

# Bicentennial Blueprint

**1976: Agenda for Tomorrow**, by Stewart Udall (Harcourt, Brace & World. 173 pp. \$3.75), outlines a suggested program to "make all our cities fair, and all our human relations amicable." Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's books include "Last Clear Chance: The Need for a New Global Federalism" and "My Wilderness: East to Katahdin."

By WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

IN 1776 OUR FOREFATHERS gave a new nation to the world, and 1976 will mark its 200th anniversary. In his new book Stewart Udall urges that we commemorate our bicentennial with Project 76—"a vast project to make all our cities fair, and all our human relations amicable."

1976: *Agenda for Tomorrow* opens with an inventory of our problems concerning race, cities, education, and environment. There is an assumption that 1945 and the early postwar years were "a fine moment" in American history when our goodness was on display. But even then, the America seen from the hovels of Asia, the Middle East, and the rest of the undeveloped areas was a racist, bigoted, selfish nation.

We are what we are because of influences stretching back to before 1776. We drop napalm bombs on miserable Vietnamese families with the disdain of a Cotton Mather banishing a dissenter to the wilderness. The filth we see in our waterways and along our lake fronts and estuaries is the product of exploitation that is decades old. City slums are still the most lucrative investment; they, like the houses of prostitution, derive directly or indirectly from the most respectable financial houses. The men who built the tenements corrupted local officials, and those who run them keep housing inspectors on their payroll.

There are, of course, many, many sources of disaffection in our society. Each represents a deep core of infection. I mention these matters not to challenge Secretary Udall but to point out that his golden phrases about civic reconstruction and the like involve revolutionary changes. Some people think in terms of a Marshall Plan for the cities under which billions would be poured out to give us lovely, comfortable, healthy, rat-free tenements. But zoning officials, who demand their share, are still in office, and housing inspectors have not changed their spots. Moreover, if these lovely new cities were built by union labor, the work would be mostly done by white men; a cruel discrimination still operates in unions in the construction industry. Once the new cities were erected, the conditions that produced the Watts riots might well still exist.

When problems of our environment are considered, equal difficulties are apparent. For example, new water standards have been set; but marginal industries say they cannot pay the cost of compliance. And so the question facing communities is: Do we want full employment or clean water? On such issues the Chambers of Commerce usually carry the day.

New air pollution standards have been set; New York City's went into effect on December 20, 1968. The greatest default here is on the part of the city, which does not have the money to modernize its 300-odd incinerators.

The race for private lands bordering prospective federal projects is intense. Indiana Dunes was authorized by Congress, but funds were not appropriated. So frenzied private building goes on within that sanctuary.

The truth is that our values are dollar values, and our excellence is in manufacturing and merchandising goods. In other respects we are not much different from those who centuries ago deforested China and eroded the Middle East. We are modern spoilers who can always arrange for a Billy Graham or a Cardinal Spellman to bless our depredations.

It will take a tremendous conversion to make Project 76 a living crusade. If it were profitable to the engineers and their employers, like Mission 63, which



the Park Service dressed up in conservation garb several years ago, it would gain quick momentum. But, while engineering is perhaps our greatest talent, we need other talents for Project 76. We need ecologists to take charge of our urban planning; we need naturalists to handle our highway programs; we need sociologists and psychiatrists and social workers to deal with race relations. We need, in other words, the talents we are most short of if Project 76 is to succeed.

I join Stewart Udall in endorsing Project 76. It can conceivably be a great catalyst. We as a people are capable of great cooperative projects at a local level, and there does exist in black and white communities enough good will to keep us all together. Project 76 is an excellent tool for harnessing these cooperative capacities and for creating an urban and rural America that is decent and liberal. But if it is to succeed, vast changes are necessary.

# "Yeast in the Dough"

**The Pornography of Power**, by Lionel Rubinoff (Quadrangle. 239 pp. \$6.95), inquires into man's "capacity for an enjoyment of evil." Milton R. Konvitz, professor of industrial and labor relations and professor of law at Cornell University, wrote the recently published "Religious Liberty and Conscience."

By MILTON R. KONVITZ

LIONEL RUBINOFF, A PROFESSOR of philosophy at York University in Toronto, states that it is the purpose of his book "to unveil further the mystery of human existence and to investigate the possible origins of that peculiar behavior that leads not only to the pornographic exploitation of human misery and despair but also to the pornographic pursuit of power (one of the chief sources of that misery and despair)."

Twenty pages later, the author says:

It is with the not very modest intention of contributing to a new treatise on human nature that the following pages are dedicated. The main theme of this book, inadequate as it must seem to anyone with exacting standards, is the mystery and outrage of man's capacity for an enjoyment of evil and the ease and convenience with which the exercise and experience of power can inadvertently and surreptitiously contribute to that end.

These statements of intention reveal the book's difficulties and failures.

They suggest a replacement for A *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume's first and greatest philosophical work, a book that occupies an eminent place in the history of philosophy of the last two and a half centuries, and which is written with a purity of style adequate to satisfy "anyone with exacting standards." But admirers of Hume can be quickly and easily reassured; the famous *Treatise* will continue to be studied and analyzed, and will awaken others, as it awakened Kant, out of their dogmatic slumbers.

Rather than "unveiling further the mystery of human existence," I am afraid Rubinoff's book contributes to it. Instead of investigating "the possible origins" of behavior that leads to the "pornographic exploitation of human misery and despair" and to "the pornographic pursuit of power," the book attacks attempts at scientific study of human behavior, and, by the use of emotive and pejorative terms like "pornographic," "mystery," "misery," and "despair," aggravates difficulties standing in the way of analysis and understanding.

Another serious stumbling block is the

author's failure to repress his inclination to inject into his discussion serious controversial issues with which he does not deal and which he introduces merely to illustrate a proposition. As a result the reader is diverted from the main point to the question of the validity of the illustration. For example, Rubinoff considers the question whether the early environment of a person should excuse him from responsibility for acts contrary to morality. But, instead of holding rigorously to this subject, he discusses what he thinks Sartre's and Plato's and Aristotle's opinions would be, and whether Plato—"and Aristotle, too, for that matter"—would agree or disagree with Sartre. After a while the reader must be hopelessly confused, and his understanding of the original question is no further advanced.

Another example is the repeated reference to the war in Vietnam as possibly an example of American pursuit or enjoyment of power for its own sake. "Now I must confess," says the author, "that I do not know the answer, nor does anyone else I know of. But it seems to me that we had better start finding out, and soon." At least one reader felt like saying: "Who's stopping you? And until you have the answer, why pose the question on a hit-and-run basis, simply to illustrate what O'Brien may have meant in a speech to Winston Smith in Orwell's 1984?"

The one theme to which the author returns time and again is that evil in man should not be accepted, nor ignored, nor negated. It should be transcended in the imagination. "It is only," he says, "through the imaginative transcendence of evil that the future of mankind can be secured." How is this to be accomplished? Rubinoff's answer is through creative art and ritualistic religion.

Rubinoff here seems to misapply one of the essential principles of the Hebrew Scriptures and of Judaism: that the "evil urge" is God-given and should not be extirpated but used as the "yeast in the dough." For without the so-called evil urge, as Buber has written,

man would woo no woman and beget no children, build no house and engage in no economic activity.... Hence this urge is called "the yeast in the dough," the ferment placed in the soul by God, without which the human dough does not rise.... Man's task, therefore, is not to extirpate the evil urge, but to reunite it with the good.

This principle involves the use of sexuality, aggression, and other forms of the evil urge in the daily and hourly activities and involvements of man. It does not exclude art and religious ritual, but it goes far beyond these into do-

mestic, business, and public life. It calls not merely for the wedding ceremony but also for the consummation of the marriage—for the real as well as the "imaginative transcendence" of evil. As Kant noted a long time ago, there is a world of difference between the idea of my having thalers in my pocket and my actually having thalers in my pocket.

**T**HE problem that troubles Rubinoff was formulated by William James in his justly famous essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War." How can we win "the war against war"? The only way, said James, is to make use of the aggressive, martial energies and virtues, patriotic pride and national ambitions for pacific, constructive ends, e.g., by a universal conscription of youth for work on natural conservation, for the mining of coal and iron, for work on freight trains, for the fishing fleets, for clothes-washing, window-washing, road-building, tunnel-making, and for all the other rough and dirty chores that make civilization possible. With conscription for these purposes, said James,

We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible.... So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way.... The martial type of character [however] can be bred without war.

This is an example of the use of the evil urge in man as yeast in the dough of human nature and society by uniting it with the good. It is an "imaginative transcendence" of evil, not into the realms of art and ritual but into the work and lives of energetic, eager, brave, and adventurous men and women.

Finally, it should be apparent that human history does not establish an ineluctable connection between the good on the one hand and art and religion on the other. Life does not offer the good on such easy terms. Art and religion,



indeed, have been as often instrumental to the ends of evil—war, lust, greed, superstition, murder—as to the ends of the good—peace, love, beauty, wisdom, justice. Men have found that transcendence is a two-way street, and that just as one may transcend evil for the good of art and religion, even so one may transcend good for the evil of art and religion.

This means that the moral judgment holds a place of pre-eminence; but in this complex world the moral judgment is hardly helped by identifying power with pornography and the good with art and religious ritual.

## High Hopes in the Glass House

*The U.N. and the Middle East Crisis, 1967*, by Arthur Lall (Columbia University Press. 322 pp. \$10), uses the peace-keeping organization's formal records to demonstrate its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict of a year and a half ago. Joel Carmichael is the author of "The Shaping of the Arabs" and "Open Letter to Moses and Mohammed."

By JOEL CARMICHAEL

THE UNITED NATIONS is certainly a serious institution; yet it is often difficult to take it seriously. While many people would agree that the talk-fests in and around the U.N., however interminable, are surely preferable to warfare, and that the organization is consequently meritorious by definition, there is something undeniably deadly about its proceedings.

Arthur Lall, former Indian Ambassador to the U.N., has made a valiant attempt to inject some life—or, at least, liveliness—into the drab records of the U.N. debates by writing a substantial book on the Middle East crisis of May-June 1967. Mr. Lall, at present an adjunct professor of international affairs at Columbia University, is certainly in a position to speak with authority. His book is an eminently fair-minded, judicious, and comprehensive account of the crisis, its immediate background, and some of its consequences. Basing himself squarely on the record, with copious quotations from speeches and resolutions and with much knowledgeable "corridor" atmosphere, he has produced a book that will surely be useful for any aspiring graduate student.

Yet it is just Professor Lall's fair-mindedness that to my mind casts into relief the inadequacy of this method of approach to the bitter conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. There is a profound difference, after all, between the Arab-Israeli imbroglio and conventional Great Power frictions. The United