

12-1994

## TIPS, Volume 14, No. 4 & 5, 1994/1995

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### Recommended Citation

Wolfensberger, Wolf P., "TIPS, Volume 14, No. 4 & 5, 1994/1995" (1994). *Training Institute Publication Series (TIPS)*. 63.

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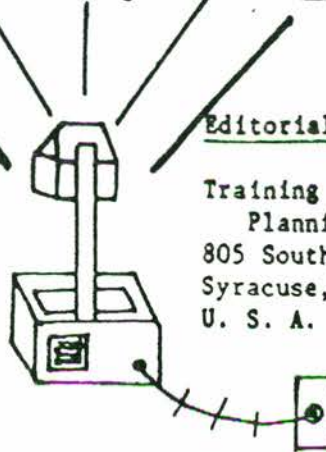
# TIPS

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Vol. 14, No. 4 Dec. 1994  
Vol. 14, No. 5 Feb. 1995

TRAINING INSTITUTE  
PUBLICATION SERIES

Syracuse, New York  
13244-2280

Our December issues always focus on some or all of the themes of poverty, homelessness, and oppression; the prison, crime and punishment scene; religion in society and its interface with human services; the family and children; issues of war and peace; and seasonal news, if any.

With subscriptions being low, we again make this a double issue in order to save on postage and handling.

### Poverty & the Poor

\*Perhaps as many as five million elderly Americans do not get enough to eat because they can not afford it. Even those who do not meet official criteria for being poor may not have enough money for adequate nutrition (SHJ, 16/11/93). According to one study, 10% of Americans rely on food pantries, emergency feeding programs or soup kitchens, and even yet more are turned away by such services (AP, in Indianapolis Star, 9 March 94; source item from Joe Osburn).

\*In the US, a lot of people who have never before been on welfare now are. One of the educations that they are getting deals with the entire subject matter of so-called food stamps--actually coupons given to eligible poor people by the US government which can be used like money to buy the more basic food items. Nearly 28 million Americans--many of them with jobs--use food stamps (AP in SHJ, 27/5/94). Application forms for eligibility for food stamps can run to 40 pages, which itself can discourage a lot of eligible people. Food stamps can only be used in stores that have been authorized to accept them, and which display an authorization card. Many people are so ashamed of using these food stamps that they shop at night or go to stores far away where they might not be known. Both employed people as well as poor employed ones might be eligible, but a lot of quirky things may make one ineligible, such as having a car that is not quite yet a junk heap which one is using to drive to work or to seek work. Eligibility has to be reestablished every six months. Welfare recipients characterized the food stamp program in terms such as humiliating, derogatory, rude, frustrating, hassle, and put-down. Many of the poor in our peculiar culture of affluence are very poor shoppers, and may use food stamps to buy expensive TV dinners instead of inexpensive staples. Also, some of them who want quick cash now rather than food over the long run will sell their food stamps on the black market for about half their value. In Vermont, the average person who receives food stamps gets \$55 worth, with the very top being \$111 (2/92 source information from Susan Mack).



\*The 3-4 million farm workers in the US have the highest rate of exposure to toxic poisoning of any occupational group. At the same time, they are among the lowest paid and worst treated of workers. According to one estimate, their average annual income is \$3,000. Many farm workers get sprayed with pesticides while they are working in the fields. There is very little monitoring of what effects this has on their health care, particularly since many farm workers migrate. Their access to health care and social services actually declined between 1980-92. Nobody studies them the way workers exposed to asbestos, solvents or lead have been studied, because if they studied the farm workers, what they would find would create such an outcry that it would change US agriculture the way we know it (Environmental Action, Fall 92).

\*The State of Vermont decided in 1991 to conduct a major review of its welfare system. Among other things, it interviewed 650 people—but only 44 of them were welfare recipients. Almost all the others were welfare workers, including nearly all 400 employees of the state's social welfare department. Overall, the workers had very negative attitudes toward welfare recipients, and their reform suggestions included such things as selling the blond children of the poor to Arabs, selling the bodies of deceased welfare clients for organ transplants, and forcibly sterilizing adult welfare recipients who are delinquent in their parenthood duties. The welfare recipients themselves expressed a great deal of hostility toward the welfare system, but a senior state welfare worker said that these sentiments were merely a reflection of the recipients' lack of self-esteem, rather than the result of the poor interactions that they had had with welfare workers (Burlington Free Press, 24/2/92; source item from Susan Mack).

\*According to some reports, being enslaved to drugs and being on welfare are closely related, with one in four mothers "on welfare" being alcoholic or drug-addicted, which is a rate triple that of comparable mothers not on welfare—which is bad enough! (SHJ, 27/6/94).

\*The government checks which poor people receive for welfare, unemployment, social security, etc., are known to occasionally arrive late. This puts great hardship on poor people who live hand-to-mouth, and who may be beset by creditors such as landlords. Sometimes, the checks are late because responsible workers in the relevant public offices do something wrong. Be that as it may, welfare workers have increasingly used a representative payee provision to lord it over the finances of the poor in recent years, sometimes doling out the money due to them in bits and pieces over a month's time instead of in one lump sum check as formerly. One ironic consequence of this is that some of the poor who are alcoholic used to go on a drinking binge when their monthly or bi-monthly check arrived. The money would soon be gone, and they would then be sober for the rest of the month, relying on soup kitchens and similar services for food, and shelter and missions for sleeping. Now that they have their money doled out to them throughout the month, they stay drunk all the time, which is actually worse, destroying their minds even faster than it would the old-fashioned way. Thus, this benign measure of paternalism turns out to be a subtle and probably unconscious form of deathmaking, and there are probably many thousands or even tens of thousands of similar cases across the country. But we made another hilarious observation recently: the checks for the local welfare workers failed to arrive on the day when they were supposed to—and all hell broke loose. The welfare workers who were being paid late went on a virtual rampage, made furious phone calls all over the state, demanded their rights, and were inconsolable.

\*Related to the above is that one of innumerable destructive practices of the US Social Security Administration is that it engages in periodic on-and-off entitlements of all sorts of people. For instance, it may suddenly deny previous disability recipients eligibility, or deny initial eligibility to people who actually do meet eligibility criteria. What then happens is that the people who have been denied go after their benefits, and perhaps years later are declared to indeed having been eligible, upon which they receive a huge lump sum amount of money—which most of them cannot properly handle. For instance, people addicted to drugs and alcohol may suddenly get lump sums of up to, or close to, \$10,000, which is of course an invitation for them to go on a terrible binge after which there is nothing left, and where they often cannot even remember what happened to their money.



One man who thusly received a \$8,500 check died the next day from a drug overdose. Sometimes, these monies get sent to the person's representative payees, who often are addicted themselves, or otherwise irresponsible. In many cases, it is a liquor store-owner who is somebody's representative payee! Furthermore, persons who are addicted actually get more money in some states than when they are trying to get and stay off (CBS "60 Minutes," 1 May 94).

\*In the early 1970s, poor families who had handicapped children became eligible for cash subsidies from Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI), for an average of about \$400 a month. In 1990, eligibility was dramatically expanded. Even people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol can have themselves declared "disabled" and receive SSI cash benefits, with which they can do what they want. Also, as the new regulations put it, children became eligible who cannot function in "an age-appropriate manner." A court also ordered the government to advertise the new eligibility regulations and pay some families large retroactive lump sums, which is almost always destructive in the culture of poverty. As a result, an army of parents has descended on the school systems demanding that their children be labelled "disabled" so that they could receive this cash subsidy, which has come to be known as "crazy checks" on the street. Many families have gone so far as to pressure, and teach, their children to act stupid and crazy in school, and engage in offensive behavior so as to be labelled disturbed or learning-impaired. Some families are systematically coaching all of their--sometimes many--children to act crazy, and the children may eventually tell teachers that the reason they do act stupid and crazy is that if they fail to do so, they will be beaten to a pulp by their parents who "need the crazy money," and some parents seem to be determined to make their children invalids. This cash subsidy is on top of often very expensive special education services in the schools. Many of these families then use this money frivolously or for drugs rather than on behalf of the children. As a result, children with behavior problems on the SSI rolls have quadrupled in 4 years, the number of checks rose from 296,000 to 800,000, and the money doled out tripled to \$4.5 billion. Local governments have urged poor families to switch from ordinary child welfare to SSI because it saves local dollars, which is yet another disincentive.

\*Many people were scandalized to learn that the US Social Security system, via several of its state programs, has been paying dependent women on welfare--some of them with as many as 8 children already--to take fertility drugs to have yet more children. On top of it all, these drugs increase the risk of multiple births and low-birth-weight babies, with all the things that go with that. In some states, Medicaid has paid for the reversal of surgical sterilization on both men and women. In some cases, the contradictions are staggering. For instance, New Jersey will pay women for a maximum of 8 dependent children, and yet has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on fertility assistance to its Medicaid recipients (Newsweek, 4/4/94).

\*Food stamp fraud is by no means a negligible bagatelle. Estimated fraud in 1994 is about \$100 million, much as in 3 previous years. However, most of this fraud is not committed by the poor themselves but intermediaries, such as store owners, counterfeiters, etc. (Parade, 4 Sept. 94). In Syracuse, almost every neighborhood store located in very poor areas has engaged in food stamp fraud (SHJ, 24/10/94).

\*Other welfare fraud is also not as negligible as we are sometimes told. Even only selective fingerprinting of single people without children (i.e., mostly males) seeking welfare in the county in which Syracuse is located saved \$750,000 in 18 months. Only 1 case of fraud was detected--but 149 people voluntarily dropped off the welfare rolls because they had something to hide (SHJ, 27/5/94). Nationwide, welfare fraud is estimated to cost about 5% of total payments (AP, in SHJ, 11/4/94).

\*After the January 1994 earthquake in California, one-half of the applications for welfare benefits because of quake losses were believed to be fraudulent (CBS TV News, 29/1/94).



\*The following is an adaption of the first four paragraphs of his article on "Notes on Consumerism" by Jeff Dietrich, in the Summer 1994 issue of Caelum et Terra.

"The poor are not nice! At least twice a week, they awaken us with the sounds of angry gunfire in the streets. In the last 2 years, our soup kitchen has been burglarized by the poor 8 times. That doesn't even count the plants the poor have stolen from our garden, the batteries taken from our cars, and even the goldfish from our pond. Yesterday, at our soup kitchen, a man tried to clobber a woman with a lead pipe; when my wife stepped between them, he assaulted her with a string of vivid metaphorical references to biological and scatological activities that would have made Henry Miller blush. The poor are violent; they spend their money on entertainment rather than housing; they prefer leisure to work. The poor are irresponsible, depressing, and superficial. They mimic the violence, rapaciousness, and acquisitiveness that form the very heart of our consumer culture. They are the ones who have most effectively internalized the cultural myths that character is defined by possessions, that work is onerous, and that leisure and consumption are the only important goals in life.

"On the other hand, the Third World poor are nice. They work hard, take care of their kids, go to church on Sunday, have dignity, purpose and a sense of self-worth. Unlike our own poor, the Third World poor are just materially impoverished, not spiritually impoverished. Third World poor fulfill our expectations that poor people should be nice folks who just need a helping hand, rather than an underclass with intractable problems that mirror our own pathological addiction to violence, consumption, and mind-numbing propaganda.

"The Third World poor still live in villages, still have community, still do meaningful work. These are precisely the values we in the developed world have sacrificed in the name of progress, utopia, and unlimited growth."

\*No, the poor are not nice. The Social Security field offices report that its clients urinate, defecate, disrobe, brandish weapons and scream obscenities or racial slurs. Some come with knives, loaded guns, clubs, razors, a chain or an ax. They assault and abuse employees, fight with others waiting in line, attempt suicide or threaten to bomb the agency (AP, in SHJ, 18/1/94).

\*The CBS "60 Minutes" program of 24/10/93 revealed horror stories about the welfare system in New York City. It is so bureaucratized that one social worker had four supervisors and one attorney looking over her shoulders. Two parents were working in child welfare agencies while their own children were in foster care. It mentioned one case of a child tended to by 5 staff members, none of whom knew the child. In some instances, 9 people were working on just one child.

\*For about a century, the State of Wisconsin has long been at or near the top of all sorts of positive social indicators. Recently, it decided that the US welfare system was so collapsed and corrupt that it started a phased withdrawal from it, replacing it with a state scheme. This is the only state so far to opt out.

### The Gulf Between the Haves & Have-Nots

\*A certain Paul Richards is supposed to have said, "When the rich assemble to concern themselves with the business of the poor, it is called Charity. When the poor assemble to concern themselves with the business of the rich, it is called Anarchy" (Mouth, 1994 sample).

\*In part because of a transfer of wealth upward, the "typical" household net worth in the US fell 12% between 1988-1991 (Newsweek, 14/2/94).

\*Between 1979-1987, the percent of working people in the US who did not make enough money to lift a family above the poverty level rose from 25.7% to 31.5%, in part because the average hourly compensation of blue collar jobs fell dramatically even as executive salaries skyrocketed. No wonder that a lot of more lowly people figure that a dishonest way of getting money is preferable (Time, 9 Sept. 91).



\*The percentage of the US population below the poverty level decreased significantly from 1960 to 1965. Since then, it has not changed much, oscillating roughly between 11 and 16% (Time, 18/10/93).

\*According to a Louis Harris Poll, the economic disparity between people with and without "disabilities" is not only bad but may be worsening. While 37% of Americans live in households with annual incomes less than \$25,000, 59% of adults "with disabilities" do. Whereas the official unemployment figures for Americans overall is roughly 7% (a gross underestimate in our opinion), the rate for working-age Americans "with disabilities" was 2/3rd (Our Children's Voice, 9/94).

\*President Reagan was largely responsible for a major transfer of wealth in the US from the lower to the highest classes. Very symbolically, a man robbed a bank in Syracuse while wearing a Ronald Reagan mask (SHJ, 18/12/93).

\*In the US, the taxes paid by the rich have declined in recent decades, while the tax on the middle class has risen 330%! Two-thirds of the budget deficit could be wiped out overnight if corporate taxes were restored to their 1950s level.

\*In 1992, there were 101 billionaires in the US, 44 in Germany, and 34 in Japan. All other countries had 10 or fewer, and mostly fewer (SHJ, 7/7/92.) The number of millionaires in the US rose from 642 in 1970 to 60,667 in 1990.

\*Running a country with a deficit budget is actually a form of wealth transfer, since the rich buy the government bonds that finance the deficit, and get (tax-free) interest.

\*Lawyers make society poor in at least two ways: they get huge incomes, and they play a major role in making the rich richer. In 1992, the US had 753,000 lawyers. One day, the people will rise up and "kill all the lawyers," as Shakespeare said.

\*Bad news for most people is often good news for some people. A 5 April 1994 headline in the Syracuse newspaper was "News of faltering economy causes rise in stock market." In other words, rich people benefit when poor people lose jobs.

\*Business bribes are tax-deductible not only in the US but also in Belgium, Denmark, France, Britain, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland (AW, 7 May 94).

\*Someone observed (Time, 15/2/93) that the wealthiest people in the US who pay lawyers and accountants hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to look after their money are the ones who leave their children in the care of people whom they pay at or near the minimum wage rate.

\*In 1994, we gained another insight into why cities such as Syracuse are becoming so run-down and poor. While driving through the nearby countryside along roads where we had never been, we saw a very large number of very new homes that had been constructed on large pieces of country property. It is apparent that a large number of the wealthiest citizens of the Syracuse area have fled the urban area into the countryside and are commuting into the city to work, sucking the financial juices out of it for their benefit and then abandoning it at nights and weekends. Our cities would be in infinitely better shape if people had to live where they work, or work where their voting privileges are. Then the more privileged citizens of society would simply not permit the cities to run-down so much.

\*The increasing division between upper and lower population groups that we are seeing in the US is also happening in countries throughout the world, including developed ones such as Britain and Australia.



People have been seeing a decline in the standard of living in several formerly (and still) affluent countries, and in some countries, there has been a growing division of the middle class into a wealthier and a poorer strata. People have had a hard time understanding the causes of this, except that they have recognized that many manufacturing jobs that were formerly in their own land have disappeared, having been either moved to the Third World or gotten abolished by greater automation. And even when they have understood at least some of the reasons for this decline in prosperity, people have not taken it well, tending to view a high standard of living as something that they deserved or that was due them being unfairly taken away, even though this benefitted nations to which manufacturing jobs have moved.

However, what people are rarely ever told, and do not seem to realize, is that it is extremely likely that there will be an increasing impoverishment in much of the world, including in the formerly affluent countries. This is apt to happen because of multiple reasons that combine, and in fact are often interlinked. Here, we list several of these. (a) Extraction of the raw materials is becoming ever more expensive, because the easier extractions have been exhausted. (b) Some substances which have been useful, or were thought to be useful, have proven to be so dangerous to the environment or health that they had to be replaced with more expensive substances. (c) The wanton violation of nature through pollution is beginning to incur astronomic delayed costs in several spheres. One is the costs of cleaning up what previously had been polluted. Another, more hidden, cost occurs when environmental disasters take place, including changes in the climate. For instance, consider the apparent increase in frequency of storms, floods, and droughts (often with fire) which destroy an enormous amount of property and crops. Further, other environmental changes may not actually destroy something but "merely" diminish agricultural yield. And then there are the medical costs of caring for people whose health has been destroyed by environmental pollution, as via asbestos mining. (d) There have been political changes in many countries that have enabled the ruling classes to become more rapacious, and to transfer to themselves an enormous amount of wealth from the middle and lower classes. We have documented a number of such mechanisms of wealth transfer, the manipulation of financial markets and the theft of pension funds being examples. (e) The modernistic mind is of such a corrupt nature alienated from reality that all sorts of things are constantly being done that are destructive of wealth in many other ways, e.g., tearing down very serviceable older buildings for the sake of erecting chintzy new ones. Another example is the US law that actually encourages grain-dealers to add filth to clean grain before it is sold, which of course makes work all around that, therefore, cannot be invested in truly productive activity and wealth creation. (f) Much of the extraction of wealth from the environment has used up more resources than it produces or replaces, even when this is not polluting the earth. For instance, modern Western agriculture uses up vastly more energy (e.g., in fuel and fertilizers) than it produces in food. (g) By all human judgment (which we acknowledge to be very shaky), the tremendous growth of population is bound to strain the availability of all sorts of resources. However, we certainly do not see this as a reason to limit births, or kill the unborn or the born of any age.

In fact, the high standard of living that has been enjoyed by the developed world for the past 50 or so years was bound to be the briefest moment in history, based as it was on the availability of cheap energy.

\*The percentage of income that people with incomes of \$1 million or more in the US have been giving to "charity" has declined sharply from 10% in 1981 to 4% in 1988, '89 and '90, despite the fact that the incomes of the wealthy rose more than at any time since the 1920s (SHA, 29/5/92).

\*Even though Japan is a very wealthy country that is outperforming the US in many domains, its industrial executives receive only about 16% as much pay as their US counterparts, and they pay about twice as much proportionally in taxes (SHJ, 8 Jan. 92). All this is good news.

### Slavery

Slavery is a special form of economic oppression, and some forms of poverty come close to a state of slavery.



\*An estimated 200 million people in the world are held in slavery, or under conditions of forced labor that amount to slavery. Yet governments uniformly deny that there is slavery in their countries, or they admit only a tiny fraction of the amount. The worst offenders in terms of numbers are India and Pakistan (AP, in SHJ, 9 Mar. 93).

\*In Africa, the slave trade is flourishing, with most of the slaves being refugees who are fleeing warfare and famine in their own countries. Many of the victims are young women sold as sex slaves. Most of the slave traders are "blacks," and the buyers are both "black" and "white" (The Australian, 22 June 92; source item from Peter Millier).

\*There is apparently a resurgence of slavery in Brazil, where on some ranches, laborers work under armed overseers and are chained to trees at night (SHJ, 6 Sept. 90).

### The Gulf Between Rich and Poor Nations

\*The poor countries of the world that used to be called underdeveloped did themselves a grave disservice when they insisted on being called "developing" countries. Some of them have been slipping into greater and greater poverty rather than "developing," and it is now time to call them what they are: the poor countries of the world.

\*For 50 years, CARE has sent food packages to the hungry around the world, but as of 1992, it has begun to get into population control measures, particularly in Africa, with plans to expand such efforts into Asia as well (NC Register, 21/3/93).

\*Almost all environmental organizations except for the Nature Conservancy have started to promote population control and de facto abortion measures in poor countries.

\*According to several major Brazilian newspapers, a memorandum of the US National Security Council a few years ago (reportedly recently declassified) targeted Brazil as one of 13 Third World countries for population control measures in order to insure the US continued access to raw materials, prevent the rise of Third World nationalism and protect overseas investments. It is alleged that there has been massive infusion of birth control devices and funds for sterilization of women to Brazil, in part through the US Agency for International Development (AID) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Allegedly, a third of all Brazilian women have been sterilized and almost all of these are African-Brazilian, or what in the US would be called "black." It has also been alleged that in some regions of Brazil, 90% of such women of reproductive age have been sterilized. It is further alleged that many of the women were sterilized without their consent, or were not informed fully of the nature of the operation (NC Register, 25/8/91).

\*One problem with Haiti is that the lighter one's skin is, the wealthier one is, and the top 1% own almost 50% of all the wealth.

### Homelessness

\*Homelessness is one of the most dramatic expressions of extreme poverty. A 1948 study by the Welfare Council of New York concluded that the causes of homelessness were "vague" (NY Times, 23/12/91). To this day, almost 50 years later, people who should know claim that the causes of homelessness are poorly understood. Time (6 Dec. 93) observed that during the 1980s, Americans felt sympathy for the homeless, but that this gave way to "compassion fatigue" by the turn of the decade, and is now tipping over into "open expression of loathing," with something like a "national arms race" being underway "to criminalize homelessness."



\*In many major US cities, homeless people are more severely hassled by the police than are street drug dealers (Newsweek, 13/6/94, p. 63). In New York City, an organization was formed in 1994 entitled StreetWatch in order to prevent and document violence against homeless people. Among other things, members patrol the public transportation terminals to prevent or document violence by police officers against the homeless there.

\*The police in DC claim to be authorized to confiscate the cameras of people filming homelessness scenes (McGrory column, SHJ, 19/1/94). Presumably, homeless people who can't be visually documented do not exist.

\*In 12/93, there was a drive to collect overcoats for the homeless in New York City, but to our great amusement people were told that they could leave their extra overcoats at three kinds of collection points: police stations, branches of the Chase Manhattan Bank, and post offices. There is something profoundly disturbing and incoherent in learning that the police powers and the imperial financial powers have joined hands in "helping" the homeless--i.e., one of the very powers that is heavily responsible for making the homeless homeless in the first place, and another power that forbids the homeless to sit or lay down anywhere.

\*A grocery cart full of stale bread was being given away in Pasco, WA, and a 51-year-old man who wanted it for a homeless shelter and soup kitchen got into a fight with an 81-year-old man who wanted it for a senior citizen center. The older man lost the fight and died of his injuries (AP, in SHJ, 2 Nov. 93).

\*US society has a historic archetype of the homeless hobo "riding the rails." Playing right into this image are plans in Atlanta to house the homeless in out-of-date railway cars (SHJ, 27/2/93).

\*It is distressing to learn that 80% of the nearly 16,000 homeless men housed in New York City shelters (more are housed or unhoused elsewhere) are hooked on either alcohol or drugs (SHA, 16/2/92).

\*A man homeless for 3 years wrote about it in Travels With Lizbeth (his dog). Scavenging from college dormitory dumpsters, he was "horrified" to discover from the students' discarded essays how easy it is these days to get an A.

\*Homelessness is on the increase all over the world. For the first time ever, we are told, there are homeless people dying from hypothermia in Israel. Homelessness is also a new phenomenon in Japan (Spiegel, 25/94).

### Hobo, Drunk, Poverty & Homelessness Songs & Poetry

Every year we plead pitifully for hobo songs, and rarely get any. Surely, readers would not want us to run out of them?

#### The Wabash Cannon Ball

Few people are aware that this is actually a hobo song, but attention to the words helps make it clear. For our foreign subscribers: the Wabash is the main river in Indiana, after which a railroad was named. The Wabash Cannonball was a train.

I stood on the Atlantic Ocean, on the wide Pacific shore  
 Heard the Queen of flowing mountains to the South Belle by the door  
 She's long, tall & handsome, she's loved by one & all  
 She's a modern combination called the Wabash Cannonball



Listen to the jingle, the rumble & the roar  
 Riding thru the woodlands, thru the hills & by the shore  
 Hear the mighty rush of engines, hear the lonesome hobo squall  
 Riding thru the jungles on the Wabash Cannonball

Now the eastern states are dandies so the western people say  
 From New York to St. Louis, & Chicago by the way  
 Thru the hills of Minnesota where the rippling waters fall  
 No chances can be taken on the Wabash Cannonball

Here's to Daddy Claxton, may his name forever stand  
 And will he be remembered thru parts of all our land  
 When his earthly race is over & the curtain round him falls  
 We'll carry him on to victory on the Wabash Cannonball

(Submitted by Karen Barker)

### Slave of the Bottle

What's in the bottle that keeps calling again and again,  
 and makes my life a misery and full of pain?  
 I don't want any more, but how can I help myself  
 When I see that coloured devil standing on the shelf?

"Go on! Go on! one more will do you good.  
 It will take away your worries and liven up your blood."  
 What's in that bottle that makes me feel so gay?  
 and yet it's the cause of my family going away.

I've lost my home and my job as well  
 but I can't get away from the bottle  
 that is putting me in hell.

I don't want any more but how can I help myself  
 When I see that coloured devil standing on the shelf?

(From Avoiding Institutions, by Nelson, Sternberg & Brindley, 1982)

### The Beggars' Plea

In a lengthy alliterative poem, entitled "The Hyeway to the Spyttell Hous," Robert Copeland in about 1536 described the many poor and handicapped people of the highways, byways, and hedgerows of his day in England. Here is an excerpt in which he relates how such street beggars pleaded passers-by for alms.

"Master, in the way of your good speed  
 To us all four, behold, where it is need;  
 And make this farthing worth a halfpenny\*  
 For the five joys of our Blessed Lady."

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\*A farthing was a quarter-penny. Apparently the speaker would show the person addressed a farthing and ask him to match it.



"Master, do what no man did this day  
On yon poor wretch, that rotteth in the way,  
For the one who died for us on a tree  
Let us not die for lack of charity."

### Lines

Lines...  
grits lines,  
soup lines,  
shower lines,  
shelter lines.  
Get in line to get your ticket.  
Lines...  
Grady card lines,  
X-ray lines,  
lab lines,  
examining lines,  
surgery lines.  
Take a number and wait in line.  
Stand in line...  
keep moving,  
slow down,  
stand still.  
Only cross between the lines.  
Something there is that doesn't love a line

(By Barbara Hamilton, in Hospitality, 4/93)

### Crime & Punishment

\*When the TIPS editor told incredulous people at workshops that not long hence they would hear machine guns on their streets, even he did not anticipate that the machine guns would be fired by children. The machine guns used on the US urban scene consist mostly of machine pistols and so-called assault rifles. In St. Louis, an 11-year old was found trying to bring one of the latter to school (SHJ, 19/11/93).

\*There are areas in many US cities where gunshots are so common--particularly at night--that no one bothers any longer to report them, or to investigate if anybody has been hurt (e.g., AP, in SHJ, 14/7/92).

\*It used to be that the police increasingly withdrew from dealing with lesser crimes in order to deal with more serious ones, such as burglary and violence; but now, in some bigger cities, the police no longer have the capacity to even deal with murders anymore, and process a large proportion of them very briefly and in a stereotyped fashion, and then more or less forget about the cases. Some cities cannot even send coroners to every murder scene anymore (Newsweek, 15/8/94). Accordingly, as societal violence increases every year, an increasing percentage of murders is going unsolved. There is also a whole new vocabulary of describing violence, including the phrase "intramural killings," in contrast to street violence.

\*In some cities, the court systems can hardly do any more than process guilty pleas, and bring only a tiny fraction of the rest of the cases to trial.



\*In many states, juvenile offenders can get away with murder. According to most state laws, they could blow up a city with a nuclear weapon and would still have to be released on their 21st birthday (Newsweek, 15/8/94). Many criminally-minded juveniles are fully aware of this and take deliberate advantage of it.

\*There is a new imperial vocabulary designed to cover up the collapse of the criminal justice system. Since so many more offenders are being sentenced to prisons than the prisons can hold, many more are being put on probation with all sorts of conditions attached to them, such as going into drug treatment or counseling, staying under house arrest, daily reporting, etc.--which however the culprits simply ignore. Ignoring a court's sentence has begun to be called being of "unsanctioned" status, though the term "non-compliance" may also still be used (Science, 6 May 94).

\*The US is not the only country where the justice system is breaking down because of an explosion of criminal cases brought before it. The same is happening in Germany. In 1992 alone, court loads increased by something like 16%, and individual courts are sometimes close to 7000 cases behind (AW, 13/12/93).

\*In Dade County alone, in which Miami is located, there were 30,000 wanted felons on the loose in 1993! (Time, 20/9/93). Yet people relentlessly keep moving to Florida because the life is "better" there, and wonder why they get killed when they go there for vacation.

\*A very high proportion of violence these days is connected with drugs, and as much with the drug business as with drugged people. Even the victims of violence often test positive for illegal drugs. In New York City, 31% of homicide victims alone have been testing positive for cocaine. The people who acquire guns in a criminal fashion have also begun to use deadlier bullets. Those who use guns on others have begun to fire an increasing number of shots. Another peculiar twist is that where people formerly used to shoot each other in the body, they then began to increasingly aim at the head, and most recently specifically at the face. Apparently, this gives the shooters an additional thrill (Newsweek, 15/8/94).

\*One handicapped man in a wheelchair, and a non-handicapped one in a wheelchair pretending to be handicapped, were arrested when they came back to New York from a Caribbean cruise with 58 pounds of marijuana hidden in their wheelchair seats and cushions (AP, in SHJ, 13/7/92).

\*In big cities, ambulance personnel seem to be increasingly likely to lift their patients' wallets on the way to the emergency service (Newsweek, 15/8/94).

\*It used to be that women in the US who committed violence committed it mostly against husbands, boyfriends, or their own children. The trend now is increasingly for women to commit violence against strangers. Furthermore, the number of female federal prisoners has grown faster than even the number of males (SHJ, 21/5/92).

\*More and more US business executives call the FBI because they are worried that disgruntled former employees might come back to the office and start gunning. The FBI's advice: fire employees "sensitively," and send problematic persons to counseling (Time, 11 April 94).

\*For some reason, so-called "stalking" has become very common in North America, and a great many people who get stalked end up being killed by their stalkers. At last, some states have begun to adopt anti-stalking laws that make it possible to put stalkers into prison and keep them there for a good while. Apparently, nothing else will deter stalkers.



\*One particular form of violent crime that has been on the increase is for criminals to invade homes and not merely seek valuables there but terrorize the residence. Apparently, the basic motive in this type of crime is the enjoyment of a domineering kind of violence rather than the acquisition of goods and money. This is underlined by the length of time that the invaders take to terrorize and torture the inhabitants when this is not to their own material advantage, and actually endangers them by making them more identifiable later and consuming precious get-away time (Maclean's, 18/4/94; source item from Zana Lutfiyya).

\*A new US crime practice, apparently particularly popular in the ghettos, is for passengers to pretend that they got injured when a public transport bus lurches or actually is involved in an accident. An increasing practice is for passers-by on the streets to quickly jump on such a bus as fast as they can and start emitting pain cries and calling for ambulances. Others who were never even on the bus later claim that they were, and file injury claims (Time, 30/8/93). In a police sting involving 10 fake bus crashes, each such "crash" produced fraudulent claims ranging between \$30,000 and \$400,000.

\*A relatively new crime in recent years has been social security number theft, with the thieves using the stolen number to get credit cards, bank accounts, etc., and use these for various fraudulent transactions. One woman discovered that somebody had acquired 16 credit cards in her name, and then ran up \$10,000 in charges. Somebody else discovered that 122 people from all over the US had been using her social security number. A significant proportion of the miscreants are illegal immigrants. (They probably couldn't help it.) It may take years for a person to discover that their social security number has been thusly stolen and fraudulently used, as when the Internal Revenue Service contacts them years later demanding taxes for transactions which the person never conducted, or when the person is getting around to start drawing a pension (SHA, 1 Sept. 91).

\*Theft of telephone numbers and cards is also big. In New York City, even the mayor and the police commissioner had huge phone bills run up by crooks who stole their cellular phone numbers and called relatives abroad (AP, in SHJ, 23/9/94). Just one racket ring working out of Spain stole 140,000 telephone credit card numbers with which \$140 million worth of long-distance calls were made. Another piracy ring stole 100,000 numbers for \$50 million calls (Newsweek, 14/11/94).

\*In the peculiar world of cyberspace and electronic bulletin boards, one can find not only an increasing amount of pornography, but also guidelines on how to commit all sorts of crimes, such as how to kill one's parents (AP, in SHJ, 14/3/94). Sometimes people communicate their plans for committing a crime to the electronic world before carrying them out.

\*A prime example of the intelligentsia proving scientifically what society wants is a British study reporting that violent video games do not breed violence among children (Newsweek, 20/12/93).

\*Richard Ramirez was a devil-worshipping serial killer who terrorized Los Angeles in the 1980s and was convicted of 13 slayings, though this may not have been the full number. Apparently despite--or because of--this, women have found something irresistibly intriguing about him because he has been visited by hundreds of young women in jail, often about 10 a week (AP, in SHJ, 24/7/91).

\*Before he was murdered in 11/94, Jeffrey Dahmer was in a Wisconsin prison for killing, dismembering, and sometimes devouring parts of 17 boys and men. Inexplicably, women from all over the world were writing to him too, many sending him money, sometimes considerable amounts. Altogether, by early 1994, he had received more than \$12,000 from letter-writers around the world (AP in SHJ, 7/94). How do feminists explain all this?



\*Right after World War II an Austrian prostitute had an illegitimate baby with a US soldier, and the child grew up in red-light culture. In his early 20s he murdered an 18-year-old woman and was put in prison. There, he began to write poems and novels--upon which Austrian intellectuals stupidly managed to get him released from prison. Right away, he began to engage in serial killing of prostitutes in Austria, Prague and Los Angeles. After being convicted of 9 such murders in 1994, he committed suicide (AW, 16/7/94). There are numerous instances in criminal history where bright and educated people thought that just because a criminal could talk or write well, he should not be in prison and/or that he was innocent and/or reformed.

\*Just about everybody has oodles of rights--except victims of crime who have no right to information about the crime, to be informed of the progress in a case, to be told about hearings, to be present and heard at criminal justice hearings, and be told about services available to them. At the same time, victims of crimes of violence or home invasion may suffer the same kind of lasting mental trauma as war veterans (Universitas, Summer 94).

\*A mugger in a NY City subway station attacked a 71-year-old man and nearly choked him to death, broke his glasses, bloodied his nose and tore his jacket. When 2 police officers came up, the mugger ran, and one of the officers shot him in the back and crippled him. The mugger sued and was awarded \$4.3 million, reduced to 3.1 by an appeals court. The outraged mugged man got nothing, and the mugger refused to share any of his new wealth with him (AP, in SHJ, 30/11/93).

\*It is a proven fact that a high proportion of people killed by police are shot in the back. Police and SWAT teams are very trigger-happy when it comes to mentally unbalanced people, who often are shot dead rather than being merely disabled. The police have now invented a new "syndrome" to account for people getting shot by police, namely, "police-assisted suicide." This refers to people who allegedly want to commit suicide but cannot bring themselves to kill themselves, and therefore confront police in a menacing fashion, usually with a gun in order to get themselves killed. A favorite tool of police for beating people has become the long-handled flashlight.

\*In Syracuse, 72% of its police officers do not live in the city which they are paid to protect. Among teachers, 60% live outside, as well as 52% of educational administrators. Also, the majority of new firefighters and sanitation workers live outside (SHJ, 21/5/92).

\*The police chief of New Haven, CT, was featured on CBS "60 Minutes" of 9 Jan. 94 for his innovative program in New Haven which allegedly managed to reduce the crime rates. Unfortunately, one of his recommendations is that much like families have family doctors, family dentists, family lawyers and family hairdressers, so there should be such a thing as a family police officer who becomes "part of one's extended family," and he wants police officers to function in the dual capacity of de facto social workers.

\*When the US House of Representatives passed a ban on "assault weapons" (machine guns), Newsweek (16/5/94) called it "a historic mental health bill."

\*In Munich, there has long been a "Shoot and Laugh Association." In America, we do it without forming a special organization for it, but we wager the Shoot and Laugh Association has better mental health.

### Judicial Killing

\*One crusader motto was, "kill them all, let God sort them out." Between 1900-1970, at least 23 people were put to death in the US for crimes which--it later turned out--they did not commit. Since 1973, an additional 42(!) were freed from death row when new evidence of their innocence surfaced (Time, 14/3/94).



\*As readers know, we are opposed to all forms of deathmaking, by any means, by any party, and for any reason whatever. But we can understand why people without such convictions derived from higher-order principles would increasingly call for the death penalty. For instance, a man who was convicted in 1982 after confessing to about 100 rapes, many of them committed in conjunction with burglary, was to be paroled by the governor of California in 1994 to a rural county, after serving only 12 years of a 25-year sentence. One of the women he had raped lived less than 10 miles from the place to which the man was to be paroled (SHJ, 21/3/94). Rather understandably, the local habitants said that they would find a way to kill this man if he was sent there (AP, in SHJ, 18/3/94). Citizens are beginning to realize that violence is becoming uncontrollable, that as victims they have few rights while the perpetrator has many, that the police, criminal justice and prison systems are collapsing and cannot protect them, and that the only certainty that a violent perpetrator will not do more of the same is to kill him/her.

\*Please give us a PC break! A young man in Texas clubbed a 62-year-old woman with a brick, raped her, and then ran her over with her own car. When he was executed for the crime, his attorney said that he got the death sentence only because he was a poor, young black man who had committed a crime against a white victim and could not afford his own lawyer (AP, in SHJ, 28/9/93).

\*The modern ways to kill people judicially are by no means as painless as claimed. A man who was being gassed to death in North Carolina screamed and thrashed for five minutes. However, modernism detoxifies the terror by making it inaudible to witnesses: the man had a leather mask put on his head, the windows to the gas chamber were double-panes, and there was no microphone to the witness chamber (Syracuse Post-Standard, 16/6/94).

\*When capital punishment resumed in the US in 1982, there were dramatic protest vigils, but they have declined to almost nothing. Some people believe that the use of lethal injection has much to do with this, because it lacks the drama of other forms of capital punishment (Time, 18/4/94).

\*The obscenities associated with capital punishment in the US have no bounds. In 1994, Texas executed a man on Easter Sunday (Time, 18/4/94). Traditionally, Friday had always been the killing day.

\*It was in the area of Buffalo, NY, that electrocution as the preferred mode of capital punishment was first strongly promoted, and implemented in 1890. At the same time, injection with prussic acid was considered, which is the same substance later used in Nazi concentration camps, but it was rejected because the medical profession did not want a medical tool (the hypodermic needle) used to a purpose contrary to the Hippocratic oath. All of this played a role in the battle between Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse about whether DC or AC current should be used in public utilities. Edison, the DC proponent, gleefully endorsed electrocution because it showed how lethal AC could be to people in their homes. Among the prime promoters were several physicians, one of whom, a Dr. Fell, also acted as an unofficial execution assistant. One of the medical proponents worked in psychiatry, and one of the other major proponents worked for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and had been a former Sunday-school superintendent. Fell said of the first victim that he "never suffered a bit of pain," and another physician proponent of electrocution proclaimed, "We live in a higher civilization from this day on." However, witnesses from the press interpreted the execution as a "revolting exhibition." Nonetheless, it soon became the favorite method in the US, in part because it represented a glamorous new technology.

But in truth, the victim's death was not so pretty at all, with convulsions, gurgles, a foaming mouth, bloody sweat, burning hair and skin, and a smelly release of feces. Furthermore, it turned out that after 15 seconds of electricity, he was still alive and had to be electrocuted all over again--and this is pretty much the story that has been ever since. One journalist called it "an official grill." Westinghouse said that they would have done better with an axe. However, what seemed to



convince the public was that at least the death was painless, though more gruesome to witnesses than certain other types of deaths. Soon, the electrician of Auburn prison, who eventually opposed capital punishment, was made the state's official electrocutioner, though his record 240 was eventually surpassed with 387 by one of his successors. (Invention & Technology, Spring 94).

### The Jail & Prison Scene

\*One of the undeclared functions of US prisons is to make prisoners dead. For instance, the local jail in Syracuse has the nation's highest rate of hepatitis A, a very high rate of TB, "epidemic" levels of syphilis and gonorrhea, a high AIDS rate (SHJ, 3/3/93), crowding in a building without windows--and guard brutality and a poverty of medical service that made national news. In California, 14% of inmates get raped, which is close to the national prison rate. AIDS is 14 times higher in prisons than in the population at large (Syracuse Post-Standard, 14/6/94).

\*In 1994, there were 1,022,000 people in US prisons--more than double than in 1984 (NBC TV News, 28/10/94; source item from Carol Flowers). As of 1992, there were about 82,000 people in US prisons for murder (CBS "60 Minutes," 9 Jan. 93).

\*More dangerous than extremely dangerous. Police were searching door to door in Bridgewater, MA, for two murderers who had escaped from a local prison. Classified as "extremely dangerous," they had been held in a medium security unit because the maximum security unit was filled with inmates considered even yet more violent (AP, in SHJ, 1 Nov. 93).

\*On any given day in 1993, about 100,000 juveniles in the US were in some kind of lock-up (Time, 19/9/94). In some states, juvenile murderers will get out at the latest by age 25.

\*California runs the largest juvenile prison system in the world, with 9,000 inmates in 11 institutions and 4 camps. These facilities are said to be dominated by gang warfare and run by brute force of pepper gas, surrounded by razor wire. Some inmates are as young as 12, but many are murderers, rapists and serious drug dealers (Newsweek, 4 July 94). When the gangs start making war against each other, the state uses huge aerosol fogging machines that spray mace or pepper gas into the fighting crowds. Some people have called the system "out of control." On the other hand, most people would prefer to see these unsocialized juveniles assault each other than the public or its helpless members.

\*A federal judge refused to return a prisoner with a drug problem back to the prison in the District of Columbia in which he had been caught using drugs, because drugs in that prison were as easy to get as on the city streets, being brought in by prison workers and visitors. The judge called the situation a "public scandal" (AP, in SHJ, 11/11/93).

\*There are more women in prison now than ever before, and the number is growing, mostly because of drugs. Their children end up shunted among relatives, foster homes, etc., and separated from their mothers for years at a time. Some prisons have instituted programs where mothers with babies can keep their babies with them in prison for up to one year--but if the mother's sentence is longer than one year, then the poor infant gets jerked away after having bonded with the mother! There are few drug rehab. programs for women in prison, so mostly they serve their sentences, which are longer than they used to be, and end up going back to the same way of life they led before they were incarcerated (Parade, 6 Feb. 94).

\*A peculiar paradox prevails in the California prison system in which half the prisoners are illiterate and have no more than a 4th grade education, in that there is hardly any educational or vocational preparation for jobs after prison, and yet a few prisoners receive training as deep-sea divers, which does not look like a very promising future. Also, hardly any public monies are allocated to deal with the prisoners' addiction to drugs and alcohol, while at the same time, court



decisions have mandated that self-declared trans-sexuals be given hormone treatments to enhance the gender identity characteristics of their "choice" (CBS "60 Minutes," 26/12/93).

\*A survey in New York State showed that citizens were most approving of state spending on school aid, health care for the elderly, and aid to municipalities. They were least favorable to (in fact, they were outright furious about) perks given to prison inmates, state bureaucrats and state office holders. Among the perks that incensed them was that the state was paying for fertility drugs for female state prisoners so as to help these women conceive during conjugal visits with their husbands or boyfriends. The state also had been paying for hormone drug treatment of male prisoners who wanted larger breasts and less hair. Prisoners who demanded such treatment said that taking on secondary female sex characteristics puts them in a favorable position with powerful inmate leaders. The state has also paid for sex change operations for inmates. The state claims that court decisions had forced it to do such things (SHJ, 8 Dec. 91).

\*As of 1993, prison guards in California were the best-paid in the nation, with an average of \$60,000 (CBS "60 Minutes," 26/12/93).

\*Occasionally, the media publish listings of the locales with the highest ratio of unattached men or women, with the implication that this is where members of the opposite sex should go to find a spouse. However, women are advised not to move to the area of Brazoria, Texas, merely because in 1993 it had one of the highest concentrations of single men in the nation--on account that this is due only to five state prisons being in the area.

\*As of 1993, inmates in a Pennsylvania state prison were serving on the average only 20% of their sentences before being paroled, and 51% of violent offenders were discharged in 2 years or less. On the average, prisoners served only 5.5 years for murder, 3 for rape, 2.25 for robbery and 1.28 for assault (Newsweek, 13/9/93).

\*When the Phoenix, Arizona, jail got terribly overcrowded, the Pentagon donated 37(!) tents (Newsweek, 16/8/93).

\*There are at least 13 periodicals in the US published in prisons by prisoners for prisoners that are intended for circulation beyond that of intra-prison newsletters (Tools for Empowerment Supplement, 1993).

\*In 10/93, the governor of Kentucky issued an order that prohibited the use of local jails for holding mentally disordered individuals who had no charges pending against them. Whether this will make things better or worse for mentally disordered people remains to be seen.

\*A prison in Manchester, England, has the strange name Strangeways.

### The Family--and the Lack of it

\*As of 1993, single-parent families constituted 24.5% of all "white" families with children, and 63% of "black" families, which is an almost double increase since 1970 for the latter, and more than double for the former (AP, in SHJ, 10 Aug. 94).

\*About one divorced mother in four has been denying her divorced husband his legal visitation rights (SHJ, 27/2/94).

\*Who would have thought that there is such a thing as a Step Family Association of America?



\*When parents relinquish their rights over their children so that they can be placed for adoption, there is no requirement that they be told some of the things that might happen to their child, such as that the child might be given to a homosexual "couple" for adoption (SHJ, 19/10/93).

\*The authorities in charge of running the International Year of the Family were unable to come to agreement on a definition for "family" (Weekend Australian, 4 Dec. 93; source item from Peter Millier).

\*Reflecting liberal and political correctness ideology, the Democratic party and the Clinton administration have been consistently profoundly hostile to everything pertaining to the family, implementing or maintaining many specific measures consistent with this attitude and policies. It is, therefore, the height of hypocrisy for Vice President Gore to preside over a national family conference in 7/94.

\*In a TV show achieving popularity in 1994, called "My So-Called Life," mothers and daughters are portrayed as in ongoing (though not unalleviated) conflict. One 15-year-old girl, the main character says, "lately, I can't even look at my mother without wanting to stab her repeatedly." This is apparently supposed to appeal to viewers.

\*Despite the fact that mothers have increasingly been holding jobs (about 70% in 1992 as compared to about 30% a generation earlier), they claim that they are nonetheless spending "at least the right amount" of time with their children, and even more than their own parents had spent with them (AP, in SHJ, 30/11/93). There seems to be a lot of self-deception going on.

\*When we saw a newspaper headline, "Widow has More in Common with Divorced or Single Mothers" (SHA, 24/4/94), we suspected this as yet another media assault on the family, insofar as the situation of a woman who has lost a beloved and wanted husband to death is entirely different in the vast majority of cases from the two other kinds of situations. In a sense, being a single or divorced mother was being "upgraded" to the same level as being a widowed mother.

\*TV shows have been prettifying up the situation of children without parents by running several series (e.g., "On Our Own," "Party of Five") in which children are managing quite nicely on their own without parents.

\*However, even the anti-family people are finally admitting that children raised without fathers are more likely to drop out of high school, abuse drugs, beget children out of wedlock during their teen years, and end up in trouble with the law. They are also at higher risk of being physically or sexually abused, and to have emotional problems, with all of these childhood problems continuing to exert detrimental influences through the rest of their lives. They are even more prone to accidents and injuries (Newsweek, 31/10/94).

\*We have also noticed that only now are people in psychology and family services beginning to admit that the breakdown of the traditional family is a major cause of all sorts of social problems.

\*Die-hard anti-family propagandists are claiming that it is not absence of fathers that is the big problem, but too many mothers who are too young (Newsweek, 20/9/94).

\*One is amazed what TV critics consider to be "almost a break-through" in the realistic portrayal of wholesome family life. It is represented by "Laurel Avenue," revolving around a middle-aged, middle class "black" couple with 6 children by various marriages, and the assorted spouses and children of these children, including a single mother trying to get her life back together after drug addiction (when she arrives stoned at a family gathering, her relatives rally around her), a man lured into a steroid-fencing scheme, a high school basketball star with a bad attitude, and a teenager falling in with the wrong street crowd (Time, 12 July 93). We suspect that TV critics



consider this a healthy family life because they don't have one, or in order to denigrate families that are healthy.

\*In 6/94, the Illinois Supreme Court invalidated a completed legal adoption, which is apt to inject total chaos into the adoption culture, and discourage many people from wanting to adopt (Newsweek, 11 July 94). We interpret this as yet another assault on the integrity of the family, and as an expression of hatred toward it.

### The Destruction of Children

\*A series of articles from the Toronto Star (10 April 94) on "children of conflict" around the world (in South Africa, Bosnia, Palestine, Vietnam) is a horror story of what happens to children in the midst of war and other violence. Some of the children become full of hate and violence themselves, while others become traumatized and fearful, and yet others become noble and good. Interestingly, a director of a US program for ghetto youths who went to Bosnia said US kids are in worse shape, even despite the war in Bosnia, because US kids have experienced so much rejection and abandonment, which the Bosnian children haven't even in the midst of their societal collapse. Also interestingly, much of this is interpreted in psychological terms (probably in part because that's who the reporters talk to), and that "psychological help" is needed in response, rather than an ordinary life where they are safe and not surrounded by violence. (Source item from Joe Osburn.)

\*Project Head Start was designed by a committee in only 6 weeks in 1967, but has been running ever since. In recent years, Head Start personnel have been overwhelmed by the problems of the children and their families, such as alcoholism, family violence, mental disturbance, etc., which is why some people started referring to the 1960s as "the good old days" of poverty, before it started getting real ugly. But there are still people who think that Project Head Start can be a major solution to these problems.

About the same time Head Start was designed (in 1967), Project Follow Through was created to help extend gains achieved by children at risk during their early primary grades, and to provide opportunities for comparative research on the effectiveness of various early childhood curriculum models. More than \$100 million of government money was spent on the evaluation of Project Follow Through, this having been the largest sum ever spent on an educational evaluation, and apparently almost all of it was wasted because of the shaky on-and-off-again history of the project.

\*The number of foster children in the US has doubled, to 442,000, in the past 10 years. As a group, they receive the worst health care of any American children. About 50% are under the age of 6, and 40% of the total spend more than 2 years in temporary homes (Time, 27/1/92).

\*In Cook County in which Chicago is located, the public guardian now represents 31,000 children, but less than 1 per 1,000 gets freed for adoption. The situation is so desperate that parents who abuse their children and have them taken away from them have these children returned to deadly home situations again and again after abuse after abuse. The public guardian is deeply indignant because liberals, imbued with romantic notions about the poor, are blocking all sorts of adaptive measures. He has said that sexual and physical assault that once taxed the imagination have become normative, and drugs play a role in 80% of his caseload (Newsweek, 25/4/94). All this is yet another expression of a phenomenon to which we have pointed many times, namely, the people of modernism losing their competency for propagation, and losing it biologically, socially, mentally and intellectually.

\*To most people today who are not familiar with King James Bible idiom, the phrase, "suffer little children" would sound like "suffer, little children!" (the way things commonly are today) rather than conveying Christ's message to "suffer little children to come unto me" (Matthew 10:14, Luke 18:16).



### Depreciation of Children Expressed in Hatred of Reproduction

We have been teaching that resentment of children, mistreatment of children, and hatred of reproduction go hand-in-hand. The Germans call it Kinderfeindlichkeit, or enmity toward children.

\*Nearly half of all German couples do not have children (Newsweek, 16/12/91). Between 1989 and 1992, the East German birth rate fell by 60%, and the marriage rate by 65%. Such dramatic declines are ordinarily only seen in history during times of war. Apparently, reunification brought about an explosion of anti-family ideology (Context, 15/9/94).

\*Because of the awful way in which children are being treated in Germany, a new law required that children be informed of their rights in kindergarten, and encouraged to report parental transgressions of these rights (Newsweek, 16/12/91).

\*When about 40,000 children were abandoned in Romania around 1990, an explanation widely carried in the media and even professional periodicals was that this was largely due to the previous communist regime having outlawed birth control. Even the News & Notes newsletter of the American Association on Mental Retardation (11&12/91) repeated this story.

\*Pakistan's prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, a staunch advocate of contraception, had her fourth baby in 1994, revealing once again that semi-enforced contraception is intended mostly for the poor.

\*In 1994, the legislature of NY State allocated \$26.3 million for pregnancy prevention and abortion, and \$5.2 million for prenatal care and breast cancer (WI, 8/94; source item from Ann O'Connor).

\*Poor nations seem to know something good about reproduction, while many modernistic developed ones are committing a form of geno-suicide. Any nation or culture with a reproduction rate below replacement is on a vector towards disappearance, as a good number of Western nations are. What is keeping their population from declining is immigration, often from ethnically totally different and reproductively more vigorous sources that may one day totally replace the native population. One of several examples is Croatia, which despite its Catholic roots has a very high abortion rate and a very low birth rate. What complicates the demographics of such societies further is that their populations are aging, which usually means a crumbling of the infrastructure which cannot be maintained without a significant proportion of a population being of highly productive adulthood (NC Register, 7 Aug. 94).

\*No ethnic group in Western history has been as intimately identified with the exaltation of fecundity as Judaism. Yet American Jews now have such a low rate of reproduction that they do not even replace themselves, i.e., they have a negative growth rate, and only conversion is keeping them from the imminence of extinction (BR, 12/93).

\*An Egyptian peasant woman went to a health clinic and was asked whether she was pregnant. She replied, "No, we know pregnancy is an evil now." She had been given Depo-Provera injections (not approved for this purpose in developed countries), and her 20-year-old daughter had an IUD, which is an abortifacient (Time, 26/9/94). The headline under which this was reported was "More Power to Women."

### The Collapse of Finance, Society & Polity in the US & Elsewhere, & The Ascendancy of Military Rule

We have a very serious forecast to make. Americans need to brace themselves for the fact that according all rational calculations, as well as wise insight into the signs of the times, American society will continue to rapidly deteriorate in all of its domains. All the expressions and



ramifications of this deterioration are difficult to foresee, but are likely to include the following: alienation between the genders; increasing domestic violence; increasing violence in public places; increasing violent crimes in general; increasing corruption in public life; further decline in the capacity of the courts and prison systems to deal with crime; increases in epidemic diseases, both old and new, some of which could assume catastrophic proportions and wreak unimaginable chaos; declining capacity of governments and legislatures to deal with problems; disorders and collapses in financial structures; further decreases in reproductive competency and family integrity; increasing deathmaking of devalued people; a further diversion of public education away from academics and toward dealing with life and social problems, but with hardly any success. As we have warned for years, in the midst of all this, there will be one institution that will retain more functionality than any of the others, and that will be the military, with all that that entails.

Other societies must be expected to experience many or all of these developments as well. In fact, readers in other countries are warned that this forecast is not irrelevant to them, for at least 2 reasons. (a) The same general trends are at work everywhere in developed nations, though we have noted--e.g., in England and Germany--that there is much denial of this, just as there is still much denial even in the midst of all this in the US, especially among the privileged classes who are insulated from many disfunctionalities. (b) Even if other countries were experiencing less collapse of their social fabric, a collapse of American society will take much of the world down with it.

The societal collapses that we are seeing happening all over the world actually have 2 phases. The first one is the collapse of polity and comity, with a country becoming more or less ungovernable, and perhaps dissolving in chaotic violence; the second phase is people then turning to extremes that promise drastic solutions. We are currently seeing such extremist movements arising in Russia and Italy, to mention just 2 obvious examples.

A breakdown in civil order and public safety in any country usually ushers in military rule--for better or for worse. When the body count goes up, concern with constitutional safeguards comes down. As one elderly resident of a public housing project put it, "a dead person don't have no constitutional rights" (*Newsweek*, 18/4/94). The fact that spending for actual or potential wars has distorted the US economy for decades has itself been an expression of the control of the military.

On the one hand, the advent of military rule is ominous; on the other hand, the collapse of an imperial and oppressive arrangement is good news, even if it means new bad structures will replace it. One must see both sides of the coin.

### Financial Collapse

So far, many of the signs of world financial collapse have involved a massive transfer of wealth from the lower to the higher social strata, but eventually, the crumbling of the world and financial order will catch up with the higher strata as well, and leave many in poverty, betrayed by their own betrayals.

With the signs of a world financial collapse coming ever faster and more ominous, we hereby offer the following (cheap!) advice. (a) Embrace voluntary poverty before becoming involuntarily poor. If this is not an acceptable option at this time, we recommend that people (b) keep some cash on hand in small denominations, (c) buy some gold coins or other small items of precious jewelry, (small, so as to be able to hide them, sew them into one's clothes, and flee with them), (d) always keep their shelves well stocked with things that they would buy later anyway (staples, soap, and above all, toilet paper), (e) put what money they have in more than one bank, and even in more than one state, (f) buy a bit of land on which to grow a garden when the time comes, and (g) every house would also be well advised to have one stove installed in which wood, and possibly other substances, could be burned.

\*Some members of the World Future Society consider it "extremely likely" that there will be a world-wide economic collapse in the next few years.

\*During the 1970s and 1980s, US banks were allowed to lend out eight times more money than they had on reserve. In 1992, the limit was raised so that now, they can lend out 10 times more.



This, of course, makes the financial market even more fragile than it already was and is. It is rather ironic that banks can charge interest on non-existing wealth.

\*All sorts of financial papers, sometimes also called financial instruments (stocks, bonds, futures, etc., etc.) are called "derivatives" because they are paper derivatives of the real assets in money, real estate, machinery, etc., for which they stand. We are amazed to learn that in addition, there is an entire computer-based paper market (though largely based on computer data and transactions) of speculation that other assets, including other derivatives, will increase or decrease in value. For instance, there are options to buy or sell securities. This tertiary market involves transactions that are 3 times the value of all the stocks they represent, and twice the size of the gross domestic product of the US. There are also speculations based on how currencies and interest rates will change. These sorts of side bets involve securities worth 30 times the value of what actually underlies them. In other words, more and more, the financial market is based on nothing. Yet further, organizations that trade in these ephemeral often have no idea what is going on or even how much risk they have outstanding. In yet other words, the financial market has become largely a pretend market. Many banks involved in these speculations are thusly very much at risk, and even Time (11 April 94) has interpreted all this as a sure-fire prescription for a financial market collapse of incredible proportion, and with consequences that could shake the foundations of the world economic system. In 1994, a firm sued Bankers Trust for \$73 million, claiming the latter had invested its money deceptively in derivatives. Proctor and Gamble lost \$102 million speculating in currency derivatives. Some people say the derivatives situation is the next savings and loan crisis in the making (Newsweek, 14/12/94).

\*Brazil is one of the biggest countries in the world. As of 1990, it had 150 million people, and even though it is in some respects one of the richest countries in the world, 70% of them were poor, the country had \$115 billion in foreign debts, and inflation was zipping along at 100,000% annually. It is things like these which are apt to contribute not long hence to disasters such as war, pestilence, or collapse of the financial world order.

Other countries with big financial problems and scandals include mighty Japan itself.

\*Further evidence of the crumbling of the world's financial institutions is that Lloyd's of London has been tottering on the edge of bankruptcy since ca. 1991. It turns out that one of several reasons is insurance firms all over the world mindlessly circle-insuring each other, e.g., firm A insured itself with firm B against going under, B with C, C with D, and so on fifty times around until firm 49 is reached...which insures itself with Firm A. When any one firm has huge losses, it takes the whole circle down with it--and there have been many huge losses due to natural disasters in recent years.

\*Of the 75 largest US metropolitan areas, 56 have been on the economic skids in 1990 (USN&WR, 29/10/90).

\*According to the General Accounting Office which does investigative work on behalf of Congress, more than \$150 billion(!) in federal funds were lost in 1989 to program waste, fraud or mismanagement. Just imagine how many oil wars could be fought with such wasted money (AP, in SHJ, 30/8/90).

\*President Bush had been referring to the economic recession of 1990/91 as "the temporary interruption of the longest economic expansion in history" (Time, 18/2/91)

#### Other Signs of Societal Collapse, & Military Ascendancy

\*In 1993, William Bennett authored a 23-page "Index of Leading Cultural Indicators" with 53 tables and charts of US trends between 1960 and 1990 in domains such as crime, poverty, natality,



family, education, drugs and TV viewing. One would think that these data would silence just about everybody who either claimed that things were getting better, or at least not worse.

\*Across the Missouri River from St. Louis is the city of East St. Louis, which has always been a bit slummy. By 1991, 65% of its population of 41,000 were on public assistance, and the city had one of the highest per capita murder rates. Virtually all municipal services had broken down, and garbage had not been collected for four years (Newsweek, 19/8/91).

\*The idolatrous nature of the US military establishment has been underlined by the fact that despite the crumbling of the military strength of the Russians, the Pentagon has continued to demand huge increases in its budget.

\*Drug import interception by the Pentagon was called by Newsweek (31/5/93) the "Southern Command's new war."

\*US law enforcement agencies have moved to deploy military personnel to conduct court-authorized wiretaps on Asian-speaking suspects (SHJ, 6 Dec. 93).

\*In 10/93, the mayor of Washington, DC, asked the federal government to send in the National Guard to help police the city against crime, saying it was a "problem of extraordinary proportions" (SHJ, 23/10/93). Actually, there had already been several instances in which the National Guard was called to the help of local police who were overwhelmed by street crime, as for instance in Sumter, SC and Puerto Rico, not to mention riots such as those in Los Angeles. While the president did not comply, we see this as yet another step toward military dictatorship that we have long warned is in progress in the US, and that we think is almost inevitable sometime in the future.

\*A guest columnist in the 25/5/92 issue of Newsweek proposed that the US military should begin to run a job training corps.

\*Fort Hood in Texas is the largest military base in the US. Because of military cutbacks, local people in the nearby community were "losing hope" until they thought of developing a special theme park, Fort Fantasy, to which people--including children--come to engage in mock warfare (Nonviolent Activists, 1&2/93; source item from Karen Barker).

\*Yet another way in which some people are trying to deploy the military to solve the nation's domestic problems is by incorporating community service projects into regular military training, as advocated by Senator Nunn (AP, in SHJ, 24/6/92).

\*Local army and air national guard units put into place plans to start immunizations, dental screening and physical examinations to Syracuse school district pupils who would not otherwise be able to afford it (SHJ, 20/10/93). Members of a fighter wing have also been building playgrounds in depressed areas of Syracuse--wearing their uniforms (SHJ, 27/8/93).

\*The imperial powers manage to accumulate ever more ways of identifying and tracking their citizens via identification numbers, social security, identification papers, etc. Now a new onslaught on anonymity is developing, with imperial powers collecting genetic identification material, by which a citizen will be able to be identified in the future regardless of other papers and even fingerprints. The lead has been taken by the US Defense Department which is planning to collect such information on every person in uniform (AP, in SHJ, 11 Jan. 92). Unfortunately, the increasing capacity of the imperial powers to track and practice surveillance of citizens either plays into the hands of totalitarianism, or is a symptom of its development. In 1994, we learned for the first time that all sorts of stores and businesses have installed hidden microphones. For instance, it was disclosed that of 500 Dunkin' Donuts in Massachusetts, 300 had audio monitoring installed. The firm claimed to do this to monitor employees, but the question is then why guest tables were bugged.



Shops that have such systems are supposed to display small stickers on a door saying "audio monitoring on the premises" (AP, in SHJ, 27/5/94).

\*A US federal bill to fund mass immunization of children would have included a provision to issue every child at birth a federal registration number on a magnetized card that would also contain a computerized face photo and up to 1600 pages of medical records that the person would carry around for life (SHJ, 12 May 93).

\*Many people have still not woken up to the fact that the US tax reform act of 1986 required, starting with the 1987 tax returns, that children age 5 and older must have social security numbers if claimed as a dependent (source material from Hank Bersani). We warned of this kind of encroachment by the government years ago when university students began to be given grades according to social security number, but were pooh-poohed even (or most of all) by most fellow members in the TIPS editor's university department.

\*Perhaps for both better as well as for worse, US citizens' cooperation with the national census every 10 years has declined steadily. The populations of city centers with heavy concentrations of poor and minority people are particularly uncooperative (Science, 31/5/91). In part, this is a healthy resistance against any form of tracking and surveillance by imperial powers.

\*One of the peculiarly manipulative rules of the US Census Bureau during its 1990 data collection was that field workers were to list any occupied dwelling as "vacant" if they were unable to determine the number of people who were living there. Of course, field workers would have the greatest difficulty determining who the occupants were in many of the dwellings of the poor, both because occupancy is so fluid, and because the poor will often not divulge to the authorities what is going on. For instance, the residential situation of ghetto adult males is notoriously ambiguous (SHJ, 13/7/90). This kind of distortion can, of course, also serve all sorts of functions to the imperial powers.

\*Another ominous sign for the future of democracy in the US is that as of 1994, the media said that the single most respected figure in American public life was a general, namely Colin Powell.

\*Apparently, there is a breakdown in public safety in Germany. At least one big reason is that Germany has one of the most liberal immigration policies in the world, and is overrun by people from everywhere else, and a very large proportion of street crimes are committed by these newcomers. This is another example of the assimilation capacity of a social system being overwhelmed. Also, much as US police will commonly not respond to calls from slum areas, so does the German police often stand by idly when violence breaks out in public places. And in true imperial manner, the German press has commonly not reported such instances of violence and the withdrawal of the police forces from the protection of citizens. The social climate in German schools is apparently also rapidly deteriorating. One consequence of the much-hailed attainment of coeducation is that the boys now have girls galore around them to molest in school, and even women teachers are sexually molested by male students. In some schools, boys routinely address girls as "whores," and this custom is even expanding downward into elementary schools (AW, 26/2/92). One of the many ways in which people in Germany have begun to relieve their tensions is to go on overpasses over expressways and throw heavy objects onto the passing cars below, which often kills or maims motorists, damages cars, or at least scares the wits out of the drivers. The perpetrators are usually young men, some with frustrations or anger about their lives.

\*Apparently, more people with weapons have tried to board airplanes in Frankfurt than anywhere else. In 1993 prospective passengers were relieved of 1345 guns, over 42,000 knives, 3800 axes, 200 hand tools for beating or killing other people, 182,000 rounds of ammunition, 3 hand grenades, and 5900 explosive devices or detonaters. Furthermore, all of this is a very dramatic increase over just the previous year (AW, 29/1/94).



### War, & the "Fruits" of War

As we pointed out in some depth in a previous December issue, war is the opposite of the works of mercy.

\*Now about 75 years after WWI, an estimated 12 million live artillery shells lie still embedded around the French fortress of Verdun, the "blood pump" of WWI, and millions elsewhere in France alone, plus millions of bombs and shells from WWII. Since 1946, 630 ammunition removers have died. Many areas are still off-limits to the population, and even areas declared cleared still yield quite a steady stream of discoveries. In 1991 alone, 36 French farmers died at their work when they inadvertently set off old ammunition from both WWI and II, and 51 other people were injured. The French government pretends that things are less dangerous than they are, because otherwise, "citizens would be alarmed if they knew how many bombs were still spread across our country" (Smithsonian, 2/94).

\*More and more, it is becoming apparent that during the Vietnam War, the US government, needing cannon fodder, enlisted about 100,000 men who failed the armed forces qualification test. Many of these men were actually mentally retarded, and not surprisingly, they were much more likely to become casualties (e.g., Syracuse Herald American, 26/6/94).

\*It is estimated that up to 80% of the children in Vietnam during the war who were orphaned and under a year of age died (Newsweek, 7 Nov. 94).

\*All in all, there is a campaign of genocide going on in the Sudan in which the dominantly Arabic northern Sudanese are trying to destroy the primarily Negro south Sudanese who also happen to be predominantly Christian. Among other things, there are reports that about 30,000 children were robbed from families in the south of the Sudan, and sold as slaves to Arabic families (AW, 22/1/94).

\*Angola was once the breadbasket of Southern Africa, but is now a basket case after about 20 years of civil wars (AP, in SHJ, 14/10/93).

\*It has been proposed to combat the horrors of Rwanda's civil war by sending in family planning educators, teach equal rights for women, and "choice" (Time, 16/5/94).

\*An Africa expert said in 1994 that the end of the cold war was the worst thing that ever happened to Africa (Newsweek, 25/4/94). It made the developed nations lose interest in Africa.

### Preparations for More War

\*Despite the end of the cold war, at least 55% of the 1994 US research & development budget was still being spent on "defense."

\*In FY 1993, US arms exports set a new record of \$30 billion, with more weapons being sold to developing countries than all other nations combined, and amounting to 57% of the Third World arms market. Arms spending in 1992 equalled 49% of the combined income of the world population! The US is now the top arms seller in the world. One is amazed at the hypocrisy that claims that overpopulation is the problem while, at the same time, these facts are not mentioned (Casa Cri, 9/94; AP, in SHJ, 31/3/94).

\*The US and other countries gave Pakistan money to build nuclear bombs (AP, in SHJ, 13/10/93). Then the US sold 38 F-16 jets to Pakistan, expecting that in a war with India, these jets will be used to drop nuclear bombs on India. Washington claims it sold the jets so that Pakistan will not build additional bombs beyond the 10-15 it now has (Time, 11 April 94).



\*What goes around comes around. The US has helped China beef up its nuclear capacity and its missile delivery system--and screamed "uncle" when the Chinese sold weapons, missiles and nuclear capacities to countries adversarial to the US (Newsweek, 4/4/94; Time, 25/5/94).

\*Us firms have been selling anyone with money gadgets that afford cheap access to the US-government-run satellite "global positioning system" which allows perfect military targeting (CBS "60 Minutes," 26/12/93).

\*Plutonium will need to be secured against theft and diversion for about 25,000 years, and yet already now, the Russian plutonium stocks are leaking like a sieve onto the black market (Time, 29/8/94).

\*In 1964, the GI Joe toy was brought on the market and became a very popular children's toy. During the mounting opposition to the Vietnam War, its popularity plummeted and the toy was taken off the market in 1978. It came back with Reagan and the jingoism of his era in 1982, and within a year became the best-selling toy in the US. Soon, the doll and its accessories were coupled with TV cartoons of a very violent nature, and sales of war toys in general increased 700% between 1982-1987, remaining roughly on this peak. The violence in corresponding cartoons also increased. War cartoons of the 1960s and 70s contained an average of 20 violent acts per hour, which increased to 48 in the late 1980s, and with GI Joe perpetrating 84 acts per hour. Amazingly, there are people--even supposed experts--who believe that children can watch 84 acts of violence per hour on children's programs for hour after hour, day after day and year after year, and not be affected by it (CW, 10/94).

### The Peculiar World War III, & Some of Its Fruits

\*Even after WWII began in 1990, Germany was still shipping nuclear technology to Iraq (SHJ, 11 Dec. 91).

\*One of the funny aspects of WWII is that Iraq had bought a large quantity of fake plastic weaponry (planes, tanks, artillery, etc.) and deployed these around the country. Sure enough, the allies used vast amounts of ammunition to destroy these, thinking them to be real. It is also amusing that there are no legal restrictions anywhere on the sale of these dummy weapons, and many other countries have also been buying them (AW, 23/9/92).

\*One wonderful outcome of what we call World War III is that in much of the world, there was a significant decline in gasoline prices (Parade, 29/3/92).

### Religion & Society

\*There is a Christian acclamation that goes "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again." The Russian communists long ago coined their own version of this: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live."

\*A California biotechnology firm working on embryo development named itself Genesys, after the book of the Bible that relates the creation of the human (Discover, 12/1994, p. 24).

\*In Summer 1993, Vogue magazine declared that "spiritual equanimity is only a credit card receipt away." People used to call this sort of thing the idolatry of Mammon.

\*The World Council of Churches published a book of verses by a Malaysian poet that includes the following:

We blind mice  
We blind mice



See what we've done  
 See what we've done  
 We all ran after  
 Progress's wife  
 She cut off our heads  
 With Development's knife  
 Have you ever seen  
 Such fools in your life  
 As we blind mice?

\*The ancient Greeks, being very open-minded and inclusive, had monuments to "the unknown God." Equal inclusiveness has recently reached Washington, DC, with the appearance of the "Church of All Denominations" (FI, 2/94).

\*The Unitarian Universalists have given preliminary approval to including pagan, earth-centered, American ("native") Indian and other elements into their own religious principles (SHJ, 2 July 94).

\*If one had told people as recently as 1970, and of course anyone before that, that there were such things as "inclusive Bibles" and "non-inclusive Bibles," they would have had no idea whatever what one was talking about. Most likely, people would have guessed that inclusive Bibles included the Apocrypha, i.e., the books considered canonical by Catholics but not by Protestants. Of course, this grotesque euphemism refers to Bibles that have or have not been edited to virtually eliminate male pronouns and references to God as "father." Soon it will be difficult to buy a Bible that is not thusly edited, and it could get to the point where the only way people who do not know Hebrew or Greek could find out the original wording would be to find a very old Bible.

\*A number of court rulings in the US have said that public religious displays or statements are permissible as long as they no longer carry religious meaning. For example, the motto "In God We Trust" on US paper currency is permissible because it has lost its religious meaning. Creche displays on government properties are permissible for the same reason. Recitation of the "pledge of allegiance" in schools, with its phrase "...one nation under God..." is permissible "because it has lost through rote repetition any significant content" (AP, in SHJ, 1 June 93). In other words, anything that is meaningless is ok, but if people said what they meant, or meant what they said, it would be unconstitutional.

\*The good news is that 76% of Americans think that the US is in a moral and spiritual decline, and 77% of them blame breakdown of the family. The bad news is that 20% think there is no such decline (Newsweek, 13/6/94). Strangely enough, 54% of the very same sample of people thought that Michael Jordan was an excellent role model for young people today, not far behind Billy Graham and Colin Powell, underlining once again just how confused and schizophrenic the American public is.

\*In an (apparently 1993), survey, "black" children gave as many votes to basketball player Michael Jordan as to God as their role models (AP, in SHJ, 21/6/94). Jordan was also most often mentioned as the most-admired athlete, his decadent life notwithstanding.

\*A survey of 1994 graduates of Catholic colleges and universities tabulated their "personal heroes." Personal friends ranked No. 3, ML King No. 4, the Pope No. 6, Jesus Christ No. 8 (with only 8%), Clinton and Michael Jordan in 12th place, and God with many others tied in 14th place (Context, Nov. 94).

\*As far as we know, humans have always considered some places blessed and holy, and others cursed and evil. Soon after cities arose, the idea also arose that some cities were holy. Jerusalem,



Benares, and Mecca are examples familiar to most readers. But there are also cities considered evil--entry holes into the underworld. Sodom, Gomorrah, and Babylon were ancient examples. New York is a contemporary one. Mohammed said that the end of the world was close when there would be "a construction of tall buildings," perhaps in allusion to the tower of Babel.

\*The eye of God? Under Saddam Hussein, the symbol of the Iraq Secret Police was an eye superimposed on a map of Iraq.

\*Walter Brueggeman pointed out that conservatives in our society call for greater sexual discipline, while liberals call for greater economic discipline. He said that the two disciplines should always be linked, but of course we know that neither conservatives nor liberals want to link their discipline to the other.

\*In the US population, church-goers generally have positive things to say about their pastors, such as that they are major factors in helping them sort out not only spiritual but sometimes also secular issues. In contrast, the TV media depict church leaders mostly as useless and irrelevant, and sometimes outright as rogues and objects of ridicule, with shallow minds and little influence in life (AP, in SHJ, 25/9/93).

\*Religious people are often interpreted as bigoted, closed-minded and prejudiced. However, a 1993 book, The Pursuit of Happiness, has reviewed an overwhelming body of research that religious people are generally happier than non-religious ones, commit less crimes, have fewer prejudices, engage in more altruistic acts, and possess greater overall mental and physical health.

\*Traditionally, anti-Jewish sentiments have been highest among the poorer and less educated classes. However, in the US "black" community, the opposite is the case.

\*Walter Brueggeman quoted a Jewish rabbi who was in Auschwitz where he said, "here, all ten commandments are violated." Accordingly, a later interpreter said that wherever all ten commandments are violated, one has an Auschwitz.

\*According to the Christian Bible, Christ said that it would be as difficult for the rich to get to heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. However, in a survey of Americans, 99% of people with a household income of more than \$50,000 a year who said they believed that there was a heaven thought that they would end up in it! But even regardless of income, very few people thought that they would end up in hell (AP, in SHJ, 2 Aug. 93). We suspect that a lot of people will be very surprised.

\*In the US, agnostics, Jews and Unitarians have the highest household incomes, but Hindus have the highest employment rate, followed by agnostics and New Agers. (Presumably, being unemployed makes one religious.) The highest rate of home ownership is found among The Brethren and congregationalists (Newsweek, 29/11/93).

\*More and more churches are experiencing vandalism and burglary. Many have installed security systems, some are hiring security personnel, and some designate certain members to provide security during services.

#### \*Exit God

Of old our fathers' God was real,  
 Something they almost saw,  
 Which walked the narrow path of right,  
 Most vigilantly well,  
 Because they feared eternal night  
 And boiling depths of Hell.



Now Hell has wholly boiled away  
 And God become a shade.  
 There is no place for him to stay  
 In all the world he made.

The followers of William James  
 Still let the Lord exist,  
 And call him by imposing names,  
 A venerable list.

But nerve and muscle only count,  
 Gray matter of the brain,  
 And an astonishing amount  
 Of inconvenient pain.

I sometimes wish that God were back  
 In this dark world and wide;  
 For though some virtues he might lack,  
 He had his pleasant side. (Gamaliel Bradford, 1863-1932)

### The Interface of Religion & Human Service

\*People with myriads of specific illnesses have each created their own "virtual communities," which is something like a computer network support group. Some people have interpreted this development in religious and salvation terms. One patient said that on a computer network, no one can see how she looks or walks, but "what they see is the soul" (Newsweek, 26/9/94).

\*One profound incoherence between mental health and society is that 90% of Americans believe in God, while fewer than 10% of mental health professionals do (ET, 2/94).

\*In many shrink circles, any kind of spiritual experience has long been considered psychotic, or close to it. Albert Ellis, the founder of the immensely popular "rationale emotive therapy," said in a 1989 work that religion causes people to "bow unquestionably" to their god's "interest and whims, refusing to self-determine or to actualize their own concerns." The fourth (1994) edition of the psychiatric diagnostic manual added a new category of "religious and spiritual problems" as a distinct mental disorder deserving of shrinkery. This new addition to the manual strikes us as very incoherent and very poorly worked in to any kind of theoretical framework, harkening back to the 19th century when the causes of people's insanity were often listed as "masturbation," "religious excitement," "had a fall and was never the same since," etc.

\*Most cognitive psychologists these days accept a computer model of the mind. Accordingly, they glibly talk about one day not long hence "down-loading" mental content into a computer. This holds out a prospect for a sort of immortality because the mind content could then be preserved after the mind itself has died.

\*In a certain church building, visitors would see two signs upon entering, both of them pointing up the stairs. One said "pastor," the other said "therapist," and visitors might find the same person in either office.

\*In Washington, DC, there is a St. Francis Center—a "non-sectarian counseling center" (Syracuse Post-Standard, 28/4/94). Hmm...Would he believe that counseling at the Holy Roller First Church of Jesus Christ Full Gospel Mission would be "non-sectarian"? And if it were, wouldn't there be an incoherency?



\*Christian ministers used to preach that Christ came to save humans from sin, death, and the pit of hell, but now there are some who preach that Christ came to save humans "from the pit of low self-esteem."

\*In 1994, a New York State Psychiatric Center sent one of its inmates (who had slashed his wife to death with a machete in front of their four children) for exorcism to the practitioner of a Caribbean religion, in a vehicle owned by the institution. When the procedure not only proved ineffective but the practitioner also submitted a bill for \$12,000, the state balked (Union Leader, Manchester, NH, 19/8/94; source item unfortunately submitted by Nancy Killam).

\*Amazingly, a child protective service agency in Arizona paid an exorcist \$90 an hour for performing an exorcism on a 10-year-old boy who was believed to have been a victim of "satanic-ritual abuse." Apparently, the exorcist got away with this by also happening to be a clinical psychologist who is an ordained Lutheran Minister (SHJ, 8 Oct. 93).

\*In 1994, we learned of a conference entitled "The Church and Disability," and that it took place in a building inaccessible to people in wheelchairs.

\*A Pakistani social worker wrote a collection of verses about a mentally retarded child. Unfortunately, the story told by the poems is that the child befriended a lion that later ate the child. Because the prophet Mohammed had bestowed the title "lion of god" on his son-in-law, Islamic clerics filed suit against the writer, then 78 years old, accusing him of insulting the prophet and associating the prophet's image with a fool, and demanded the traditional penalty for this, which is public hanging (AP, in Syracuse Herald-Journal, 21/5/92, p. A15).

\*The National Abortion Federation in the US has been meeting since 1977, but in 1994, it held its first panel on "spirituality." An abortion clinic leader told participants in effect that many women claim that God wants them to abort. She also noted that few abortion leaders are members of "organized religion" because of its constraint on "choice as women" (Syracuse Post-Standard, 28/4/94).

\*The Netherlands now has the fewest people in Europe saying they believe in God (Spring 1994 news clipping from Kristjana Kristiansen). Could this have something to do with them being willing to kill all their afflicted members?

### News of the Season

\*There is a social scientists' Christmas song. Two such scientists (Hatfield & Rapson) came up with a list of 11 strategies of relationship maintenance and repair, 12 defense mechanisms, 13 power strategies, 14 types of investments in relationships, 15 sources of conflicts, 16 compliance-gaining techniques, and 24 symptoms of grief. Their students had better have good memories.

\*The 14 Days of Christmas An advertisement for high-powered (and high-priced) human service training unwittingly also provided a contemporary parody of the song "The 12 Days of Christmas." To wit, it promised that anyone who attended its 3-day sessions (at almost \$1000 per person) would learn, among other things:

- 3 strategies that ensure learning occurs and transfers to the job;
- 3 design tips for engaging discussions;
- 4 easy-to-use leader's guide formats;
- 5 keys to successful behavior modeling;
- 5 feedback tips for improving learner performance;
- 7 debriefing questions to ask after a role play;
- 8 guidelines to make mental visualization work;
- 10 tested debriefing questions;



- 10 ways to make role plays realistic and easy to use;
- 12 interactive lecture variations that add impact;
- 13 questions to consider when you select methods;
- 15 icons to make your leader's guide more user-friendly;
- 19 items to include in your leader's guide;
- 20 specific tips you can provide to instructors to start and run a role play professionally.

We would prefer to receive from our true love the old gifts, and especially the partridge in a pear tree.

\*Not long after clown ministry became popular, ventriloquist puppet ministries began to enjoy a minor craze in certain religious circles, sometimes also called "gospel ventriloquism" (Smithsonian, 12/93).

\*The US Marine Reserves have been running a "Toy for Tots" Christmas drive for years. They raised \$10 million in 1992 and '93, but none of the money was used to buy toys because it failed to even cover the cost of running a direct-mail appeal, and possibly because of financial irregularities by the foundation operating the appeal. One problem was that the foundation seemed to lack any kind of documentation of its finances. Its president was dismissed after having been convicted of tax evasion and involvement in counterfeiting (AP, in SHJ, 10 Feb. 93).

\*There is a "tradition" at Princeton University to hold a mid-winter Nude Olympics. In 1/94, close to 300 stupid students first got drunk, and then raced naked around the campus and the neighborhood, led by a female freshman torchbearer while more intelligent, sober, fully-dressed students egged them on (AP, in SHJ, 5 Jan. 94).

\*For thousands of years, foolery seasons--such as the Greek Pan festivals and bacchanalia, the Roman Saturnalia, and its successor, Mardi Gras--have been occasions for drunkenness and sexual debauchery. In some European convents, the nuns keep around-the-clock prayer vigils during Mardi Gras to pray against the evils going on all around them. Some customs around the Christmas and New Year's season also hark back to pre-Christian fool feasts.

### Resources

\*Gallagher, H. G. (1994). FDR's Splendid Deception. Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press. \$19.95. This is a slightly revised version of the author's 1985 edition. It is a stunning exposé of President Roosevelt's concealment of his crippleship, and America's collusion in this deception. FDR got crippled with polio in 1921, and falsely claimed "recovery" from it in 1924. He was rarely publicly presented in a way that revealed his inability to walk (except hobbling for short distances, with much gadgetry). During the 12 years of his presidency, not a single photograph was published of him in a wheelchair. Yet everywhere he lived, worked and vacationed, ramps were installed, entrance steps dismantled, etc. (After his death, all traces of these modifications, e.g., at the White House, were obliterated.) Often, he had to be lifted or carried. There is no record that he ever discussed his condition with anyone, and no political commentator ever wrote about it. His biographies virtually ignored it, only tangentially referring to it as something he "overcame." Of 35,000 photographs of him, only 2 unpublished ones showed him in a wheelchair. Not a good role model after all, Gallagher concluded.

\*"Disability humor wear" can be ordered from an Ohio firm (1-800-241-8468).

\*TIPS readers may request a free copy of the schedule of upcoming Training Institute workshops.



## Human Service News

\*The bad situation of many kinds of handicapped people in East Germany had long been covered up by propaganda, and is only now coming more fully to light. As regards retarded children, prewar attitudes that viewed them as capable of little or no development largely continued. Accordingly, segregation and institutionalization have been very common, as well as heavy drugging of retarded people whereby, according to West German news media, they were "mentally annihilated." Institutions had still been using animal-like cages or beds covered by nets. Ironically, some of this was ascribed to lack of skilled personnel, whereas of course unskilled but positively ideologized personnel would be the far preferable option. Parents continued to be told that keeping such children at home would do damage to their other children.

\*In Germany, a 1962 play by Dürrenmatt, "The Physicists," is often performed. In it, 3 ingenious scientists go to live at an insane asylum. One of them thinks he is Newton and the other one Einstein. Their insanity is a self-elected one because they can see no way out in the ordinary world. They make discoveries intensely chased after by both of the super-powers, but the inventions fall into the hands of the really insane directress of the asylum who then programs the apocalypse.

\*A review of the 4th (1994) edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (the shrink bible) said that if you have a heart beat, you probably will fit into one of its diagnostic categories. With each new edition, the number of mental disorders has multiplied, and now stands at over 300, more than triple the number of the first (1952) edition. There are now such things as "mathematics disorder," "disorder of written expression," "nicotine dependence," and if all else fails, "unspecified mental disorder (non-psychotic)." One of the authors of the manual defended it by saying, "you don't want to be cavalier and leave people out who may have a treatable condition" (Indianapolis Star, 9 Aug. 94; source item from Joe Osburn).

\*Every once in a while, something breaks out which the vernacular calls mass hysteria, and which the specialists call "mass psychogenic illness" or MPI. MPIs are usually manifested by fainting, nausea, vomiting and dizziness, all these in public places, and they usually last from several hours to 10 days. In work settings, 80 to 90% of affected persons are women. The condition mimics contagion, as do many kinds of social phenomena. Many of these occur in schools and work settings, and at least in the latter are believed to reflect a deep dissatisfaction by workers. Interestingly, employers resist a diagnosis of MPI because of its implications that they need to spend money to make work conditions better, while unions likewise resist the diagnosis because they don't want their members imaged as crazy.

This reminds us of an incident in 10/79 when almost all teachers and students at a military academy in Miami went on a rampage of destruction and screamed that they were possessed by evil spirits (AP, in SHJ, 26/10/79). The school being what it was, they probably were.

By the way, a study of people who "had seen" UFOs was not able to distinguish them from a group of "normal" controls. The researchers concluded that UFO seers were not insane (Science, 12 Nov. 93), but we think they were stupidly blinded to the valid conclusion, namely, that everyone is insane these days, and that people who did not see UFOs merely have other insanities.

\*We believe that there is a connection between the loss of personal and cultural memories as a manifestation of the culture of modernism, and the invention of phony memories such as we see in the so-called false memory syndrome, in psychotherapy, sex counseling, and Facilitated Communication. "Memories" of UFOs and having been abducted by aliens and similar themes may fall into the same category. We suspect that the connection is as follows: as people fail to acquire or retain the kinds of memories that people used to acquire and retain, they invent false memories, because apparently the human mind has a memory avidity. If this avidity is not satisfied with real memories, it will generate phony ones.



\*Apparently in response to the excesses of behaviorism, the delegate assembly of the Council for Exceptional Children adopted a policy on "physical intervention" in 1993 (see Exceptional Children, 9/93). In some respect, the policy is very commendable in prohibiting a number of negative consequences that had been used by behaviorists, such as spraying noxious substances into the faces of subjects. On the other hand, the policy puts much hope into a peculiar category of "more of the same" of formalism and bureaucratism, namely so-called "physical intervention plans" which would become part of a child's larger written educational plan.

\*A major development in human services is the growth of an ideology (e.g., Australian Disability Review, 1994, No. 1) that claims to reject service ideologies in favor of outcome evaluation, which in turn are usually tied heavily to quantitative and qualitative research. Some of the critics of ideological positions toward human services have called for the necessity to "transcend ideology." The shift from ideology to outcome is sometimes also characterized as "progress from image to substance."

A rather characteristic expression of this trend was also an April 1992 position statement on program design for people with mental retardation passed by the board of directors of the Division on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities of the Council on Exceptional Children. It said that meeting the needs of retarded students "must not be constrained by philosophical concerns." Amazingly, the very next sentence dogmatized philosophically that "professionals should strive to achieve integration...for all students." Obviously, the drafters of this statement are philosophically very naive and not aware of their own philosophical dogmatisms, valid as they may be. An article in the 3/94 issue of Education & Training in Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities elaborated on this position statement. Apparently, "normalization" was one of the philosophies toward which the position statement was directed, irrational as that appears to be since normalization is an underpinning for integration. The article strongly emphasized individual programmatic decisions based on personal individual needs, but did not make clear how such decisions can be made without what the authors called "philosophical positions." Specifically targeted by this critique was the "regular education initiative" that flourished after it was proposed in 1986 by the assistant secretary of education for the US Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. In effect, it would have abolished special education as a distinct administrative and programmatic entity. At the same time, the article appeared to be an argument for retaining elements of segregated education and special classes, though this was couched in code language.

\*Probably everyone in our work is aware that 21-year-old Miss Alabama, who is deaf, became Miss America in 1994. What a lot of people do not know is that she lost all her hearing in one ear, and 95% in the other, at age 18 months, but that her mother nonetheless insisted that she grow up in the oral rather than sign language culture. While this took a tremendous amount of effort, it worked for her, and unlike most other deaf people she is bright and high-achieving. When she does sign, she almost always uses not the American Sign Language but Signed Exact English (SEE), which translates English word for word into gestures, and thereby enables deaf people to participate in the vocabulary and grammar of ordinary English. In the deaf culture, the issue of what pedagogic and communication system to use is more explosive than issues of religion, money or sex, and a lot of deaf people who otherwise are proud of her are really put off by her success in the oral method. One deaf ideologue said that "she may be medically deaf, but she does not have a social identity of a Deaf person," which apparently all deaf people are expected to acquire or they get sent to hell by these circles (Time, 3 Oct. 94).

\*In this connection, a recent book by Tom Bertling, A Child Sacrificed to the Deaf Culture, is relevant. It claims that residential schools for the deaf prepare children for living in a deaf culture, not in society; that these schools are the single biggest means for assuring that there will be a deaf culture; and that without these schools, the cultural experience of deaf people would be very different, and that this is what the leaders of the deaf culture are afraid of.



\*Blunden, R. (1988). Ties and connections: An ordinary community life for people with learning difficulties. London: King's Fund Centre. Many mentally retarded people live in what Blunden (1988, p. 28) has called a "relationship vacuum."

\*A 1994 study found that during the early 1990s, it cost parents an extra \$6,348 a year above everything else to raise a child with mental retardation or related developmental handicaps. The less income a family had, the higher was the percentage of unreimbursed expenses required to raise such a child.

\*The legislature of the Canadian Province of Ontario passed a "Substitute Decisions Act" in 1992 which was scheduled to be put into force in 1995. This act is actually a package of four different acts that profoundly impact on issues of guardianship, advocacy, and representation of another person. Some people are very suspicious of what this act is apt to do to devalued people. Among other things, it has been estimated that 21,000 retarded persons may have a person appointed over them who will make medical, life and death decisions on their behalf. One of the four components, called "The Advocacy Act," legitimizes both paid and unpaid advocates who operate under the authority of an independent advocacy commission. These advocates are supposed to help people who are impaired but not totally incapacitated to make their own decisions. Unfortunately, this is the contemporary modernistic version of advocacy that abdicates advocate responsibility and conscience, and that defines advocacy entirely in terms of pursuing what a person says he or she wants.

\*In the United States there is a special advocacy form functioning in association with the court system about which one has heard very little so far. It is the so-called "court-appointed special advocate" scheme. Such advocates are private citizens who volunteer their services as individual advocates for a child that is involved in a case pending before a court, such as custody, foster placement, health decision or juvenile justice cases. The volunteer serves through a local chapter of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (of which one can become a member) that apparently was founded in 1974 and that by 1994 was reportedly deploying 33,000 volunteers through 556 local organizations in all US States. Some of the local units have names such as Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem, Voices for Children, and Child Advocates. The organization trains the volunteers in courtroom procedures, social service, the juvenile justice system and special needs of children who have been abused and neglected. Courts will then appoint such volunteers to speak and act on behalf of children involved in a court case. The advocates are supposed to gather objective background information about the child at issue that will enable a judge to make better-informed decisions as to what is best for the child. However, many of these advocates are not appointed as formal guardians ad litem. We are puzzled why this scheme has not been better known.

\*To our amazement, we discovered that in at least some states, a legal guardianship terminates upon the death of the ward. This means that the moment the ward is dead, the guardian can no longer make decisions affecting such things as the person's burial or memorial service.

\*On 1 July 94, we heard an advisory on radio that a woman on a flight from the US mainland to Hawaii died shortly thereafter from TB, and the passengers on that flight should have themselves tested for TB. Strangely enough, no such news item was carried in the newspapers that we saw. This sort of thing is likely to become more frequent, particularly with the advent of new airplanes that recirculate the internal air rather than making use of fresh outdoor air. This is one of the mechanisms by which the TB may spread from high-risk groups to other members of the public.

\*A 1993 book, Dying to Live, claims to have found the neurophysiological basis for many so-called near-death experiences, namely, a combination of anoxia and a flooding of the brain with endorphins, together with random electrical activities in the visual cortex and pre-epileptic



phenomena in the temporal lobe and elsewhere which can result in flashbacks, a flood of memories and feelings of familiarity.

### The Problem of Communalities These Days

One of the things that bodes ill for modernistic societies is their declining capacity for being communal.

\*How poorly modernistic people even understand true communality is exemplified by the recent claims that computer networking and so-called "virtual communities"--i.e., "communing" with others, often very far away, via one's computer--constitute true human communities. Even the editor of the Whole Earth Review, Howard Rheingold, wrote this in the September 6, 1993 issue of Newsweek. He cited the example of a man in Massachusetts whom he contacted via computer--Rheingold lives in California--who "talked" to those in his computer network about his young daughter's surgery, and his hopes and worries about her. And he gave the example of a man who let the computer network know that his son had been diagnosed to have leukemia. "Within minutes," said Rheingold, "an information and emotional support task force had been assembled, helping make sense of blood counts and test results. Most important, there were other parents there, 24 hours a day, to share..." (p. 49).

We do not doubt that the information provided over the computer was helpful to these two distraught fathers. But Rheingold, and others like him who exalt such computer communality, have equated the conveyance of support that is both long distance and anonymous with the hands-on, physical presence and helping of people who are face-to-face, and can hold each other in the flesh. Yet further, the equation of the two kinds of communality implies that long distance support and help are always sufficient to a problem, or equal to--or even superior to--people's actual, physical communal presence. But if one's child is in a hospital in Massachusetts, and one's community members are unknown, faceless strangers scattered all across the rest of the 50 states, who will sit with her and oneself in the wee hours of night and see that she does not come to harm? And especially, who will do so night after night, and all through her perhaps lengthy rehabilitation? Obviously, having a computer monitor in the room is not the answer. Only people who are physically present, who have made a fundamental and enduring commitment to each other, can and will perform this difficult work of living out communality.

\*The fact that a man in Virginia saved the life of a suicidal woman in Denver by communicating with her over a computer network is very mixed news, in that help having to come from more than 1000 miles away via a computer certainly speaks to the contemporary phenomenon of decommunitization (AP in SHJ, 27/11/93).

\*We received an announcement that "Client/Server is Coming." It turned out that this was a flyer for a new set of computer software.

\*The difficulty of forming a communality these days was underlined by a group that got together in Syracuse in 1991 to plan a joint urban village focused on ecological and egalitarian principles. It took them one entire meeting of 2.5 hours to merely agree to write down anything they might agree upon, and that the easel on which they would record their agreements should be stored in the basement between meetings (SHJ, 10 Nov. 92).

\*On a fine 1993 summer day near Rotterdam in the Netherlands, many families and children were enjoying the sun in the park where people were also swimming in a lake and floating on boats. Suddenly, two children, aged 9 and 11, somehow got dumped from a canoe into the water, and one of them began to drown. The drowning child and a number of others began to scream for help, and 200 people did indeed stop doing what they were doing--and started staring, some of them discussing whether the children in distress appeared to be African, and possibly illegal immigrants. During this time, only six people made any effort to save the girl, who drowned. Even after this had happened,



no one wanted to help rescuers trawl the lake. There has been much debate about what caused this phenomenon, including the likely dynamic of depersonalization, and dilution of personal responsibility, in large crowds (The Age, 29/8/93; source clipping from John Annison).

\*On the average, homeowners move less frequently than people in other types of dwellings, but in the US, even they have high mobility. On the average, as of 1988, a homeowner has been in the home for 11.5 years, but many states have much lower rates, and therefore higher mobility (USN&WR, 5 Feb. 90). This attests to the high discontinuity in American life.

\*Only 29% of Americans in a poll said that they wished that they had more friends, and a full 70% resoundingly said no (Time, 1 June 92). This is somewhat puzzling, insofar as Americans have a high rate of rootlessness and relatively superficial relationships.

### Miscellaneous News

\*At no time since ca. 1920 have there been as many countries writing, or rewriting, their constitutions, rearranging their borders, and replacing their governments. Not since WWII have as many countries been in the process of breaking up. Nor have ever before so many countries come under extensive control of commercial bodies that had their seats in other countries.

\*When President Clinton constituted his cabinet, he said that it "looks like America." When it was pointed out that 18 of its members were lawyers, the Attorney General said, "Lawyers are what make people free" (Newsweek, 27/12/93).

\*People who think that President Clinton is a friend of the mentally retarded should recall that while governor of Arkansas, he approved the execution (as recently as January 1992) of a man who was interpreted by some people to have been an "imbecile." This has hardly been mentioned in the national media.

\*According to some authorities, the more important a bill before the US Congress is, the less scrutiny it gets. For instance, a 1989 bill that bailed out the Savings & Loan scandal to the tune of \$100 billion was hastily pasted together by staff members, and not a single member of the Congress had read it when the vote was taken. The 1990 Budget Bill contained over 1,000 pages, was put together so hastily that the pages were unnumbered and unindexed, and Congress voted on it without a single member having a copy to read first (Newsweek, 11 July 94).

\*Surveys throughout the years have indicated that Americans are basically schizophrenic about what they want and how they vote. Some political scientists have said that about 80% of citizens do not have stable and well thought-out opinions on some of the major issues of the day, and that politicians exploit this public ignorance or apathy by appealing to the lowest common denominators of voter sentiment rather than trying to truly educate voters (e.g., Time, 22/7/91). The majority of citizens want less government, but a greater governmental role in crime prevention and national security. They want greater defense spending but less defense expenditure. They are deeply concerned with the welfare of the handicapped and poor, but believe that the majority of the poor are cheating and/or do not need help. People are very supportive of the goals of antipoverty programs, but very dissatisfied with specific components, such as food stamps. They want government to be an active regulator, but believe the government and the military are greatly inefficient and wasteful. They are particularly concerned with worker health and safety, product quality, consumer protection and the protection of the environment while at the same time, Americans are grossly abusive of the environment. In essence, Americans endorse big government but want it to be much better--one could say that they want the government to be better than its citizenry.



\*No matter how often Richard Nixon was his own nonintegrated self in political life, people kept rehabilitating him. When he died, there was a virtual fury of Nixon apotheosis. We believe that he now knows what truth is, though he may not like it any better than he ever did.

\*In Fall '92, Time put out a special issue on the future, entitled "Beyond the Year 2000." Here are some tidbits from it.

One thing that struck us was the peculiar schizophrenia of the issue, with some of its articles predicting a virtual utopia, and others a nasty and brutish future. Apparently, the editors did not perceive this incoherency. It predicted that there would definitely be a vaccine for AIDS, which in actuality is an entirely unpredictable thing. It foresaw the possibility that sexually transmitted diseases will be so common that there will be services that combine the functions of dating service, social club, bar and medical clinic, where young people meet up and have fun and a few drinks while waiting for their medical tests to see if they have either venereal diseases or genetic defects that make it inadvisable to mate with certain people.

Surveys of the US public found that 75% of Americans believed that scientists will find a cure for AIDS, and 80% believed in a future cure for cancer, but amazingly, only 39% believed in a cure for the common cold. Apparently, the worse the disease, the more people believe that a cure for it will be found. Also, 57% thought that the average US life expectancy will become 100 years.

Also amazingly, more thought that the world will be better off in another 100 years than today.

Thirty-two percent believed that there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, and that humans will have contact with it.

It said that the collapse of the family may result in state-sponsored baby hatcheries, much like those in Huxley's Brave New World. For the same reason, schools might actually become residential institutions where children not only learn but also sleep because they have no other place to go to, plus where there are baby-minding services for the babies of the pupils.

The medical progress that was foreseen included that "the deaf will hear, the blind see, the lame walk." Time predicted that "almost certainly," scientists will be able to stimulate injured neurons to regenerate themselves.

One of the positive articles predicted that human ingenuity "will always" be able to find new resources so as to overcome the so-called "limits to growth."

One article described the Middle Ages, and listed some of the conditions then that made life grim, one of which was the prohibition against abortion, thereby portraying this as a backward horror (Time, Fall '92).

\*In early September of 1994, at about 8:45 am, all radar systems based in Chicago controlling air traffic for several hundred miles around it became nonfunctional because of a power outage. Air controllers frantically radioed the airplanes in the air to separate further from each other and to start looking out for each other visually. O'Hare came to a virtual standstill until late afternoon. Also, shortly after 9 am, the computers at the Chicago Board of Trade shut down for reasons unknown, and with it all trading activity on the floor. Not long afterwards, the Chicago long distance MCI telephone system shut down for about two hours because of a problem with a software switch (Indianapolis Star, 15/9/94; source item from Joe Osburn). This is a good example of the rarely-acknowledged flip side of highly complex technology, namely, that it is easily disabled, that once disabled, it creates greater havoc, and that multiple independent complex system can disfunction at the same time.

\*The Syracuse Herald Journal (26/12/91) noted in an editorial that "it is the nature of news that most of it is bad," and then added that "for that we can be thankful." Unfortunately, so many of the awful things that TIPS reports are losing their newsworthiness because they are becoming so commonplace. In fact, one reason they need to be continually reported is that readers and others are apt to no longer even notice these things because of their commonness, and no longer ascribe to them the significance they deserve, and that they would have ascribed to them years ago.



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