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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 service; the family and children; issues of war and peace; and seasonal news, if any.

We have never done a double issue for December before, but we are doing so this time because of both the accumulation of copy on the usual December themes, and the savings in postage and handling which becomes a significant factor as long as subscriptions are low.

Poverty

*By 12/92, 10.4% of Americans received food stamps, more than ever before. There was a 36% increase in 1989-92, but a 53% increase in the cost of such stamps for those eligible for them, to $23 billion. Many families become eligible for food stamps before they become poor enough to become eligible for public assistance (SHJ, 2 Mar. 93).

*The late cult leader David Koresh of Waco, Texas, is said to have had as many as 47 wives at a time, and apparently, many of them received public welfare benefits. Cult members often bought huge bulk quantities of staple foods in local stores with food stamps (SHJ, 26/3/93). We suppose if one of us had to support 47 spouses, we would also be poor—unless of course we were supported by our 47 spouses.

*In 1992, thousands of destitute people in Illinois got bumped off the welfare rolls because they could read above the sixth grade level, according to which criterion they were reclassified as "employable" (AP in SHJ, 1 April 92), and we kid you not.

That giving poor people money does not necessarily solve their problems was dramatically exemplified by a federal fiasco in Syracuse. The government decided to tear down an expensive public housing complex and gave its poor tenants large sums of money to find a place to relocate. Twenty-one people received more than $15,000 tax-free without any loss of their other welfare or government aid payments, with one person getting as much as $28,000. A few people used this windfall wisely to buy houses or get an education, but many others did not, exemplified by the woman who got the $28,000: she went on a splurging and buying spree, and soon remained as much on welfare as before. Another recipient blew much of the money on drugs, and a large proportion remained poor and on welfare.

Poor people who get some kind of social security pension are sometimes accidentally overpaid, and by the time the government gets it straight, the money has long been spent. So what the government does in these cases is to subtract a certain amount of what the person owes from each subsequent payment. In cases where the overpayment was considerable, it might take many years of reduced payments to make up the difference. Throughout this time, the poor person is in bad financial straits, usually for no fault of their own.

The Welfare Department of the county in which Syracuse is located had someone working for three months on getting a load of heating oil delivered to a 70-year-old woman during the coldest part of 1991-92—but still, somehow or other, the oil never got there, and one day the woman was found nearly frozen to death (SHJ, 24/3/92).

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Amazingly, in metropolitan Toronto, Canada, one-third of all children now live on welfare (Globe & Mail, 4 Oct. 93; source item from Barry Wever).

In some poor countries, colonies of very lowly people have developed around garbage dumps which they pick through for their livelihood. Some families in these dump villages are now in their fourth generation (e.g., Press & Sun Bulletin, 3 Feb. 1991).

We commented before on stone soup for the poor. Some people call it rock soup. The "BC" cartoon of 27/6/93 announced that rock soup tastes better when there is something clinging to the bottom of the rocks as one pries them out of the ground and throws them into the soup.

The Gulf Between the Haves & Have-Nots

Between 1982-90, $400 billion of net wealth was somehow or other transferred from poor nations to rich ones (CASA, 10/93).

Most of the increase in income in the US between 1977-89 went to the richest 1% of American families, giving them 13% of all personal income, or about 50% more in percentage terms than in 1977 (SHJ, 5 March 92).

Large-scale downward social movement has not merely been a trend in the US over the last dozen years or so, but also in other developed countries, largely in connection with the transition to a post-primary production economy (AN, 24/7/93). In many other developed countries, there has also been a transfer of wealth from
the lower to the highest economic classes, and/or an increasing economic separation between them.

*New York state legislators simultaneously managed to get raises for their staff members—sometimes more than 10%—while at the same time proposing cuts in welfare and health benefits for the poor (SHJ, 26/3/93).

*Someone has called tax-deductible business meals "federal food stamp programs for the corporate class."

*Even between 1989-90, the number of high-income people in the US who paid no taxes doubled; and there were almost 800 individuals or couples earning an average of $440,000 apiece for a total of $340 million who paid no federal income taxes (SHJ, 29/6/93).

*When Americans were asked what income they would need to achieve their American dream, the median answer was $77,000, but those already making more than $100,000 said they needed $192,000. Ordinary adults thought that "real wealth" consisted of $549,000, while those with incomes above $100,000 said it was $1.16 million (SHJ, 12 July 92).

*The wealthiest people are the ones most likely to stop giving money during economic hard times, while the lower down one goes on the economic ladder, the more people give in relation to what they have. For instance in 1989, households earning under $10,000 gave away 5.5% of their income, while households with $50,000-60,000 gave only 1.7% (Newsweek, 13/12/92).

The Cold Within

Sick humans trapped by circumstance In bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood, Or so the story's told.

Their dying fire in need of logs
The first man held his back,
For of the faces around the fire
He noticed one was black.

The next man looking 'cross the way
Saw one not of his church,
And couldn't bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch.

The third one sat in tattered clothes.
He gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his log be put to use
To warm the idle rich?

The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy shiftless poor.

The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight,
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.

The last man of this forlorn group
Did nought, except for gain:
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.

Their logs held tight in Death's still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They didn't die from the cold without,
They died from the cold within.

(Author unknown; source item from Joe Osburn.)

Homelessness

*It is rather peculiar that homelessness has become a widespread phenomenon at the same time all over the Western world. The post-primary production economy seems to have much to do with it, insofar as waves of people are being rendered virtually permanently unemployed and unemployable (Parade, 15/8/93). There is also a strong link between homelessness and the collapse of the family. People
who have never married or who are separated or divorced are vastly more likely to
end up homeless, as are adults who have grown up in single-parent homes.

*New York City has decided to refuse to grant homeless status to people who
have abandoned their apartments because of the high crime rate in their building
or neighborhood. Also denied homeless status were people who are, in fact,
homeless but have been taken in by friends or family (SHJ, 11 Aug. 93).

*The New York subway system has been said to be home to about 1200 people who
prefer it to the public shelters of the city. An ignorant transit police officer
said "No one can tell me what we see down there is better than a shelter" (SHJ,
16/9/91). But in those city shelters, you will either get beat to death, robbed
of whatever little you possess, or given TB. The Port Authority bus terminal in
New York has also become notorious for being a shelter for an army of homeless
people. All efforts to drag them away or curb their behavior have so far failed,
and so the latest strategy in the war of the authorities against them—obviously
the product of a super-sadistic genius—has been to pipe in classical music.
Apparently, this has worked better than anything else so far (Newsweek, 28/12/92).

*When the homeless in New York quit using public shelters because they are
too violent, the city reports a decline in homelessness! (Newsweek, 4 May 92).
The city reports 25,000, while allies of the homeless say the real number is now
90,000, and that a third have HIV or AIDS (Newsweek, 2 Dec. 91).

*About a third of the homeless in the US are said to be severely mentally
disturbed (SHJ, 9 Nov. 91)—and that sounds low to us.

*Isn't it ironic that the one job for which homeless men get hired in droves
every year in December is as Santas for stores or to man collection boxes on the
street? Some of these Santas are pretty rough characters: drug-addicted,
ex-convicts, HIV-positive, etc. (SHJ, 19/12/92).

*An interesting phenomenon in places of meal hospitality for the poor and
homeless is that in so many of these places, the guests do not take off their
outer garments, and will sit around in their overcoats and hats. One reason is
that they do not feel secure in these places, and/or are afraid that their clothes
will be stolen if they took them off. This phenomenon can usually be observed in
the pictures of such places that periodically are run in virtually every
newspaper. The more at ease guests feel in hanging up their overclothes, the more
this is a sign that the place is really one of hospitality, and is properly run.

*Let them eat voice mail. A telephone firm installed a free voicemail
service for the homeless at the Salvation Army shelter in Baltimore (AP in SHJ, 10
Sept. 93).

*Dade County, FL, in which Miami is located, approved a 1% tax on food and
drink in large restaurants in order to raise revenue to fund programs for the
homeless (Newsweek, 9 Aug. 93).

*In Baltimore, a group called "City Advocates in Solidarity with the
Homeless" began to hand out "polite panhandler kits" to the homeless, together
with a yellow and green button with the slogan, "Polite panhandling pays." This
strategy was adopted in the hope of increasing the amount of money that homeless
people would be able to beg (SHJ, 10 July 1993).

*Students at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science designed a new
kind of overcoat, known as a shelter-pak, specifically for homeless people. It
has strong nylon on one side and heavy wool on the other, is full-length and
hooded, can be used as a blanket at night and carried like a backpack in the
daytime, and has huge pockets to carry all sorts of goodies in. Sadly, one of the
professors involved in the project said, "We are going to keep making shelter-paks
until the problem of the homeless is resolved" (Time, 23/3/92). What a foolish
promise! Was he a liberal banking on Clinton?

*The most arrested individuals in a lot of US cities are not career criminals
but vagrants. We reported before on a homeless alcoholic man in Syracuse who held
the city's record with 175 arrests—and one day reformed and became a
rehabilitation worker. Another alcoholic Syracuse street denizen is now trying to
beat the record, with 141 arrests by 4/93, sometimes four times a week, spending
67 nights in jail in 1992. He often starts his drinking day at 4 am. May he
have a long life! What do you know about the record-holders where you live?

*So often when efforts are made to do something about derelict homeless
people, the idiom of hygiene and garbage disposal is used. For instance, people
often speak in terms of "removing" homeless people from a place where they have
squatted, much as one would remove garbage. Sometimes, the idiom is one of
"cleaning up" a particular area. For instance, in discussions of plans for
constructing a Queen Elizabeth Gate in a corner of Hyde Park in London, one of the
benefits cited was that it would "clean up a derelict corner of the London park"
(Parade, 6 Dec. 92).

*The September 1992 newsletter of the University of Adelaide, Australia,
announced a "dramatic increase in the number of destitute people harassing
passers-by for cigarettes and food." The manager of security for the university
said, "We want to know where beggars are so they can be removed and counseled."
As we can see, modernism has either invented a new work of mercy, or managed to
improve on the old ones that one should feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty
and clothe the naked, namely, that instead, one should remove and counsel them.

*The milk of human kindness. A Miami judge decreed that the city must
establish places ("safe zones") where the homeless will be let in peace instead of
haunted by the police to move on (AP in SHJ, 18/11/92).

*Over and over we emphasize that those who sow violence will also reap it.
Los Angeles has a record as one of the most relentlessly inhospitable cities for
the homeless, waging a form of low-intensity urban warfare against them with means
such as the following: fewer public toilets than any major North American city;
public benches on which one cannot lie down; a city park sprinkler system that
comes on at random during the night so as to drench any would-be sleepers; manual
hosing down of sidewalks to deter loitering; garbage dumpsters made bum-proof to
the tune of $12,000 each. There have also been as yet unrealized proposals for
mass deportation of the homeless into mountain camps or desert farms, or onto
derelict boats in the harbor (Guardian Weekly, 10 May 92).

*More ships of fools. By age 49, a homeless mentally disordered
crack-addicted man in New York City had been arrested or institutionalized more
than 40 times and had become known as "the wild man of 96th Street." In 1993, he
was discharged from the state's Creedmoor Psychiatric Center with a court order
that he move out of the state to Bridgeport, Connecticut, and live there with
relatives (New York Post, 27/7/93).

Oh, What Will We Do With the Homeless
When the Olympics Come to Town?

Cities sponsoring world-class events always try to look good, and try to hide
or get rid of their poor and homeless people. Atlanta will host the 1996 summer
Olympics, but has a very mean-spirited record of dealing with its homeless people, as we reported before. In 1991, there were 15,000 homeless people in metro Atlanta, at the same time as there were 30,000 vacant apartments (Hospitality, 8/93). So one friend of the homeless wrote the following Olympics homeless song, as good as hobo songs of which we are always short.

When the world comes to Atlanta, Where will the homeless be? Will we march them to Oklahoma Like we did the Cherokee? Will we shove them into alleys, Dare them to show their face? Or make them a major Olympic event? How 'bout a homeless race?

CHORUS: Oh, what will we do with the homeless? When the Olympics come to town? What will we do with the homeless? Hide them in Under-ground? Oh, what will we do with the homeless? We cannot allow them to roam. What will we do with the homeless? Why don't we find them a home? If we deal with the homeless problem, Make low income housing our goal, When the eyes of the world are upon us, We'll fare so much better I know. We'll show them our closets and corners, No homeless folk will they find, Then we'll share a Coke and a peach pie, And have an Olympic good time.

REPEAT CHORUS

Joyce Brookshire

*What comes to mind when one thinks of hobos? At least to older people, it will be freight trains and boxcars. Accordingly, Atlanta Project, which is former President Jimmy Carter's campaign against poverty, has come up with the idea of turning old boxcars into shelters for the homeless. Plans are to line up entire trains or train yards of such cars where some of them will be fixed up as kitchens, others as bathrooms, some as dormitories, all set up into a village with a railway theme. A railroad company jumped in and donated 21 boxcars, and said it would gladly donate another 1,000 for this purpose (Newsweek, 12 Oct. 92).

*The number of rail-riding hobos declined after the Depression, but a new phenomenon in recent years has been a new generation of teenage and young adult hobos. There is not much that is romantic about their lives, which are really quite dreary and extremely dangerous. Every year now, about 500 "trespassers" are killed by being run over or crushed by train cars. Two reasons they ride the rails instead of hitchhiking are that they often get where they want to go quicker, and there are areas of the US such as in the Southwest where it is almost impossible to hitchhike across (SHJ, 21/8/93).

We keep pleading—without success—for hobo poems/songs to publish. We have a few liquor, drink, or homeless poems, but have run out of hobo ones.

If Dirt Were Dollars
By Don Henley

Walkin'like a millionaire, Smilin' like a king He leaned his shopping cart against the wall.
He said, "I been a lot of places and I seen a lot of things, But, sonny, I seen one thing beats 'em all. I was flyin' back from Lubbock, I saw Jesus on the plane ...or maybe it was Elvis, you know, they kinda look the same. Hey, look out, Junior, you're steppin' on my bed" I said, "I don't see nothin," He just glared at me and said,

REFRAIN: If dirt were dollars, if dirt were dollars, If dirt were dollars I wouldn't worry any more.
There are two more stanzas along these lines, but the first is the best.

**Violence in Society**

*People who are wise in the ways of violence have always said that when a nation inflicts violence abroad, it will come back to it in some other way internally, as for instance through violence at home. According to some reports, the outbreak of World War III coincided with a marked increase in assaults on women in the US, particularly by "battering," which usually means that a husband or lover beats up on the woman (First Things, 3/92).


As late as 1985, a whole book was written under the title, The Great American Crime Myth that continued to perpetuate the liberal myth that there had not been a dramatic increase in crime in America, but that rather, there has been an increase in: (a) people's awareness of the prevalence of crime; (b) people's fear of being the victim of a crime; and (c) possibly the reporting of crime to the police forces.

According to Wright, while the US does have the highest homicide rate of all industrialized nations, there are also differences in the way countries report crimes. For instance, in Norway, only those homicides are reported as murders where there is a court finding of intentional killing. In contrast, in the US, any incident where death occurs and violence can be attributed to it is reported as murder.

An interesting testimony to the power of imagery is noted by Wright in regard to crime and people's fear thereof. People are likely to be more fearful of crime where there is disorder in the environment, as shown by abandoned buildings, graffiti on the walls, vandalized structures, and groups of teenagers congregating on street corners. Even though the crime rate may be the same in nicer-appearing areas, the fear of crime is greater in the more disordered-appearing ones.

The book contains a good section on some of the hidden functions and purposes, goal displacement, and self-survival dynamics in police organizations, but the ideological bias of the author calls for much caution by readers.

*During just five years between the late 1980s and early 90s, murders committed by youths under 18 in the US increased by 85%. In contrast, in the US, any incident where death occurs and violence can be attributed to it is reported as murder.

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*One of Chicago's most violent weekends followed the showing on national television of the film "Boyz'N the Hood," which was about Los Angeles gangs. The Chicago police chief called the film a training film for ghetto crime (Newsweek, 17/5/93).

*Like baseball trading cards, children now can buy, or get with their candy or comic books, crime and killer 2½" x 3½" "trading cards." Some can be bought in entire packages. Each card features a notorious murderer and his/her "statistics" and colorful description of the crimes, all to collect, memorize, and trade (Time, 4 May 92). Maybe your kid would like some for Christmas? One such series of cards is on "true crime": "G-men, Murderers, Serial Killers, Gangsters." One such set (True Crime II, $1.10 in Syracuse) featured six New York or Chicago gangsters (several of them Mafiosi); Lu Gang, a disgruntled Chinese student at the U. of Iowa who calmly shot 7 university people (most of whom died) and then himself; a career criminal who had killed 8 people (often in connection with robbery); Jack the Stripper (a serial killer of 8 prostitutes); a serial child sex killer—and Dr. Frederic Wertham. Who? Yes, the deeply insightful ex-German psychiatrist who had written works (e.g., The Mark of Cain) on the killing of
handicapped people in WWII Germany. What was his "true crime" according to the manufacturer? He had published studies and analyses which indicated that comics with violent themes, such as crime comics, contributed to juvenile delinquency, leading to efforts "to censor creative material in the name of protecting children."

*When the Super Soaker waterguns came out, and people started wantonly shooting water at other people, some of these other people shot back with real guns, even at children. The US government responded by calling for a ban on...the water gun rather than the real thing.

*Here is a big improvement on the violence scene that apparently no one had thought of earlier. A man accosted another in Syracuse, demanding to buy drugs from him. Annoyed, the second man whipped out a Colt-45 malt liquor bottle and hit the accoster over the head (SHJ, 1 June 93). We deem this a vast improvement over shooting with a Colt-45 gun. So now, if only someone would make Colt-22, Colt 36, Colt 9mm, and similar malt liquors, there would be much less shooting.

The Jail and Prison Scene

Miscellaneous

*Susan Thomas took a short course on prisons, and tells us the following. She was able to tour the inside of a maximum security prison—a remarkable opportunity, since most citizens are never allowed inside a prison. The only people who are either get sentenced to be there, work there, are visiting a prisoner (and then, they are only permitted in certain spaces, usually in the very front part of the prison), or are members of a grand jury. From this experience, we gained many insights into prison, and into society as a whole.

It is fairly well-known by now that the US has the highest rate of incarceration of any nation in the world: approximately 455 per 100,000 of population. The prison population has been rising, and continues to rise, both in absolute numbers and in percentage.

At least in the US, the final cost of a prison building ends up being twice the initial stated cost, because of interest and the cost of floating bonds. The average 1992 cost to build a medium security prison cell is $86,000.

Most of the cost of running (as opposed to building) a prison is staffing, and of that, most of the cost is for guards. The average annual cost of keeping a person incarcerated in the US in 1991 (including federal, state, and local imprisonment) was $24,410. In contrast, it cost approximately $9,812 annually per parolee or probationer.

The primary purpose of prison is security of detainment, both within the prison, and vis-à-vis society on the outside. Every other purpose—good and bad—gives way to this one.

One reason that most people in prison are poor and uneducated is that the kinds of crimes that people get sent to prison for are the kinds of crimes that the poor and uneducated are apt to commit. Vice versa: the kinds of crimes the poor are apt to commit are the kind that get punished by imprisonment.

The average recidivism rate for people who leave prison is between 40-60%. (Recidivism is defined as a return to prison within five years after release.) In comparison to first-time prisoners, recidivists are apt to be older, younger when they were released from prison, and to have a family member who has also been in prison. The higher one's education (above the high school level), the less likely one is to be a recidivist, and the longer one has been out of prison, the less likely one is to end up going back.

Approximately 75% of both first-timers and recidivists have never been married, or are divorced, indicating once more the importance of family and communality.
In some prisons—even maximum security ones—the officers do not carry weapons, because they fear what would happen if prisoners got hold of them. For instance, New York State prison officers do not carry weapons. In contrast, at the Illinois State Penitentiary in Joliet, the officers carry double-barrel shotguns, at least one of which is fired on average once a day.

One of the planned physical discontinuities inflicted on prisoners is their periodic movement to new cells. This is done so that the prisoners do not get to know their cells too well, which prison administrators assume they would take advantage of, e.g., for hiding contraband.

Since the 1970s, there has been a dramatic change in the culture of prisons, reflecting similar changes in the larger culture. It is thought that these changes are largely due to the influx of young prisoners for drug-related offenses; 70% of prisoners today are there on drug-related offenses, including robbery and homicide. The older men who have been in prison a long time tend to prefer the pre-1970s prison days, even with all their harshness of more restrictions, fewer privileges, more time spent locked in the cells (up to 16 hours per day), no talking rules, etc. They prefer this because back then, there at least was a moral code in prison, though it was a harsh one. For instance, it used to be that part of the prison code was group cohesion, with one group (the prisoners) against another (the staff), and vice versa, and this was why a prisoner did not "rat" or inform on another. Now, there is a highly individualistic pursuit of one's own wants, needs, etc. In prison language, "everyone cuts their own deal."

Also, while homosexuality has always been present and tolerated to a degree in prison, it did not used to be what it now is in prison: blatant and overt, with men dressing as women.

Yet further, the former pecking order of status in prison according to the offense committed is also crumbling, because the types of offenses for which people are being imprisoned is relatively new (compared to what they used to be), and because some of what used to be thought of as the worst crimes (rape, child molestation) are relatively mild compared to some of the things people do today. Now, the "new element" in prison—i.e., mostly young, mostly black drug addicts—live by no rules, but are individualistic and hedonistic to the maximum. In that sense, prison is truly a mirror of society, which has also become increasingly individualistic and hedonistic.

Of all that has been studied and researched about crime punishable by prison, the only two factors that have been shown to be statistically significant are age and education: the more one has of both, the less chance that one will turn to the kind of crime that gets one into prison.

Like many other institutions, prisons used to be more culturally normative than they are now. For instance, many of them used to have grass and trees growing in the inner court or yard. However, in most prisons, this has all been replaced by concrete and tarmac—largely as a result of seeing and treating the prisoners as menaces, and as likely to bury weapons and contraband in the soil. This has given rise to a phenomenon known as "prison weather," where the temperature in the prison yard is 5-10 degrees warmer than it is outside.

There can be no doubt that imprisonment is big business. In 1992, the New York State prison industries made $1 million profit on $50 million in sales. Further, work as prison staff pays very well: annual starting salaries for a secretary are $24,000, a recreation leader $28,000, and a guidance counselor $31,000. There has also been a dramatic professionalization of prison work, as exemplified by the fact that while wardens used to be men who had worked their way up through the ranks of prison guards, prison administrators are now more likely to be yuppies with MBAs.

Hardly recognized at all is the conflict of interest between the public, and the government departments that run prisons. The public is interested in, and wants to see, offenders kept locked up and punished for their crimes. The government departments, on the other hand, have an interest in saving money, which
means they want to get prisoners out of prisons, and free up as many prison cells as they can.

The largest growing group of people being incarcerated today is females, and they are being imprisoned increasingly for the same type of crimes as males: violent ones and drug-related ones. Equality is being achieved at last!

Contemporary imprisonment which deprives people of their liberty is often contrasted favorably with former times when offenders were likely to be severely physically punished for an offense, e.g., by being mutilated, branded, or even simply displayed for public ridicule. Of course, the death penalty in the past was apt to be inflicted very brutally, as by drawing-and-quartering, burning, and hanging. Today, it is apt to be inflicted via electrocution, gas, or poison injection, and in some places by gunfire. However, one big advantage that the punishments of the past had over those of today is that offenders were not so likely to be cast into a long-term, perhaps life-long, menace role. That is, one committed a crime, one was apprehended, and one was physically punished for it, sometimes gruesomely. But then, as long as the punishment was not death, one was released and got on with one's life, and it was recognized that one had paid the price. Today, one commits a crime, one is apprehended, and one is then surrounded for years with some of the most serious and devastating menace imaging and menace role expectancies imaginable that are apt to follow one for life, assuming one is ever released from prison.

In most prisons in western societies today, prisoners can take college courses, and even obtain college degrees. The liberal arts degree program that Syracuse University offers at one New York State prison is said by its director to be one of "the best classical Jesuitical educations" available anywhere, even though Syracuse University is not a Jesuit school. He meant by this that the students in prison get more of what a classical Jesuit education used to entail—an emphasis on the humanities, a broad reading of the classics, and a mind trained for critical thinking—than students at other (or even Jesuit) universities do these days, especially since many students in those major outside the liberal arts. Knowing what colleges and universities have normatively become, we can certainly believe his claim.

Further, while it is difficult to recruit people to teach in prison, once they agree to do so and once they gain some experience at it, they become reluctant to teach anywhere else again, because the prison students are so enthusiastic and engaged—unlike so many of the students in ordinary high schools and colleges, who would rather not be there, who take education for granted, who are going to college to have a good time, etc. We see this as a parallel to other kinds of recruitment of engagement with devalued people, such as Citizen Advocacy: while finding citizen advocates may not be the easiest task, once a person decides to be such an advocate and becomes involved as an advocate, they often end up radically committed.

*Chang, D. H., & Armstrong, W. B. (Eds.). (1972). The prison: Voices from the inside. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman. Along with an introduction and conclusion written by the editors, this book contains 19 chapters, each written by a separate inmate of the Illinois State Penitentiaries, about prison life. Since the book was written before the 1972 Attica (NY) prison riot, which sparked nationwide prison reform, some of the statements about prison life may no longer be true. Some of the writers tell the story of their lives, usually as an explanation of how they ended up in prison. They all testify to the harshness and brutality of prison life, and to racism—though the "whites" say it is practiced against them, and the "blacks" make the same claim. A number complain about the wretched food; that the guards make it difficult for prisoners to get an education because hardly any guards have (had) a college education themselves; and that some of the guards are homosexuals, making many prison procedures (such as strip searches) even worse than they would otherwise be.

At least when this book was written, it was the practice of Illinois state
prisons to inform a prisoner's family of the details if the prisoner was caught either masturbating or engaging in homosexuality or other sexual deviancies.

One inmate claims that the public's stereotypical image of the criminal and ex-convict is that they are all "sexual perverts and murderers, ... ugly, with heavy beards and the inevitable cigarette hanging precariously from the corner of the mouth."

In 1968, it was discovered that at the Arkansas State Penitentiary, there had been wholesale murder of prisoners by prison guards. The condition of many of the corpses testified that the men had been mutilated and apparently tortured before they were killed. Other prisoners were assigned to bury the killed prisoners, as in the Nazi concentration camps, and admonished not to report what had happened at risk of their own lives. (Reviewed by Susan Thomas, as part of her above-mentioned course.)

Moynahan, J. M., & Stewart, E. K. (1980). The American jail: Its development and growth. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. In England in 1630-31, there was a royal edict that "houses of correction" (i.e., prisons) be built next to jails, thus constituting an early example of deviancy program-to-program juxtaposition. Following this practice, many jails and prisons in the US were also built next to each other.

Street drug use, drug laws, and the prison system have been on a collision course in the US, with people with drug offenses filling up the prisons faster than they can be built and expanded. Almost a third of state prisoners are in for drug offenses, while prisoners are being released early in order to make room for newer ones. The situation is desperate, with no solution in sight, though some people see this as a strong rationale for simply legalizing drug use.

Every year, the prison statistics get worse. Between 1960 and 1975, the number of people in state prisons in the US was roughly constant at around 200,000, but then exploded and reached close to 700,000 in the early 1990s (Newsweek, 14/6/93).

Among young men in the US, there were in prison, jail, on probation or parole on any given day in 1990, 23% of young "black" ones, 10.4% of Hispanic ones, and 6.2% of "white" ones (Newsweek, 26/4/93). More young "black" men have gone to jail than to college, and correctional institutions are replacing home, school and church as their major socializing institution (Newsweek, 2 Aug. 93).

The combination of a dramatic increase in crime in society, and overcrowded prisons, has resulted in a circus of prisoners getting dumped out of prison long before their sentences are up. Parole boards have a long-standing practice of not considering the criminal record of an applicant for parole—one reason why people who are very dangerous get released back into society. Even when prisoners are denied parole because they are thought too dangerous to be freed, they may be released under some other provision. For instance, they may get placed on what is called "day reporting," in which they are out on the street but are supposed to report daily to parole officers. In essence, the state has a vested interest in getting prisoners out of prison as quickly as possible in order not to have overcrowded prisons, which can result in expensive legal actions against the state. Parole officers are overwhelmed, and many prisoners on parole or otherwise released under supervision simply disappear. In New York State, almost 1/3 of prisoners who ran away while on the outside could not be found. Furloughed prisoners are still counted as inmates on state records, so the public may not even know how many prisoners have been released (SHA, 3 Jan. 93; SHJ, 4, 5, & 26 Jan. 93).

Further, prisoners accrue what is called "good time" merely by being in prison, which means their sentence is reduced for every day they actually spend serving it. In essence, the prison system rather than judges decides what kind of
punishment and for how long it will administer to a convicted criminal, despite what the public demands.

This is only one reason, but an important one, why there is public sympathy for the death penalty. The public feels it cannot be sure that a person sentenced to life in prison will really serve a life sentence, and in fact on this, the public is right: people convicted and sentenced for the most heinous crimes may be let out of prison after having served only a small portion of their time (narrative from Susan Thomas).

*In the US, about 52% of rapists end up back in prison for some other crime, but 8% are reconvicted for another rape within 3 years, which is the highest rate of re-arrest for the same crime after prison release (SHJ, 15/6/93).

*Two-thirds of all the deaths of prison inmates in New York and New Jersey in 1991 were due to AIDS, which in turn was due mostly to needle drugs (AP in SHJ, 13/9/93).

*In a series of articles from July through September 1993 (and more sporadically since), the Syracuse newspapers reported on a persistent pattern of staff beating up teenaged residents at state-run juvenile detention/corrections facilities in New York State. Staff would literally gang up on a resident, take him to a padded cell away from other staff and residents, and beat him there. Sometimes entire groups of residents would be beaten at a time. This violence might be visited on residents for "attitude" problems, for mouthing off to staff, for misbehaving in class, and of course to frighten other residents into compliance. Notably, these residents were not the most aggressive and violent teenage offenders, but were often victims of parental abuse and abandonment, homeless, and sometimes with criminal records. Sometimes the youth's injuries would not be reported, and they would be denied medical treatment. If injuries were reported, staff lied about the source of these injuries, saying that injuries had occurred when the resident resisted legitimate restraint. Apparently, there was a systematic cover-up of these abuses by higher-ups in the facilities and at the state level (SHJ, 26/7, 8/8, & 2/9/93; SHA, 8 & 15 Aug. 93).

*It is common to apply the term "jail" to the places where offenders are detained prior to their sentencing, and the term "prison" to the places to which people get sentenced by the court. For hundreds of years, seriously disturbed people got put into jails. Then came people like Dorothea Dix who, for better or worse, managed to pry the mentally disordered out of the prison system. According to some authorities, we are now back to the 1830s with over 7% (roughly 31,000) of jail inmates (in distinction to prisons) being seriously mentally disturbed—a tenfold increase since 1980, with the increase further continuing. States vary widely in the percentage of very disturbed jail inmates. This is particularly serious considering the large proportion of such persons who are in jail without having been criminally charged. In one Montana county, the local jail is the only facility that accepts disturbed people on an emergency basis (Health Letter, 11/92).

In the police and prison culture, a "mercy booking" refers to putting someone into jail out of compassion for their plight. These days, this mostly means putting a mentally disordered person into jail to give them a relief from homelessness, hunger, drinking or self-destruction. Some local jails are becoming so desperate that they are installing "mental health units"—as if a jail were good for mental health! If Dorothea Dix lived today, she might campaign to get abandoned mentally disordered people off the streets and into jails, as an act of mercy.

*In Tupper Lake, in the far north of New York State, the state is building a $6 million super-secure, high-tech prison for 36 mentally retarded offenders.
Supposedly, by late 1993, there were already between 16-18 people targeted to move into the facility, who were then living at the Monroe Developmental Center—a state institution for the retarded in Rochester. The prison was projected to have $4.5 million just in personnel costs.

*There are an amazing number of women who are obsessed with the idea of romancing or marrying a man who is serving a prison sentence. Some of these become outright prison groupies, and try to get into prisons so that they can meet prisoners for romance and sex. Many are, or get, involved in some kind of prison visiting or corresponding, and did not know the man prior to his imprisonment. In Florida, a man on death row has been virtually besieged by women who want to marry him, and his mother said that she "almost lost count" of their number. Some of them even bought wedding dresses (1/92 source clipping from Michael Steer). Should such a couple actually get married, and the man eventually comes out of prison, these marriages usually fare very poorly. It is obvious that either very faulty ideas or some mental abnormality is driving most of these women.

*The largest prison in the US is the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, with 18,000 acres, or 28 square miles.

*There is only one prison unit in the US earmarked entirely for Christians. It is part of the Fort Worth, Texas, prison system, and holds 48 of its 4400 inmates (AW, 3 April 93).

*If you are an observant Jew, then the place to commit a crime punishable by prison is in New York State, which so far is the only one that has started to offer a kosher diet in all its state prisons—a most "sensitive" gesture, particularly considering that soon, virtually the whole state prison population may be dead from TB (see 8&10/93 TIPS issue).

**Sexual Abuse & Deathmaking in Prisons**

*The prison riot at New York's Attica prison in 1971 was put down by a massive assault with machine guns by police from all over the state, in which the police killed 43 people. An attorney charged in 1993 that the mission was so designed as to retake the prison in the most brutal way possible so as to set an exemplar of what happens to prison rebels (AP in SHJ, 9 Jan. 92).

*In 4/93, there was a terrible riot by prisoners in the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility at Lucasville, with many dead, most of them inmates. The prison had been so oppressive as to allow prisoners only one five-minute phone call out a year. There was special irony in all of this in that Lucasville was supposed to have been "designed to be the latest word in humane confinement," but that is something that the imperial powers say about virtually every prison before they build it. Unfortunately, one of the demands of the rebels was a halt to compulsory TB tests. This is of course an impossible demand, given the explosive expansion of TB in prisons these days, so that without these tests and some counter-measures based on them, probably all prisoners would catch TB, and almost all of them would die from it (see 8&10/93 TIPS issue).

*Between 1987-92, there were 42 suspicious jail deaths in Mississippi, half of them involving "black" inmates (Atlanta Constitution, 15/4/93).

*Prisons in New York State have one of the worst records for prisoner health care. To begin with, many prisoners have used drugs, come from the poorest classes of society, and are thus likely to have many more medical problems than the typical population, not even counting the dramatic increase in AIDS and TB in the prison population in recent years. In addition, prison medical staff devalue
and distrust prisoners (e.g., they think prisoners commonly exaggerate their symptoms in order to get out of work), and the medical staff are often marginally competent. Ergo, it is a common prison practice to give inmates medicine to mask their symptoms rather than to do meaningful medical examinations to detect the underlying problem. As a result, problems go untreated until they become crises, and often it is too late for any treatment to be effective (Syracuse Post-Standard, 10 Aug. 1992).

*Prison guards are almost as larcenous as prisoners, since they are well-known to smuggle into prison just about anything a prisoner has money to buy. In New York City, prisoners have been buying guns from guards and then used them to shoot themselves in some harmless way so that they can file multi-million dollar lawsuits against the city for failing to provide them with adequate protection while in jail (Time, 1 Feb. 93).

*In the local jail in Syracuse, prisoners during 1992 have been suspended from their handcuffs—something similar to what one sees in cartoons of medieval dungeons.

*Some women's circles complain a lot about both real and unreal sex abuse from men, but there are probably few places where women are at greater risk of really being sexually abused than they are in women's prisons, where they are at risk from both their fellow prisoners and from the personnel—both male and female! Some prisons are apparently virtually sex slave camps, such as the Georgia Women's Prison. Sometimes, when the abusers are men, pregnancies result and then the inmates are pressured to undergo abortions (e.g., Plain Dealer, 14/11/92).

Women's prisons in Georgia have been places of torture and sexual abuse of the inmates for over ten years. Among the people who have been fired for sexually violating the prisoners have been an assistant warden, a prison chaplain, a head counselor, and others. However, none of this has come to grips with the situation. In one women's prison near Milledgeville, as many as 50 prison employees are said to be involved in abuse. Both male and female prison staff have been implicated, and one staff member has 200 potential rape counts pending. One woman, impregnated by a prison guard, was forced to have an abortion in order to cover up the incident. An employee of a Georgia woman's prison who was blowing the whistle on other staff members was murdered, apparently in efforts to prevent his testimony (AP in SHJ, 15/3/93). There have also been recent exposés of sexual abuse of female prisoners in Hawaii (e.g., Newsweek, 9 Nov. 92).

*Apparently, women who are imprisoned for having participated in anti-abortion activities are particularly likely to be subjected to sexual abuse and harassment by jailers, in which case they will find no champions against sexual harassment among the feminists (LA, 12/91). Apparently, these women are the only ones whom many feminists believe "deserve sexual abuse."

*Pelican Bay Prison in California is said to be the toughest one in the US. It cost $250 million to construct, and enables people to be imprisoned without any direct contact with other inmates. There are no windows, and if prisoners are moved from one place to another, they are always shackled and accompanied by at least two guards. Prisoners said to be intractable (many of them reportedly mentally retarded) are sent there from other prisons, and 60% of its inmates are from 800 or more miles away. The prisoners claim that they are being made insane by the environment, and we believe it, based on the same thing happening in prison history before when inmates were excessively isolated. In fact, we could not help but think of this prison as the Titticut Follies of the 1990s. The prison system claims that picking these prisoners out of other prisons has made the other prisons much less violent, and that we are prepared to believe; but we are
unwilling to believe that there are not yet other ways to accomplish the same end. Paradoxically, when these prisoners have served their sentences, they may be dumped out of the Pelican Bay environment directly onto the streets without any kind of transitional arrangement or help, despite the fact that at least by that time, they had been characterized as extremely insane and/or extremely violent (CBS-TV program 60 Minutes, 12 Sept. 93).

We mentioned before the new prison system practice of constantly moving prisoners about. One of the most cruel instances of this dislocation policy occurred when 500 prisoners from Puerto Rico were sent to Minnesota (under contract) into a privately-operated prison in the small town of Appleton, where the prison was built in order to create jobs (SHJ, 1 April 93).

Solitary Confinement
by Robert Walker

Robert Walker died between 4:30-5:00 am, 28 August 1984, in Fremantle State Prison, Western Australia, Aged 25.

Have you ever been ordered to strip, before half a dozen barking eyes
Forcing you against a wall--ordering you to part your legs and bend over?

Have you ever had a door slammed, locking you out of the world,
Propelling you into timeless space--to the emptiness of silence?

Have you ever laid on a wooden bed--in regulation pyjamas,
And tried to get a bucket to talk--in all seriousness?

Have you ever begged for blankets, from an eye staring through a hole in the door
Rubbing at the cold air digging into your flesh--
Biting down on your bottom lip, while mouthing 'Please, Sir'?

Have you ever heard screams in the middle of the night,
Or the sobbings of a stir-crazy prisoner,
Echo over and over again in the darkness--threatening to draw you into madness?

Have you ever rolled up into a human ball, and prayed for sleep to come?
Have you ever laid awake for hours,
Waiting for morning to mark yet another day of being alone?

If you've never experienced even one of these, then bow your head and thank God.
For it's a strange thing indeed--this rehabilitation system!

The Death Penalty

*When the death penalty was reintroduced in the US in the early 1980s, hundreds of people would crowd around a prison when someone was being executed, some holding a vigil in solidarity with the condemned, and others celebrating the killing exuberantly. Now the novelty has pretty much worn off, and at execution time, there may now be no one outside a prison, or only a very few people. Prison inmates themselves used to hold special observances the night of an execution, but this too has fallen by the wayside. All around, people have just simply gotten used to the killing, and relatively indifferent toward it (Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 6 Dec. 92).

*Texas is one of the leading states in the US when it comes to the death
penalty. A Texas state judge had the bad taste of drawing a happy face next to his signature on the death sentence of a state prisoner. The Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct was at a loss about what to do, commenting it "has never had a situation like that come up before" (SHJ, 28/7/93).

*As of Spring 1993, there were 2300 people on death row in the US. Many are mentally disordered, some are mentally retarded, some were less than 18 years old when they committed their crimes. The US has executed at least 23 people this century who turned out to have been innocent (Casa Cry, 5/93), and just between 1980 and mid-1993, 21 people condemned to death in the US were later released because of new evidence of their innocence.

*US Attorney General Janet Reno has been promoting proposals that would reduce delays in executions, as well as expand capital punishment to about 50 federal crimes. "I'm very comfortable with that," she said (SHJ, 13/8/93).

*A number of death penalty opponents have begun to sign a declaration that if they should be murdered, they do not wish for their murderer to be executed. The campaign to get people to sign this declaration has been called a "living wish campaign" (source information from Christina Dunigan).

*Capital punishment by lethal injection is now virtually the norm in the US. Allegedly, this is because it is more humane. However, after long and considerable waffling, physicians and nurses decided not to participate in such killings, and as a result, the technology of the killing is often very "inexpert," and the victims will die slowly, with considerable suffering, and sometimes with violent pain reactions (IAETF Update, 5&6/93; Life at Risk, 7&8/93). Personally, the TIPS editor would prefer to be hung or shot, since this is now the less gruesome method, though no longer consistent with the "sensitivity" of the age. How would you like yours?

The US Criminal Justice System—or Better Yet, Its Collapse

*With the collapse of polity among people on the one hand, and the inability of police to cope with problems, police put more and more reported offenses on the back burner, and deal only with the most urgent ones. In some locales, things have gotten so bad that even rape is no longer considered to be an urgent matter by the police. In the greater Syracuse area, a woman called police at 2:00 am on a Sunday reporting that her 15-year-old daughter had been raped. It took hours for the police to respond, including because some of its resources were devoted to a burglary in progress. Conceivably, the day may come when police will be selective even in regard to which killings they will pay attention to, and which ones not (SHJ, 31/3/93).

*Los Angeles, one of the most crime-ridden and riotous cities in the developed Western world, has had one of the lowest ratios of police officers per capita among large US cities.

*Apparently unbeknownst to much of the public, and certainly without any public debate or comment that we have seen, there has been a profound change in US police practices in the handling of prisoners between circa 1975–85. Previously, police used a great deal of discretion as to whom they shackled and how, but now it has become prescribed standard operating procedure to shackle everybody in certain ways. Even the most harmless people arrested for nonviolent resistance (e.g., a sit-in at an abortion clinic) will be shackled just as securely as a person just arrested for cold-blooded mass murder. Other countries have copied US practice. Relevant to SRV is that this practice images anybody in police custody much more starkly and explicitly as a menace.
*According to some authorities, police fabricate fake evidence against suspects all over the US. When one New York State trooper was convicted in 1992 of faking evidence and lying, he claimed that his superiors wanted fake evidence, and that the practice was widespread in the state police. State officials denied this and said that it was the first such instance in 75 years, but then were mortally embarrassed when one case after another began to become public of evidence fabrication by other state police officers.

*In 1/93, the US Supreme Court rendered a ruling which certainly should prove, for those who still harbor doubt, that it is insane and that the end of polity in the US must be near. The ruling was that a person condemned to death for a crime may be executed even though new evidence that proves the person's innocence has emerged. In other words, as long as the proper procedures were followed, and a trial was fair given the circumstances available at that time, guilt or innocence no longer matters. One of the dissenting judges said that such an execution "comes perilously close to simple murder" (AP, in SHJ, 31/1/93). Actually, we should not be surprised, considering that the self-same court has legalized the wanton killing of the innocent unborn since 1973.

*One can easily see why the American public would become radicalized on the issue of blue-collar crime. In Syracuse, a man who had already been convicted three times for robbery was nonetheless paroled from prison, and within the week, he had robbed another bank and driven away in a stolen car, while carrying a loaded pistol (SHJ, 15/1/93). In Texas, a man with an earlier criminal record who sexually assaulted and then strangled an 8-year-old girl pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 30 years—and was paroled after just ten years (SHJ, 21/6/93). No wonder Americans are screaming for the death penalty.

In 11 May 92, Time reviewed the TV program, "In My Daughter's Name," where a woman's daughter is raped and murdered, the perpetrator is acquitted on a ludicrous insanity defense, and the institution to which he is sent lets him go—upon which the mother tracks him down, shoots him dead, and then has to stand trial herself. Time said "It's overwrought and unbelievable," and yet very soon after it said this, this very sort of thing happened in reality.

*In the New York City subway, a young man mugged an elderly man in his 70s, tore his jacket, bloodyed his nose, broke his glasses, and almost choked him to death. As the mugger tried to flee the scene, a transit policeman shot him in the back which left him paralyzed. The mugger sued and won $4.3 million in damages for "excessive deadly police force" (SHJ, 7 April 93). It is true that the force used was excessive and deadly, but the victim got nothing, and rulings like this totally destroy the citizens' faith in government and the justice system.

*While the criminal justice system is over-filling every detentive facility there is, and is screaming for more, a lot of people are being jailed for trivial offenses or for failure to be able to put up small bails. For instance, there have been recent cases in Syracuse where a man was jailed for not paying $1.15 cab fare, and for inability to post the $250 bail. Some people were slated for an alternative to imprisonment, and were put in a special holding program in jail for reassignment, but the bureaucracy works so slowly that they spent 100 days in prison waiting for an alternative to what might have been a shorter sentence. A man was unable to pay a traffic fine of $100 and was hauled into prison for that. A day in jail was costing about $100 a day at that time (Thursday's Obligation, Summer 93).

Religion in Society

Much of the content under this heading could just as readily have been carried under the heading of "Signs of the Times." Of course, belief and value
One of the most obvious universals about human beings is that they are religious. Except for the smart educated materialists of modernism, apparently all peoples and cultures have held explicit religions, often on the level of cosmologies. And the amazing thing about the smart educated materialists of modernism is that no sooner do they renounce what they call religion than they fall for a religion in disguise—usually in the disguise of economics, politics, or science. Examples are "research," scientific positivism, reductionism, Marxism, deconstructionism, human potential movements, psychoanalysis or other psychological treatment cults, feminism, political liberalism, human and legal rights, and even "New Age" cults.

The compulsion to be religious seems to be a greater human universal than all sorts of other human characteristics of considerable universality—indeed, it seems to be more universal than many human appearance characteristics that are based on genetics and race. This universality of religiousness in the human has been the reason why some people have referred to the human species as Homo religiosus. Materialists have of course no answer to this, and must take recourse to strident attempts to deny the validity of the phenomenon, or to very convoluted and unlikely theories of cultural transmission of superstitions. Many other people have simply not given the matter much thought. Yet others acknowledge the phenomenon, but offer little or no explanation. Some ascribe it to the nature of the human spirit or soul, and say that if humans have a spiritual component to their identity, then it is only natural—indeed, inevitable—that they should either seek the spiritual in general, or generate belief systems that are above the level of materialistic explanatory constructs.

The conventional liberal and now PC wisdom is that the more deeply religious people are, the more likely they are to be close-minded, bigoted, and a threat to civic harmony. What a national US Gallup poll found instead was that roughly 13% of the population that can be said to have deep religious spiritual commitments are more tolerant of others, more concerned about societal betterment, more inclined to perform charitable acts, and vastly happier than the rest (First Things, 3/93).

*The 20th century is the only age in human history that we know of that has not regarded some kind of religious faith as natural and normative (Time, 27/9/93).

*In order to avoid saying something that might acknowledge a creator, a writer in Science (4 June 93, p. 1531) explained the difference between living and nonliving organisms in the following pretzled fashion. "The commonly accepted view is that this distinction is not due to some nonphysical forces acting in the living systems, although this is an empirical question. Instead, it seems that living things owe their status to the peculiar spatiotemporal organization of quite ordinary physicochemical processes."

*Wolfe, A. (1991). Whose keeper? Social science and moral obligation. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. The author argues that modern liberal democracies, such as the US and Scandinavia, have broken with traditional sources of morality and instead have relied upon economic and political frameworks to define citizens' obligations to one another. He calls for reinvigorating a sense of community and thus a sense of obligation to the larger society.

*Even the worst blood persecutions in history seem to have been less successful than the more subtle means of the former East German government in extinguishing religious faith by means of ideological strategies of materialization. Nowhere in the world was communism more successful in eradicating religion (in the usual sense of the term) than there. As late as
1949, 80% of the population still identified themselves as members of Protestant churches, and 15% as Catholic. By 1989, only about 10% were left as practicing Christians (First Things, 4/93). Belief in God is now lower in East Germany than in any other European or Western nation (SHJ, 18/5/93). As of 1991, only 26% of East Germans still believed in God, and even fewer (19%) believed in heaven--by far the lowest figures in 14 developed or Western countries (CS, 5 Aug. 93). This was one of the extremely few Marxist goals that the country achieved in 45 years.

*Woody Allen has come up with a new proof that there cannot possibly exist a God. The proof consists of pointing out that one cannot get a plumber on weekends, implying that if there is not even such a simple thing, how can there be something infinitely bigger and better (Time, 9/9/92).

*A survey (Patterson & Kim, 1991) found that all over the US, 90% of the people said they believed in the existence of God, but that they do not turn to God or religion to help them decide any of the major or minor moral issues of the day, and that religion plays virtually no role in shaping people's opinions on a long list of important public questions, including those that would appear to be closely related to one's religion, such as abortion, birth control, the role of women in the clergy, and so on. On not a single such question did a majority of people seek the guidance of religion, and most of them did not even know their church's position on such important issues.

We do not really need such a survey to know that the above is true, because we see this happening all around us all the time. However, the phenomenon itself sheds important light on how people view religion and divinity, namely, as legitimately existing but totally irrelevant to how they should live. In other words, they have issued a declaration of independence from the very divinity that they acknowledge to exist. This is of course a totally inconsistent position, and may be one of the contributors to the insane schizophrenia in American public life and morality.

*We were a bit taken aback to read in the obituary column (SHJ, 20/5/93) that a nurse practitioner with a "family planning" agency and with Planned Parenthood (which performs abortions left and right) was a communicant of (a Catholic) Immaculate Conception parish.

*One of the gurus of externalistic modernists is Marianne Williamson, a "nondenominational preacher" of incredible mystic-sounding meaningless platitudes who has written two books that stupid modernists have made 1992 and 1993 best-sellers in the advice category: A Return to Love and A Woman's Worth. She has "given meaning to the existence of Raquel Welch and Cher," and officiated at Elizabeth Taylor's most recent (eighth?) "marriage" (Newsweek, 7 June 93).

*About 40% of Americans attend a religious service at least once a week, according to their self-reports, and 78% claim that they pray at least once a week. One amazing thing about American religiosity is that even among the 13% of Americans who declared themselves to be atheists or agnostics, nearly one in five still claims to engage in daily prayer (A.M. Greeley survey, in Newsweek, 6 January 92). Yet stranger is that 32% of respondents in a 1986 survey claimed that they had at least one transforming mystical experience through prayer, even though one would not be able to infer that from observing public life. Perhaps we gain a better understanding of what is going on when we learn that 43% of Americans ask for material things when they are praying.

*A national US poll indicated that 83% of Americans think that the ethical and moral standards of Americans should be higher, but apparently everyone thinks that everyone else's standards should be higher (Time, 14/9/92).
*A columnist in Indianapolis Business Journal (20/9/93) said that it might very well be corporate America that would be the "vehicle that would lead our culture to higher ethical standards" (source item from Joe Osburn).

*Two former Catholics, one of them a former Catholic priest, have written a book, Recovering Catholics, which interprets church membership as a "codependency."

*In Syracuse, a "Catholic Singles" group is "open to singles of any religion" (SHJ, 25/5/93).

*In Jerusalem, the majority of the members of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) are Jewish (NC Register, 20/12/92).

*Today, any objection to state or public practices that is rooted in what is interpreted as a religion is interpreted to be illegitimate, while critique based on a religion that is not recognized as such—as most idolatries are not most of the time—is usually accorded legitimacy. One result of all this is a separation of believer and state, but not of religion and state (Thompson, 1992).

*We are all in favor of what used to be called the separation between church and state, but of late, the PC culture has increasingly prohibited all sorts of Christian displays in public, while at the same time increasingly permitting religious displays that are either implicitly or explicitly non-Christian or anti-Christian. For instance, the Ku Klux Klan was permitted to display a ten-foot high wooden cross in a Cincinnati downtown square over the Christmas holidays, while displays with traditional Christmas themes, such as nativity scenes, may no longer be exhibited on public properties (FI, 2/93).

*It is bad enough that a punk rock star is named Billy Idol, and that he is in fact idolized by innumerable fans; but on his body, he also wears all sorts of Christian religious symbolisms.

*A federal court approved the motto "In God We Trust," which also includes a cross, on the Chicago city seal because the motto "in this country (the US) is essentially an empty gesture, drained of any traditional religious meaning" (AP, in SHJ, 8 Jan. 93).

*Because US dollar bills have the inscription "In God we trust" on them, Israel's chief rabbi ruled that Jews are not allowed to bring US dollar bills out of their pockets or other hidden places when they are in toilets or other "unclean" settings. Instead, they must treat such US dollars as holy documents that may not be exposed to filth. We know that a lot of other people too have thought of dollars as holy (FI, 6/92).

*A store sign said, "In God we trust, but all others pay cash." This probably explains why "In God we trust" is written on all US paper money bills.

*Increasingly, couples in the US are getting married at shopping malls, which underlines that these are one of the temples of modernism—in this case, temples to mammon (SHA, 14/2/93).

*Some modernistic people have sloshed from one guru, seer, religious craze, etc., to another, so much that they eventually began to suffer what has been called "prophecy burnout." Also, within specific religious groups, the confusion of values, the vacuum in moral authority, and people's externalism have resulted in an explosion of religious apparitions, with some people making pilgrimages from one apparition site to another until they collapse from prophecy burnout. The
streaming from one cult or subcult to another has also been referred to as the religious equivalent of modernistic consumerism, i.e., religious consumerism. For some reason, women seem to be much more susceptible to cultish movements. For instance, thousands of the people who pilgrimaged to the Marian shrine in Medjugorje in the 1980s came back and started having visions of their own, and most of these visionaries were women, though only a small number of them have subsequently attained public prominence. In fact, one can almost speak of a Marian apparition business that sprung up after Medjugorje.

*It is always a sign of severe societal stress when there are epidemics of religious visions. It is as much a sign of societal distress as is people going berserk in public places and mass-killing others before being killed or committing suicide. The TIPS editor remembers how, during the last year or so of WWII, Germany was swept by visions, prophecies, future-tellers, and so on, all feeding a lively rumor mill. Now, in the US, religious visions are becoming a dime a dozen, but at the same time more and more people who have not had the visions themselves are putting their faith in the visionaries who did.

*People who make a big deal out of the rise of so-called millenaristic movements or cults should contemplate that the biggest and most fanatic outbreaks of salvation religions in the last 100 years have been materialistic ones: science and technology as salvation, Marxism, Soviet communism, Nazism, Italian fascism, Chinese communism, Korean communism, Cambodian communism, Peruvian Shining Path, Marxism, and on and on.

*On 15 May 1993, we heard a TV ad that proclaimed, "There is a can in the store with your salvation in it." The ad was for Desenex foot powder!

*In our opinion, the unnecessary uses of deadly force in US government confrontations with religious cults, most recently in Idaho and Texas, are serving as stalking horses for more widespread persecution of religious bodies and practices. The groups in Idaho and Texas were easy prey because they were so unpopular, but this is how things start down the slippery slope. Maybe 15 years ahead, a mainline church may be persecuted because it is opposed to some gross immoralities made permissible by law, such as abortion or "euthanasia."

*Under the communist regime in Poland, the authorities built up computerized files on priests, but never did the same with criminal records, showing that the communist beast knew quite well who its real enemies were (AP in SHJ, 12/12/91).

*Contemporary Western witchery reflects modernistic individualism in that each witch's version of religion is his/her (mostly her) own thing--except that they are vastly more united in what they are against: Christianity, and often men. One woman in Syracuse who says she is a priestess of Ochun and a Wiccan "celebrates the erotic...recognizes the power of the Great Whore...the truth that is between our skirts, and embrace the sacred harlot within ourselves" (SHJ, 27/4/93).

*For the first time ever, a woman was selected to play the role of Jesus in the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" in Minnesota (AP in SHJ, 31/7/93).

*There is a church in Dallas that claims to be the largest church for homosexuals, with 1000 members. It plans to build a nursing home for homosexuals and launch a television ministry (AP in SHJ, 27/2/93).

*To our amazement, we learned that one of the modernistic translations of the Bible (Psalm 139:16) referred to the unborn baby in the mother's womb as "embryo." This is called a historical anachronism, insofar as the construct of an embryo
would not have been available to people at the writer's time. This is similar to
the gaffe of another modernistic Bible translation that rendered "you are a light
unto my path" (Psalm 119:105) as "you are like a flashlight on my way."

A Modernist's Magnificat (based on Luke 1:46-55)
by Susan Thomas

My soul doth magnify myself,
And my spirit rejoiceth in my self-esteem,
For all have looked and beheld
The greatness of me myself.
For behold, from henceforth
All generations shall speak of my fame,
For I who am mighty have done great
things,
And self-indulgence is my name.
And my concern is only with myself
Throughout all generations.
I have shown strength in the pursuit
Of my every whim and pleasure

The Interface Between Religion & Human Services

*One of the world's most famous places for the care of mentally afflicted
people is the town of Gheel (actually more properly spelled Geel in Flemish) in
Belgium. There, since the Middle Ages, the citizens of the town and nearby
countryside have taken care of (in their own homes) thousands of people with some
kind of mental handicap. Not as well known is that this practice began as a
pilgrimage to the shrine in Geel of St. Dymphna, who is one of the patron saints
of mentally handicapped or mentally suffering people. In the 1960s, St. Dymphna
was removed from the official calendar of saints by the Catholic Church because of
insufficient proof that she ever existed. However, her cultus still continues.

Few people know that there is also a St. Dymphna shrine in the US, namely, on
the grounds of the former Massillon State Hospital in Massillon, Ohio, 55 miles
south of Cleveland. There are daily devotions at the shrine, and one can become a
life member of the shrine association for $25.

*We have commented before that there is a certain segment of Christianity
that spans almost all denominations that has wedded itself to pop-psychology (or
sometimes even just plain psychology), and that has created a virtually new form
of religion that is a syncretism of psychology and Christianity. In sectors of
this religious culture, people who come with alleged multiple personalities may be
subjected to exorcisms addressed to each single one of these multiple
personalities to make sure that the entire person will be saved and go to heaven
(PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter, 11&12/93). Under shrinkery, one person kept
coming out with ever more personalities, until she had produced 100 during two
years of therapy which, of course, could keep exorcists mighty busy. For the
benefit of her shrinks (after spending about $300,000 on their "services"), she
also "recovered" "memories" such as sacrificing three of her children and drinking
blood, but eventually even she admitted that all of this was fantasy. The bulk of
the abuse that gets transacted in this kind of psycho-pop context is what happens
in the shrink sessions, where at the shrinkee's great expense, all sorts of false
memories are planted in them.

*Christian human service circles are marked by grotesque efforts to meld
Christian concepts of serving with secular material technologies and crazes. Here
are some painful examples of topics from the 11/92 Second International Congress
on Christian Counseling in Atlanta. "And the Word Became Flesh...in Psychodrama;
"Integrating Hypnosis with Christian Therapy;" "A Critique of the Inner Child
Work: Implications for Christian Counseling;" "A Christian Approach for Building
Self-Esteem;" "Multiple Personality Disorder and Scripture: Enhancing Healing;"
and "Christian Counseling As Business and As Ministry" (BDM Letter, 11/92).
*A Harvard cardiologist "prescribes" regular prayer and meditation for their healing "relaxation effects" (Newsweek, 6 January 92, p. 40).

*The Divine Mercy Treatment Center, a residential shrinkery rooted in traditional Catholicism, opened in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1992. It can be reached by phone at 1-800-MERCY-4-U. At least this beats "mercy-therapy 4 U."

*In Wisconsin there is a shrink center so specialized that it deals only with victims of clergy abuse (Time, 7 June 93).

*When Christians were tortured for their faith in olden days, they dealt with their travail by offering it up to the Lord and forgiving their torturers. Apparently, with the help of their faith, they were able to cope with what they had experienced once it was all over, and carry on. Nowadays, they go into psychotherapy instead, as we discovered with amazement. A nun in Guatemala was tortured by the security forces who, in recent years, have killed tens of thousands of people, and tortured many more. She promptly went to a center in the US that specializes in the shrinking of torture victims (CW, 10&11/92).

*It used to be that nuns would teach girls gainful skills so that they would not turn to prostitution. But in 1992, when prostitutes in Colombia held a public march to protest the closing of brothels by the government, a group of nuns marched with them because they believed that most of the prostitutes had no economic alternatives (Newsweek, 19/10/92).

*Prometheus Press professes itself to be based on the faith of secular humanism, and has been publishing numerous books with a message that religion in general, and Christianity particularly, are very bad for people. One such book is Deadly Doctrine: Health, Illness, and Christian God-Talk by a retired psychiatrist, which makes the point that Christian teachings "are incompatible with sound health," and that Christian attitudes towards sexuality are particularly toxic and result in "phobic responses" toward sex (FT, 4/93).

*A state court in Louisiana has actually prohibited a local school district from teaching a course on sexual abstinence to high-schoolers because this would constitute a "religious activity." Planned Parenthood led the opposition to the course!! (Interim, 4/93).

*Now that virtually every last vestige of religious identity in teaching has been purged from American public schools, the schools in the former Soviet Union are desperately struggling to bring the teaching of religion back into their 160,000 schools. This is a rather chaotic and flailing enterprise because of the lack of any kind of continuity in such teaching after more than 70 years of Communist dictatorship.

*Our Lady of the Snows is unfortunately the name of an apartment community for the elderly. That the snow here refers to what is on the head and not to what is on the ground is underlined by the fact that the facility is located in Belleville, Illinois, which is not extraordinarily snowy.

**Family Life & Children**

As we began to teach in 1992, the imperial powers, including the liberal and political correctness movement, most of the politicized homosexual sector, and much of feminism, have decided that the empire no longer needs the family, and that the family can and should now be destroyed. The empire has always disliked the family because of its communal nature, but had reluctantly allied itself with it because it could see no alternative to its own (imperial) continuity and
security. Now that the empire believes it no longer needs the family, it is doing to it what it wished it could have done to it all along. Theoretically, one could have an imperial arrangement that makes war against the family but values and nourishes children, but the dominant entities of imperality at this time have also declared war on children, hence also on reproduction.

*Under the new 1993 Tax Act signed by President Clinton, the "marriage tax" has gone up, i.e., a married couple pay much higher taxes than two single people making the same income. Similar disincentives exist in Canadian law where it may cost couples with children $1200 more if they were married (Interim, 8/93).

*On 16/5/93, we saw a very disconcerting TV ad (we believe it was on CBS) for a pregnancy test. A worried couple were shown to erupt into delirious and relieved happiness when the test came up negative.

*The pro-abortion governor of New York state, Mario Cuomo, has called for a tax of $250 for each childbirth, which even though it would be levied on physicians and hospitals would obviously be passed on ultimately to the parents. Why not a tax on abortions? (LA, 6/93).

*Some employers in Brazil will only hire women who will submit a sterilization certificate. Apparently, behind China, Brazil has the highest female sterilization rate (CM, 4/4/91).

*More women (35%) are sterilized in Puerto Rico than anywhere else in the world, due to the successful efforts of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

*With materialism engulfing Japan, children have begun to be seen increasingly as an economic burden, and birth rates have declined so much that the government has begun to initiate measures to encourage childbearing, not because of any moral or philosophical principles, but because of the threat of a declining worker pool (USN&WR, 24/12/90).

*Since ca. 1960, young children began to be occasionally referred to as "ankle-biters" in Canadian, US, and Australian parlance. Small children have also been called rug-rats, crumb catchers, and curtain climbers. This phenomenon, and others above, fall into the category of Kinderfeindlichkeit, a new German word to describe modernistic society's hostility toward reproduction and children.

*There has been a dramatic rise in poverty among children, i.e., more children are growing up poor (multiple documentations).

*In some poorer city areas in the US, a lot of children change schools about twice a year, among the reasons being that a lot of families move on the average of once a year, some shuttle their children among relatives, or the children are already in the child care system (Wall Street Journal, 14/11/90). Naturally, the children suffer greatly in their academic progress because of this.

*The protection and advocacy office for developmental disabilities and mental health in New York State came up with a very condemnatory report about the residential mental health services for children in the state. Such institutional "beds" cost about $180,000 per year per child in psychiatric centers, and even up to $210,000 per bed per year per child in hospital units. Children often remain in such expensive facilities for lack of less expensive or family-based ones, despite the fact that these services have been getting ever more expensive. The report said that the children are often first robbed of their childhood by their desperate home conditions, "and then by the very design of the service system that
keeps them moving from one placement to another" (Quality of Care, 3&4/93).

*Research has shown that reuniting children with their parents after they have been placed in foster care is commonly more difficult to achieve than the prevention of out-of-home placement would have been in the first place (Pelton, 1989).

*Child placement agencies commonly instruct foster parents not to become too emotionally involved with the foster children—and then are surprised if a child is not treated well (Pelton, 1989).

*There are millions of children in the US who should be adopted, but only a fraction of them are (ca. 60,000 a year), despite the presence of about 3 million households prepared to adopt a child (e.g., SHJ, 3 Aug. 93).

*After the communist government in Romania fell, couples from the US flocked there to get adoptable children. For several years, Romania was perceived as the last place where large numbers of caucasian children were up for grabs. About 300 agencies in the US began to specialize in Romanian adoptions, which recently have made up one-third of all international adoptions. Many Romanian parents sold their children for as little as $500, and many did it out of the crassest consumerist motives, e.g., in order to buy luxury items such as VCRs (e.g., "60 Minutes," 14/4/91).

*Some Romanian mothers have taken their children to Hungary to abandon them there, and all of them eventually were apparently adopted into the US, at a fee of $13,500 each (SHJ, 7/7/93).

*According to some experts, there will be 125,000 children in the US under the age of 18 by the year 2000 whose mothers have died from AIDS. The vast majority of these children will be concentrated in a small number of large urban areas, such as New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Washington, Newark, and San Juan. Unfortunately, the New York Times failed to say that these children need parenting, and instead said that they need "counseling" (SHJ, 7 Mar. 93). This grotesque peculiarity is probably due to the fact that the liberal PC media crowd has declared war on the family and can no longer bring itself to say that children need one, and they therefore instead emphasize shrinkery as the answer to loss of parents and/or family.

*While foster care has long been a child-destroying system, more and more it seems that even adoption is becoming one. Instead of pursuing above all else permanent stable family homes for children, adoption agencies, courts, and parents are sacrificing the welfare of children to all sorts of idols, and especially the idol of biological parents' "ownership" of their child. The entire adoptive system in the US is under a grave assault. Parents who gave up their children for adoption years earlier are suing to have them returned to them, with a number of courts having ruled in their favor. Who would want to adopt if one had to expect that any day in the next 18 years, the courts might undo the adoption? And the children are usually devastated when they are taken from their good adoptive homes and given to usually dysfunctional parents whom they do not know.

All this was exemplified by a 1993 case of a little girl whose biological mother surrendered her at birth but lied about the identity of the father. When she later told the real father (a week after the birth) that he had a child—who by then was in the process of being adopted—he sought custody of the child. After two years (!) of litigation, the child was ripped out of the family that had raised her from birth and was trying to adopt her, and given to her birth parents. The (semi-)adoptive parents were faulted for not surrendering the child early on when they first learned (a few weeks after the little girl was born) that the
biological parents were seeking custody. Had they done so, she would not suffer the profound trauma of being taken out of the only home and family she has ever known. At the same time, the biological parents continued to pursue custody even after they had given her up, and after they knew that they would have to fight for her in court, which could—and indeed did—take years. Surely they too must have known that their daughter would have become attached to the only parents she had ever known. All in all, it seems that all the adults acted selfishly—most of all the biological parents—and it may be the ruination of this little girl.

*In the former Soviet Union, there existed no government-funded foster care system, and therefore, all children not taken care of by their parents or relatives were put in institutions, and very few of these were ever adopted (Fact sheet on child care in the USSR from Doug Mouncey).

*A couple in New Jersey managed to adopt four children out of New York State, receiving $24,000 a year from the state to care for them, and then locked them up in a prison-like attic without beds, heat or light for almost three years (AP in SHJ, 18/10/93).

*People who disdain adoption refer to couples who adopt more than one child as "gatherers" (Time, 7 Sept. 92).

War & Preparations For War

"Older" readers may recall that we believe that war issues relate closely to human service issues, in both very direct and many very indirect ways.

*As of early 1993, there were about 110 wars going on in the world, more than at any other time since the 17th century, most of them civil wars. Of these, 32 were classified as major (SHJ, 26/3/93), leaving millions dead, wounded, homeless, etc.

*It is very difficult to drive around in New York State without contributing to a war mentality. Some of the major highways across the state are called the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Highway, the Veterans Memorial Highway, the American Legion Memorial Highway, and the Purple Heart Highway.

*During the Cold War, the US had poured over $600 million into Somalia, $335 million of it in arms, and the Soviet Union yet more. All this ruined rather than helped the country, and when US troops landed in Somalia in early 1993, they were—not inappropriately—confronted by their own weaponry.

*If only a very few years ago, one would have told someone that one might soon read a newspaper headline, "US Attacks Somali Force; Many Injured" (SHA, 31/1/93), no one would have believed it, and one would have been interpreted as likely insane. Compared to all the places where the US might have intervened, why Somalia? This has been a great puzzle, but we believe we finally glimpsed the answer. It is not Somalia's strategic location near the horn of Africa, but the reports that Somalia may contain vast undeveloped oil reserves (SHJ, 27/10/93). Bingo! All is now clear!

Knowing that people's memory is collapsing, we kept a news clipping that said that US Marines were arriving in Northern Somalia "as part of an amphibious landing exercise," and to "bring in doctors and clear brush" (as the Pentagon put it) as a "humanitarian relief effort," and would be there "a few days."

*During one engagement in Somalia involving thousands of combatants from various nations and intense use of all sorts of weaponry on the ground and from the air, all of which must have been the most fearsome experience particularly for
uninvolved civilians, the UN began to broadcast urgent appeals to the local population "to remain calm" (AP in SHJ, 12 June 93).

*As of mid-1993, more than 25 countries were believed to be involved in the development of weapons of mass destruction, which include nuclear, gas and bacterial warfare. More than a dozen of these countries had ballistic missiles that could throw nuclear warheads far beyond their borders (Time, 21/6/93). Nuclear war may not come at all the way most people have been thinking of it until recently, i.e., in a sudden world-destroying cataclysm. Instead, it may come as a nuclear pea-shooter local war among minor nations that creates a great deal of spotty local pollution plus some world-wide fallout that can be extremely destructive to health for decades, but that does not kill everybody or virtually everybody. Against these kinds of nuclear exchanges, fallout shelters and stockpiling of food and water are much more rational than they would have been for all-out cataclysmic nuclear war. For instance, in early 1990, India and Pakistan came close to nuclear war, we now learn (AP in SHJ, 22/3/93). It was the US that helped both—but especially Pakistan—to develop nuclear capabilities.

*One reason why regional conflicts are so much more vicious since 1990 is that the withdrawal of the superpowers from the Cold War has resulted in a glut of military hardware. For instance, in 1992, the US provided weapons to 59 authoritarian governments in the world, irrespective of their human rights abuses, type of government, or aggression against other nations (CASA, 10/93). Also, the 50,000 machine guns, 1.6 million M16 rifles, 130,000 tons of ammunition, plus many planes and tanks left behind by the US in Vietnam—this alone has been sloshing around the international arms market (SHJ, 8 Jan. 93).

*The US has replaced the former Soviet Union as the world's leading arms exporter (SHJ, 21/7/93), though total international arms sales have declined sharply and steadily since 1988. GOOD NEWS: In 1992, it was only $24 billion worth ($18 billion in 1990 constant dollars) (Time, 5 July 1993).

*Zillions of students from abroad, including from Iran, Iraq, and Libya, are being educated in nuclear physics at US universities, and in fact a lot of nuclear engineering departments in the US are only being kept alive by such foreign students (Newsweek, 12 July 93). This is yet another way in which the US is in fact exporting nuclear weapons technology.

*A 1986 book, Preventing Nuclear Terrorism, gives one the precise description for making a uranium or plutonium bomb (Newsweek, 12 July 93).

*Hundreds of thousands of highly-educated scientists, engineers and technicians in the US have depended on the weapons industry, either its think tank, research, or production domains. Now that there are at last some cutbacks in these activities, they are extremely unhappy, and some are screaming bloody murder, so to speak (e.g., Science, 8 Oct. 93). They look at peace, and "don't like what they see." "Life is going to be very unpleasant," said one. One rationalized his nuclear weapons job by saying, "Sure, nuclear war is lousy, but so is conventional war." Many are scrambling frantically to come up with new ideas on how to deploy their installations or skills in other ways, and some are coming up with some pretty far-fetched proposals.

As of 1992, 40% of US scientists were still working in one way or another for war enterprises. There is something about making tools for violence that takes possession of the tool-makers and junk their minds. Neither in the former USSR nor in the US have weapons firms been able to switch to peaceful manufacture. The chief executive of General Dynamics got it right: "Swordmakers don't make good plowmakers" (Time, 22/3/93), even though plowmakers have always managed to quickly become swords.
interpreted by some people as an opportunity to "beat swords into pork barrels" (Newsweek, 1 Aug. 92). For instance, protesting the cancellation of all sorts of defense contracts, one defense contractor said, "The only thing worse than paying $300 for a hammer is paying $300 and not even getting a hammer," referring to a famous defense contract scandal a few years earlier (SHA, 24/1/93).

Also, despite the end of the Cold War, the US federal budgets for research and development continue to be overwhelmingly earmarked for "defense," and still continued to increase from 1992 to 1993. The military R&D was of course overwhelmingly of an applied nature, while the much smaller civilian R&D research monies were overwhelmingly for basic research (Science, 16/4/93). This underlines once again how profoundly the American science and technology culture has wedded itself to warmaking, and cannot be readily weaned to peaceful purposes.

*The US Congress approved the development of a new fighter plane. Each will cost about $120 million, for a total bill of at least $95 billion. Even at that, the US Air Force would still like to spend $70 billion for another bomber. All of this means the grosses kinds of theft from the poor and from children. For this folly, the nation will pay a gruesome price--perhaps with its very existence.

*Trident submarines were built for one purpose only: to carry nuclear weapons, but the Pentagon would "neither confirm nor deny" that any specific Trident is carrying such weapons (Greenpeace, Spring 91).

*The US B-2 Stealth bomber is worth more than three times its weight in gold (Time, 14/12/92), yet there is no rationale for its existence, and the Pentagon has desperately tried to invent some (USN&WR, 29/2/91).

*The US alone still had enough nerve gas in storage in 1993 to kill every human being on the planet (Discover, 9/93).

*A US citizen, Karl Meyer, decided--as an act of personalistic assumption of responsibility--to quit contributing to war and war preparations by no longer paying taxes. For many years, more than 50% of US federal taxes have gone to such purposes, though some in very hidden ways not easily apparent from the official budget figures. So here is the dialogue between Karl and Uncle Sam, the format being inspired by Dr. Seuss's "I Do Not Like Green Eggs and Ham."

Karl:

Listen,
I do not like to pay for arms,
I do not like to do much harm,
I do not like it, Uncle Sam;
I do not like green eggs and ham.

Uncle Sam:

Try it, try it, just this year,
try it try it, have no fear.
Try it now the war is ended,
or your judge may be offended.
Withholding makes it very easy
to still your conscience when it's queasy.
You will like it once you pay.
You will do it every day.
Pay your tax like other folks;
we are tired of your jokes.

I will not let you take my pay;
I will not stand it for a day.
I will not pay you with a check;
I will not pay this year or next.
I will not pay, I will not budge,
I will not pay them to a judge;
I will not pay them through the mail;
I will not pay them in a jail.

Sort through your tons of canvas sacks;
you will not find my income tax.
I do not like to pay for arms,
I do not like to do much harm,
I do not like it, Uncle Sam;
I do not like green eggs and ham.

(From a secondary source, the 1&2/93 Catholic Worker).
The Peculiar World War III, & Some of Its Fruits

*While Iraq was America's friend, and received vast economic and arms subsidies, it destroyed much of Kurdish territory and killed up to 300,000 Kurds, many with poison gas. All this was known to the US government though it lied about it. UN war and embargo action since caused a quarter million Iraqi deaths, most of them women and children. Yet more have been killed by the Iraqis themselves since the war.

*The Pentagon awarded the National Defense Service Medal for service in World War III to seven times as many members in the armed services than actually served in the Gulf, namely, apparently to all of them, i.e., 3.5 million.

*Only after the US Armed Forces used a lot of heavy ammunition made from depleted uranium was it learned that the metal is actually still radioactive, and gets of course widely dispersed when it explodes and pulverizes. When a lot of it is used under battle conditions, then of course one gets radioactivity everywhere, including a great deal of radioactive dust that one inhales. The question has arisen whether US soldiers were harmed by this radioactivity, and of course even more so what will happen to people exposed to these materials under even low-intensity warfare, such as in WWIII. Also, many children in southern Iraq are now reported to be developing unexplained diseases that may be caused by uranium exposure (AP in SHA, 13/6/93). This seems to be a most peculiar way to try to inexpensively get rid of low-grade radioactive waste.

Miscellaneous News

*The Clinton administration, in its moral foolishness, has appointed (and probably will continue to appoint) to high places so many moral fools, mean people, and incompetent people because they are PC that we predict that eventually, one or more of them will do something so outrageous as to shake the foundations of the Clinton administration, and perhaps bring it crashing down, much as the Watergate boys did to Nixon, and the Iran-Contra gang almost did to Reagan. Surgeon-General Joycelyn Elders is a good candidate for becoming such a torpedo to the Clintons.

*The Public Citizens Health Research Group—a Nader offshoot, and usually quite reliable—has labeled the Clinton health care proposal a "cruel fraud" in conveying several false impressions and making several unkeepable promises (Health Letter, 10/93).

*Burstyn, V. (1993, June). Breeding discontent. Saturday Night, 15-17, 62-67 (source item from Beth French). This article from a Canadian magazine focuses on opposition to so-called reproductive technologies in Germany, where the opposition clearly ties the development and use of such technologies to the eugenic ideas of the Nazis. The author notes that this is a shocking perspective for the rest of the West.

Frederick Osborn, a eugenicist who was an administrator at the Carnegie Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1930s, said that eugenics could only work if people could be made to think and act eugenically without noticing it. He said that to do that, one had to establish a society with a high material standard of living in which everything—including health—could be bought. Then the family had to be smaller in size, so that parents would think about the "quality of life" (not Osborn's term) their children could have. In this kind of society, success depends on economic performance, and thus, people would start to think eugenically, to "choose" what "kind" of children they would have (p. 62). His scenario certainly describes the type of society of today.
In the 1985 film "Witness," about a Philadelphia cop who hides out in an Amish community, one of the characters—an elderly Amish grandfather—explains to his grandson that he must not handle a gun because a gun is meant for the taking of life, and "whatever a man takes into his hand, he takes into his heart." We think this insight deserves reflection by human service workers who so often let themselves be socialized and manipulated into becoming technologists, and who eagerly take in hand any technology that comes along, thinking that they can do so without becoming somehow shaped by the technology.

To show how esoteric one's "favorite devalued people" can be, consider the Maryland man who went around killing only hairdressers who dyed people's hair blond, manufacturers of blue-tinted contact lenses, and certain plastic surgeons—all because they made their clients look more "Aryan," thereby "diluting the Aryan beauty" (AP in Syracuse Herald Journal, 10 Aug. 93).

People in the computer world are now claiming first of all that "life can best be understood in terms of computation," and secondly, that it is "possible to create 'real' life in a computer" (Science, 21/8/92).

The answer to the ultimate question. Yes, the famous "last things" that occupy all religions—and Harper Collins has the answer in a book entitled Easing the Passage: A Guide for Prearranging and Ensuring a Pain-Free and Tranquil Death via a Living Will, Personal Medical Mandate, and Other Medical, Legal, and Ethical Resources.

We were amused to read the dedication of a book (Walsh, 1970): "Dedicated to the memory of the late Dwight David Eisenhower, without whose confidence and faith there would be no HOPE."

There is an organization in Syracuse called PEACE, but rather incongruously, it has been giving courses in the martial arts.

Conclusion

In his semi-historical 1910 novel, The Fool in Christ, Gerhart Hauptmann sketched a small sect that thought that the second coming was at hand.

"One song they intoned more frequently than any of the others. It was a song of tears, a veritable debauch of tears, endless stanzas of tears. It was like grey, dripping, trickling, drenching rain.

'Tears and tears and naught but tears
Is the Christian's life on earth.
He whose soul to God adheres
Walks in tears bereft of mirth.
Tears we eat and tears we drink,
Tears till in the grave we sink.
Mention but the name of man,
You will mention tears again.'

And so it continued in the same strain. The last stanza went:

'Tears, sweet tears, of heaven blest,
To an end this plaint I bring.
One thing still let me attest,
Tears the Christian's virtue sing.
Shedding many tears of pain
Makes bliss easy to attain;
For each tear dropped here below
Is a heavenly crown you sow'."

TIPS is also "a veritable debauch of dripping, trickling, drenching tears," except that it is punctuated by episodes of belly-wrenching laughter.