of 1963—the last before the Junta took over. "Development" was then the key word in the prize-winning samba, the shout of the dancers while they jumped to the beat of the big drum.

Development based on high per capita energy quanta and on intense, individual professional care looks in retrospect like the most deleterious missionary effort ever undertaken by the West. Investments for this project were guided by an ecologically unfeasible conception of human control over nature, and by an anthropologically vicious attempt to replace the nests and snakepits of culture by sterile wards for professional service. The hospitals that spew out the newborn and reabsorb the dying, the schools run to busy the unemployed before, between and after jobs, the apartment towers where people are stored between trips to the supermarkets, the highways connecting garages form a pattern tatooed into the landscape during the short development spree. These institutions, designed for life-long bottle babies wheeled from udder to udder, begin now to look as outdated as cathedrals, albeit unredeemed by any aesthetic charm.

Ecological and anthropological realism has become inevitable. But let us watch out. Soft is ambiguous; both right and left appropriate it. It will equally serve either of two choices on the z-axis: a honied beehive, or active pluralism built on the stark risks of freedom. The soft choice

could easily permit another recasting of a maternal society at home and one more metamorphosis of the missionary ideal abroad.

Amory Lovins argues that the possibility of further growth now depends on the rapid transition to the soft path. Only with this option, says he, can the real income of rich countries double and that of poor countries triple in the generation. Only by the transition from fossil to sun, can the externalities of production be so cut that the resources now spent on making waste and hiring scavengers to remove it be turned into benefits. I agree, if growth is to be, then Lovins is right, and your investment is more secure with windspinners than with oil derricks.

The World Bank makes the matching argument for services. Only by choosing labour-intensive, sometimes less efficient, forms of industrial production can education be incorporated in apprenticeship. More efficient plants create enormous externalities in the formal education they presuppose, while they cannot impart education on the job.

The World Health Organization now stresses prevention and education for self-care. Only thus can population health levels be raised, while expensive therapies—mostly of unproven effectiveness, although still the principal work of physicians—can be abandoned. The liberal egalitarian utopia of the eighteenth century, taken up as the ideal for industrial society by the socialists of the nineteenth century, now seems realizable only on the soft and self-help path. On this point, right and left converge. Welfgang Harich is a highly cultured communist, refined and steeled in his convictions by two stretches of eight years in solitary confinement. He is the one East European spokesman for soft path. But while for Lovins the transition to decentralized production depends on the market, for Harich the necessity of this transition is an argument in favour of Stalinist ecology. For right and left, democrats or authoritarians, soft process and energy becomes a crucial means to satisfy the increased needs of ever more people by the standardized production of goods and services.

The soft path could lead straight to a new frontier: the conquest by planners and educators of the informal sector at home and abroad. We have seen that wherever wage-labour expands, its shadow, industrial serfdom, also grows. Wage-labour, as the dominant form of production, and gender-specific housework, as the ideal type of unpaid complement, are both forms of activity without precendent in history of anthropology. Both came into being only with the industrial mode of production, both depend on an assumption of human greed and envy, both posit a sex-specific nature of work that formerly would have been considered immoral. *Vir economicus* and *femina domestica* are the two genders that make up *homo industrialis*. They thrive only where the absolute and, later, the industrial state destroyed the social conditions for subsistence. They spread as small-scale, diversified, vernacular

communities have been made sociologically and legally impossible—into a world where individuals, throughout their lives, live only through dependence on education, health services, transportation and other packages provided through the multiple udders of industrial institutions.

Conventional economic analysis has focused on only one of these two complementary activities of the industrial age, on the citizen as wage-earning producer. The equally production-oriented activities performed by the unemployed, until now remain in the shadow of the economic searchlight. But this is changing rapidly. The contribution made by unpaid activities begins to be noticed. Feminists claim wages for housework; scholars examine Chinese communes and Castro's volunteers to determine what unapid work contributes to growth; students of Milton Friedman discover the economics of sex behaviour. At a time when structural unemployment coincides with a rapid decline in tertiary sector jobs, when mini-processors replace people and the soft path permits the relocation of production into small units, the contribution of the informal sector to the total economy becomes of central concern. The management and production of, what Ignacy Sach calls pseudo use-values, becomes the last growth domain. Sach's distinction between autonomous use-values and their managed counterfeits has been generally overlooked because the activities leading to each are amalgamated by current economics in the catchall category of "informal sector" activities. I prefer to restrict the use of the term in which *home-made commodities* are produced "informal sector" to the shadow economy of industrial age serfdom, that is, for example, unpaid study for the certificate, commuting, paraprofessional self-care and what women do in the domestic sphere. To this unpaid shadow economy I would oppose the equally unpaid *vernacular activities* which provide and improve livelihood, but which are totally refractory to any analysis utilizing concepts developed in formal economics. To these activities I apply the term "vernacular". There is no other current concept that allows me to make the same distinction. "Vernacular" is a Latin term that we use in English only for the language that we have acquired without paid teachers. In Rome, it was used for 1,200 years to designate any *value that was homebred*, homemade, derived from the commons, and that a man could protect and defend though he *neither bought or sold it on the market*. Since we have lost a simple term opposed to commodities and their shadow, let us see if this one will catch on. If the term *Khadi* used by Gandhi had not been co-opted into formal economics to designate home-made commodities, I would recommend *Khadi* instead of *vernacular* as the international term to designate the alternative to *commodities*. But only the term *vernacular* allows me, at present, and without confusion to distinguish between the expansion of the shadow economy's informal sector, that contributesto further commodity-intensive needs and its inverse—

the expansion of the vernacular domain.

The two can foster each other if only in balance. Their respective importance is the key issue on the third dimension of options, distinct from political right and left, and from technical soft and hard. Option for one or the other depends on the view taken of the nature of human satisfaction, and one's view of work. The option here is between hierarchically managed standardized work that may be paid or unpaid, self-chosen or imposed on one hand, and ever newly invented forms of simple, integrated subsistence actions which have an outcome that is unpredictable to the bureaucrat, unmanageable by hierarchies and oriented by the values shared at the moment within a community on the other hand. The choice is between two visions of man, of his needs and what satisfies them. For those who, between Locke and Leontieff, between Karl Marx or Milton Friedman hold to the view of man, who by wage work, can produce all necessities of life, industural organization of work has liberated mankind from the general mediocrity of subsistence as Marx puts it in Chapter 24 of *Das Kapital*. They are blind to modernized subsistence chosen for its pleasure, and to the rejection of those forms of industrial enrichment that, like none before, privileges the powerful and painfully frustrates most. But for those who reject the Catholic faith that all peoples have equal needs for the same productive udders, the intent to protect equal opportunities for very distinct forms of subsistence calls for limits on industrial productions that go far beyond those postulated by the soft path.

If the economy expands, which the soft choice can permit, the shadow economy must expand even faster; and the vernacular domain declines. In this case, with rising unemployment, the unemployed will be integrated into newly organized productive activites in the informal sector. Not only in India, but also in many rich countries Khadi in all its forms will become a preferred form of commodity, sponsored by the State pressed into the service of growth. Unemployed men will be offered the so-called privilege to engage in those production-fostering types of unpaid activity that, since their emergence as housework in the nineteenth century, had been considerately earmarked for the weaker sex—a designation that was also first used at that time, when industrial serfdom rather that subsistence was defined as the task of women. Under *this* option, international development is here to stay. In this option "Khadi as an economic commodity", which is the ultimate counter-feit of Khadi, will become the symbol for the new colonist. The international standardization of the informal sector will reflect the now sexless unpaid domestication of the unemployed at home. The new expert exporting alternative technologies and self-help methods already crowd airports and conferences. The last hope of development bureaucracies to safeguard their own legitimacy lies with these new kinds of mission-

ary tutors—those who monopolize the export of work formerly confined to the *femina domestica*, but now assigned to men in the "colonies".

Many of the new dissident elites that I have mentioned take a stand against all this—against the use of soft technology to reduce the vernacular domain and increase professional controls over informal sector activities. These new elites conceive technical progress as the instrument to live by a new type of value: value that is neither traditional nor industrial but both subsistence-oriented and rationally chosen. They give, with more and less success, the example of living by values which express a critical sense of beauty, a particular experience of pleasure, a unique view of life that is cherished by one small group—that might be totally meaningless to the next. They believe that modern tools make it possible to subsist on activities that aim at multiple, different, transitory lifestyles, and yet relieve much of the painful drudgery associated with the old time subsistence. And they struggle for the freedom to expand the vernacular domain of their lives, but are careful not to take more than their just small share from world resources.

I would hazard the opinion that self-sufficient lifestyles chosen by *avant garde* elites from Travancore to Wales could soon, by sheer example, sway those majorities that for decades have been enthralled by the contrary "demonstration model" of stupefying, sickening, and paralyzing enrichment. But for such an example to be thus effective, two conditions would have to be met. First, that the new lifestyle formed by a new relation between people and tools be oriented by the perception of man as belonging to the species of *homo habilis* and not to *homo industrialis*. Secondly, that commodity-independent lifestyles be spread by examples that are sought out by the receiver, and not by mission and the tutorship of new evangelists.

Before I conclude, let me mention one danger: a relapse into one-dimensional options. Political activists today often berate the ecologists' disinterest in politics. The criticism is well taken, but activists themselves must be willing to take a stand against hard techniques that call for a degree of expert domination which reduces participatory politics, right or left, to a sham. For the shape of a society's option to be the result of citizen participation, and not of expert decision, the distinction between three forms of participation, to which each one is called, must be clearly understood: the use of the vote for representatives to implement political programmes; the defence against professional dominance over technologies that is exercised through a personal stand in the citizen movements leading to such actions as referendas; the appeal to justice and law to safeguard the integrity of each group's view of human nature and thus their vernacular domain. □

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Thinking the Irreparable About Cambodia

By George Steiner

Massacres are as old as mankind. Sumerian, Egyptian inscriptions celebrate the razing of cities. Saul slew his thousands, but David surpassed this performance tenfold. Throughout European tongues it is a folk saying that no grass will grow again where the Hun has ridden. At the close of the Thirty Years' War, wolves moved into empty hamlets and towns. There is no bestiality on an organized, massive scale to which history does not bear witness.

No one suppressed the evidence. Gibbon marshals it with stately irony. But it was, in the period between the late 17th Century and 1914, muted. Or, rather, the awareness of the human potential for political monstrosity was made abstract and historical. Hobbes had grounded his coercive theory of society on the postulate of unalterable human ferocity. Locke and Jefferson proceeded from a postulate of progressive humaneness, of man's halting but certain journey towards tolerance and decency. Certain terrors lay in the dark past. Voltaire, no sentimentalist, no innocent in regard to human behavior, could affirm with confidence that judicial torture, enslavement and the annihilation of a beaten adversary would never return to the practices of Western politics.

But this optimism of the Enlightenment, enshrined in the "pursuit of happiness" of the Bill of Rights, was precariously underwritten. The relative civility of warfare was based on the fact that professional armies conducted limited dynastic campaigns. The mass levies of the French Revolution and the counter-wave of nationalism which the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars triggered, ended the old order of constraint. If Voltaire and Jefferson could place their trust in the "inevitable" liberalization of society through education, it was because their model of social relations remained, at bottom, static and hierarchic.

It assumed a contract of genteelness as between the governing elite and its satisfied inferiors. The industrial revolution was to make this consensus illusory and was to pose the insoluble paradox of mass education. "Insoluble," because the values of mass education are inherently at odds with those of an elevated liberal culture, be it along Jefferson's lines or Matthew Arnold's.

A Strategy of Blindness

Unconsciously, perhaps, the prophets of hope and rationality throughout the 18th and 19th Centuries adopted a strategy of blindness. With few exceptions, they simply did not *see* the cyclical *misere* of the rural condition or the abjection of a growing urban proletariat. And so long as no visible challenge came from these gloomy quarters, it was indeed reasonable to assume that torture, religious fanaticism and homicidal modes of war were obsolete nightmares.

We know better (or worse) now. But to a surprising degree, the blueprint of human perfectibility drawn up by the Enlightenment and the Victorians continues to shape our expectations. What we carry in our bruised minds is the nostalgic image of a middle-class Arcadia (its virtues certainly exaggerated) which ran from, roughly, the 1750s to the belle epoque just before the First World War. For the privileged, this spell of less than two centuries marks an armistice with history.

The first unmistakable warning that this armistice was ending came with the Bulgarian massacres of Armenians in 1894-5 (Sherman's march through Georgia had been seen, in Europe at least, as a bizarre anomaly of American primitivism). In the face of the Balkan horrors, Gladstone's plea that civilization itself was at stake, whatever its electoral ring, takes on a prophetic quality. The Turkish massacres of Armenians in 1914-15, improved on the earlier model. Here, for the first time in *modern* history, was planned genocide, i.e., the political resolve to eradicate an entire ethnic community in order to obtain territory, wealth and national uniformity. There is a real sense in which the murderousness of the 20th Century and the spiral of terror in which we are now caught up were programmed and successfully tested in the Armenian butcheries.

Two other factors contributed powerfully to loosen the props of civility. The casualty-lists of 1914-18, 60,000 on a single day, more than half a million at Verdun, paralyzed and numbed the imagination. So did the wild inflation of currency in Germany during the Depression. With a billion marks required for a loaf of bread, with the daily escalation of astronomical figures, the framework of numerical stability, of measurement, which plays a central psychological function in a rational society, was shattered. The concept of deaths or deportations by the millions became "unimaginably acceptable," which is to say acceptable because beyond concrete imagining.

This does *not* signify that the Nazi holocaust of 1939-45 was in any way pre-determined or that it represents only a variant on preceding inhumanities. I have tried to show elsewhere that there are unique, irrational dimensions to this enormity.

Ours is now precisely the climate of politics which Locke, Voltaire or Jefferson had regarded as irrevocably of the dark ages. Organized torture is endemic, whether in South Africa or Argentina, whether in Iraq or Indonesia. Weaponry already in hand suffices to incinerate the human species several times over, but the manufacture and sale of more sophisticated arms is going ahead at an estimated rate of $3 million an hour every day and night of the year. Napalm and saturation-bombing are recognized instruments of foreign policy. Terrorism of every description has become a banality (the first use of a nuclear device for terrorist or sectarian blackmail cannot be too far off). Censorship is ubiquitous.

There are no accurate figures as to the number of men, women and children hounded, gunned, starved to death in Biafra not long ago, or being eliminated right now by Indonesian policies in East Timor or by Brazilian greed in Amazonia. The geography of mass-murder and starvation, of political incarceration and torture, has become routine. But at the same time, it has become unreal.

This, of course, is the point about Cambodia. Mass-media coverage, graphic, gut-twisting as it is, has packaged the event in unreality. The more we are shown, the less we know. What, in fact, brought on the Cambodian apocalypse? The American-backed Lon Nol regime fought a civil war with the agrarian-Marxist forces of Pol Pot. To escape this war and American raids on rural areas, the population streamed into the cities. Pol Pot carries the day and proceeds to reverse this process by an insanely logical evacuation of Phnom Penh (the Greeks emptied Troy, the Romans Carthage). Enter the Vietnamese armies driving all before them.

The superpowers are implicated at every point. U.S. bombardments and interventions contribute to the disintegration of an ancient but fragile society. The Chinese propel the Khmer Rouge on their road to madness and blood-lust. The Soviet Union backs the Vietnamese. This, roughly, is what the chain of guilt looks like now. Future historians may rule otherwise (and be equally mistaken).

What is hideously clear is the legacy of desolation: the millions murdered and starved, the psychic and bodily scars which will cripple the survivors, the near-scouring from this earth of a complex civilization and ecology (the two are inseparable). How many millions? We do not know. But does it matter terribly? Torture one man or woman to insanity or death in the Gulag or a Chilean football stadium, starve 10 children in a Congolese village or Kurdish refugee camp, and you have abrogated the dignity, the hopes of what the

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Enlightenment called, with such pride, "the city of man."

Distorted, fragmentary, made glossy, the amount and kind of news we get about a phenomenon such as Cambodia (but why not about East Timor, why not about Ethiopia or Afghanistan?) corrodes. This is a complex process. Bombarded by photographs, newsreels, TV-features of undoubted but somehow familiar horror—since Belsen all starved children look alike—we lose any sense of a "real presence" (that poignant and precise theological term). In some way we know and do not know whether what we are witnessing is actually *there*. And immediately after the horror, in a counterpoint at once titillating and reassuring, comes the commercial jingle.

One has no answers, of course. But there are unpleasant calisthenics of mind and spirit worth trying. First, there are illusions to be exorcized, particularly from America. About the assurance of human progress, about the ability of representative democracies to satisfy for long the boredom, the infantile appetites for charisma and violence which seem to be imprinted in the species. Illusions about the Miltonic or Jeffersonian guarantee that truth and decency will prevail, after all, over lies and sadism. Illusions about the certain capacity of the human brain to perceive accurately, let alone resolve, the major problems of social justice and equitable distribution of resources on a planet of radically diverse climates, talents and mental sets. We must discipline ourselves to a watchful sadness knowing that even our benign apathies are murderous and that every man is accomplice to that which leaves him indifferent (but is there not an indecency in using such resonant words to cover what is, in the final analysis, impotence?).

Breaking Through Barriers

The second exercise is more arduous. It is to take one's own imagination by the nose and rub it in the actual smell and substance of things: in the rancid smell out of the mouths of hunger, in the sweat and excrement of the detention center. To do this means breaking through the barriers of statistics, of abstractions, of photographic invisibility which package our news. It means learning to *look* as do Shakespeare's men and women at the bleak climax to "The Winter's Tale": "They look'd as if they had heard of a world ransom'd, or one destroyed."

No miracles will come to such a re-education of vision. But it may be that the helpless nausea in us will ripen to rage. Against the lies of official policy statements (how many Americans know that Soviet aid to Cambodia, however coldly selfish its motives, has, so far, been more plentiful and effective than anything coming from the West?). Against the puerile diplomatic jockeying which condemns a nation to slow extinction. Against an armaments race which *must* end in catastrophic miscalculation and which, ironically, erodes those very ideological differences which it is meant to serve.

But it may, in a perfectly sober, nonmelodramatic sense, be too late. It could be that human history is an experiment which has failed; more exactly, that it is an experiment which can go on only at an intolerable cost in moral atrophy ("I know that children are being tortured, I shall see pictures of the happening on the TV tonight, but there is absolutely nothing I can or, at some central level, wish to do about it; and there is a good midnight movie to follow"). The irreparable is just that. There is no harsher lesson.

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