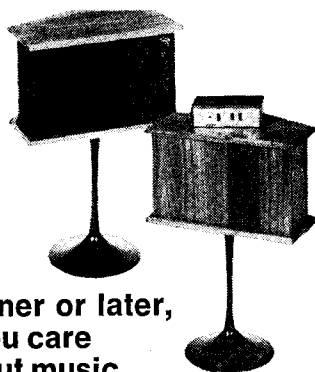




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ing backup volume of several hundred pages will enable us to examine the data and assumptions used in the various projections in detail. We can then make our own assumptions and project the consequences.

Response to the study varies from those who agree with the work's principal thrust, as I do, to those who reject it out of hand as a doomsday prophecy. The findings of *The Limits of Growth* are not comforting—but then neither are the circumstances in which we find ourselves in the late twentieth century.

II. Planetary Salvation

by LARRY L. FABIAN

Jeremiah has gone modern. He has traded his scrolls for computer printouts and the imposing paraphernalia of the systems analyst—mathematical models, complex simulations, feedback loops, flow charts, and all the rest. He displays mankind's grim future on cryptic graphs that show weird squiggles colliding ominously as they trace planetary collapse under the crushing weight of excessive growth.

In the unemotional language of science, this contemporary prophet challenges us to rethink cherished premises of the good life, and to see growth as decay, progress as regression, abundance as scarcity. He foresees irreversible damage to the planet's finite life-support systems, perhaps during the lifetimes of our children, if current industrial-output and population-growth trends continue unchecked. He pricks our optimism by saying that we are running out of technological solutions, which hitherto have always confounded Malthusian predictions. Why? Because a computer fed a model of a world with unlimited resources, effective antipollution measures, vastly increased food production, and perfect birth control reported that even if the real world could live up to this ideal model the result still would be "an end to growth before the year 2100."

Much critical dust has been stirred since Professor Dennis L. Meadows of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology unveiled the chilling findings of *The Limits to Growth* at a day-long seminar held at the Smithsonian Institution on March 2. So far this latter-day Jeremiah, together with his study-group colleagues, has fared only a shade better than his biblical counterpart, whose manuscripts were contemptuously tossed into a royal fireplace by a complacent Judean monarch deaf to unpalatable prophecies. The MIT study has been ridiculed, belittled

as an intriguing but misguided curiosity, and more fundamentally criticized for its methodology and skimpy evidence. While the authors readily admit the limitations and imperfections of their models, they insist that these do not significantly alter the book's pervasive message, characterized so gently by the *Washington Post* as "Stop-Growth-or-Die."

Strongly assailed by some, staunchly defended by others, the study is already an international Event, complete with translations and wide distribution to world leaders. Sensational conclusions are not the only explanation for the hoopla. For this little volume is not the standard run-of-the-computer report by sheltered academics in Cambridge. Rather, the Event marks the splashy public debut of The Club of Rome, the four-year-old, international elite study group that sponsored Meadows's work. An "invisible college" of peripatetic scientists, scholars, and other assorted professionals, The Club was founded by Aurelio Peccei, an Italian corporation executive (Fiat, Olivetti, Alitalia), management consultant (Italconsult), and transnationally-minded reformer who refuses to be intimidated by macroproblems of global survival.

The Club's mystique is well-groomed. Just shadowy and discreet enough to be tantalizing, it is less a prosaic club than a loosely organized, multinational, and highly respectable intellectual brotherhood. The organization has grown from the thirty charter members who met in 1968 at Peccei's urging to a present count of seventy-five, and it will reach but not exceed 100. In 1970 Peccei discovered Jay W. Forrester, MIT's famed pioneer in the "systems dynamics" of industrial and urban planning. After convincing The Club that his methods could handle planetary phenomena as well, Forrester promptly developed a computer model of global ecological processes. Meadows, a Forrester protégé, was then given the task of refining this world model for The Club. He elaborated but did not radically depart from the overall antigrowth thrust of Forrester's earlier research.

Despite this carefully nurtured partnership between The Club of Rome and MIT, The Club's evaluation of the Meadows report is still rather fuzzy, enough so to raise a question or two about how solidly The Club's experts endorse the scientific underpinnings of the book. In a concluding "Commentary" drawn up by the six-man executive Committee, of which Peccei is a member, it is stated that preliminary drafts were seen by some forty individuals, mostly Club members—that is, by about half of The Club's roster. After briefly summarizing the resulting comments, the Executive Committee

vaguely informs us that "Over-all, a majority of those who read [the Meadows] report concurred with its position." The Committee then offers its own generally favorable evaluation, but adds: "We cannot speak definitively for all our colleagues in The Club of Rome, for there are differences of interest, emphasis, and judgment among them." Fair enough. Ordinarily there ought to be no particular magic to a sponsor's imprimatur. But the MIT study has been routinely identified with this prestigious Club, and it shares its cachet. The reader therefore is entitled to know more than he is told about the "invisible college's" professional assessments of the analysis and specific findings.

These questions would be less important if the book had not been published in advance of a technical compendium promised for later release. As things stand, the authors have it both ways. They can derive tacit blessing from The Club, which seems not to have reviewed it comprehensively. And they can rest their conclusions on data and cause-and-effect assumptions that it will take outside experts considerable time to evaluate. The interests of the general public, like those of the scientific community, would have been better served by simultaneous publication of both the book and the supporting technical documents, even at the cost of some delay. Those who confront a lay audience with such immensely significant conclusions bear a correspondingly great responsibility for scientifically validating their conclusions.

The Limits to Growth suffers from more than a presentational flaw. While its global perspectives and long-range concerns provide important correctives for our often myopic discourse about planetary housekeeping, the book's time may already have passed. For the conclusions merely jolt once again our ecological awareness without really deepening or extending it. The study tells us that we must mend our ways and that this will be painful, but it barely hints at how painful, or for whom. *The Limits to Growth* reminds us of our finite ecological boundaries (although with some fancy hedging) without significantly sharpening our understanding of how to redirect behavior and institutions. Furthermore, while the study provides us with models of alternate futures it does not satisfactorily connect any of them with today or with norms for guiding our choices among conflicting social goals. Nationally and globally, ecological security will impinge deeply on man's philosophical outlook and on his social and economic life. The authors sensitively identify these dimensions; however, they make no serious attempt to explore them.

These MIT analysts make modest claims for their model. They do not pretend to be infallible; they are, though, sufficiently convinced of their rightness to reject orthodox faith in economic growth. Although they seek to stimulate further thought and research, they have settled in their book for a vulnerable scientific apparatus, for prescriptions too generalized to be useful to policymakers, and for an approach that makes assertions rather than explains matters to the layman. They risk, in the end, satisfying none of their intended constituencies.

In a larger sense, the work's future context could become as controversial as its contents. Billed as phase one of a continuing Club of Rome endeavor to study "the predicament of mankind," it is a stepchild of Peccei's, and as such reflects a special brand of internationalist reformism, one that deserves scrutiny. Plans for a phase two have not yet been outlined. But Peccei will doubtless remain The Club's guiding figure, and his preferred framework for global problem-solving has been revealed in his impassioned personal testament, *The Chasm Ahead* (1969). There he sketches a benevolently elitist blueprint for planetary salvation, catalyzed by a faintly messianic network of apolitical technocrats. What he calls the Great Four—America, Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan—would steer a new global institutional setup, a kind of super think tank *cum* guidance mechanism for central planetary management. Efficiency would be the overriding criterion for collective decisions. Avoidance of "politicized" international forums with broadly representative membership would facilitate sound planning. What Peccei calls a "World Forum" of experts would execute a feasibility study for the project.

This approach raises a profoundly important issue for the future of world order: Can the technologically advanced "few" of this world develop viable and just community relationships with the technologically less advanced "many"? Peccei's future may promise merely a substitution of one parochialism for another. To exchange outmoded nationalism for a narrowly technocratic multilateralism is not much of an advance, tempting as it may be to turn away from the messiness and frustrations of genuine global community processes where "politics" often defies efficient, rational solutions. Yet coping with these stresses rather than systematically sidestepping them is the cost of world community-building. Barry Commoner's meta-law of ecology, Everything Is Connected to Everything Else, increasingly governs our multiple and overlapping global interdependencies—political, social, technological, and biophysical. A

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paramount implication of our mutual responsibility for each other is that we must commit ourselves to the creation of social structures regarded as legitimate by the bulk of the global community rather than by only the privileged minority.

This imperative could hardly be clearer than in the holistic verdicts of the Meadows study. Massively consequential choices would face statesmen in the world he assures us is coming. Social justice and welfare would have to be defined in planetary terms. Global goods and services would have to be allocated in a limited-growth or equilibrium world. For tasks of this scale, the exclusivism implied by Great Four-based designs would be not only naïve but also dangerously discriminatory and divisive. The inner logic of Meadows's world view insistently contradicts particularist solutions and reinforces awareness of universally shared interests. If during subsequent Club of Rome studies of the "world problematique" this awareness is translated into creative thinking about how to remold planetary institutions effectively and equitably, then The Club will have helped bridge the real chasm ahead.

Larry L. Fabian, a research associate in the Foreign Policy Studies Program of the Brookings Institution, is working on a study of technology and world order.

WHEN CAN I COME HOME? A Debate on Amnesty for Exiles, Anti-war Prisoners, and Others

by Murray Polner

Doubleday, 267 pp., paperback, \$1.95

Reviewed by Eugene G. Windchy

■ Youth, which is ordered to fight the war, is uniquely affected by it. Murray Polner, a historian, tells us precisely how. In his first book, *No Victory Parades*, which came out last year, Polner describes the experiences overseas and at home of the Vietnam veteran, and observes:

Never before in American history have as many loyal and brave young men been as shabbily treated by the government that sent them to war; never before have so many of them questioned as much, as these veterans have, the essential rightness of what they were forced to do.

The press recently reported a sad postscript to Polner's conclusion. In 1968 Lloyd J. Kantor, one of the college students who worked for the election of Richard M. Nixon, assured skeptical friends that his candidate would stop the war. Nixon was elected, but the war continued, and Kantor was



Draft evaders in Canada—if a general amnesty were declared, would they return?

drafted. He went to Vietnam. There he lost both hands, both feet, one eye, and part of his hearing. Shortly afterward, President Nixon let it be known that, in his view, the war was no longer an issue. But it was to Kantor. The hospitalized youth sent a letter to the White House, making use of his 1968 Nixon-campaign stationery—and never received a reply. In the news story, Kantor was particularly bitter that President Nixon devoted his spare time to visiting football players rather than war veterans.

Polner's new book, *When Can I Come Home?*, is about the young men who refused to fight—the deserters and the draft evaders. Working this time as editor, Polner has put together two dozen articles, including one of his own, that tell what it's like to break the law and debate the question of amnesty. He makes no pretense of objectivity; his aim is "to initiate a national debate that would ultimately declare a general amnesty and forgive both the 'victims and the executioners.'"

Those proposing various forms of amnesty are not the war resisters themselves, but such persons as Edward I. Koch, Democratic Congressman from New York, and James Reston, Jr., novelist and son of *The New York Times*

columnist. Those against include William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, who argues, somehow, that "the possibility of amnesty is in direct proportion to the success of American arms in Southeast Asia. . . ." Ernest van den Haag, professor of social philosophy at New York University, complains that amnesty would "make suckers out of those people who obeyed the law." Ronald Docksai, a student of political science and national chairman of the Young Americans for Freedom, says he would rather not go to Vietnam, but would if drafted, "for I believe it is my duty as an American to serve."

One of the most informative chapters is by Willard Gaylin, a psychoanalyst who made an early study of the men incarcerated for draft evasion. Since 1965 some 2,600 men have gone to jail for refusing induction; approximately 300 are there now. (Having "paid the penalty," they still need amnesty to regain full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote.) Gaylin expected to find behind bars politically sensitive individuals "analogous to the college radical," a type that includes a high percentage of Jews and a low percentage of Catholics. To his surprise, nearly 80 per cent of the men he encountered were Jehovah's Wit-