1979/No. 14
Asia/General

by Richard Critchfield
[RC-2-'79]

The Peasant and the West
Part II: Prophets Come from Villages

The first part of this Report set forth a hypothesis, summarized below, which draws upon the work of Arnold Toynbee, Robert Redfield, and others, and this writer's own experience of reporting the peasant world for 20 years, the past 8 of them in villages:

The peasant has, I believe, been awakened by the West, which has offered him two ways to modernize: industrialization-urbanization and Marxist-Leninist revolution, both accompanied by a transfer of Western farm technology. Both are failing the peasant. Disillusioned and disappointed, the peasant is likely to retreat into the spiritual fastnesses of his own religious heritage and in this fashion culturally challenge the West.

To support this hypothesis, I argued that, given the constraints in industrializing and modernizing agriculture and the certain redoubling of the rural population in the coming generation, the peasant is migrating to the world's cities on a historically unprecedented scale. But, in the main, he is neither urbanizing nor industrializing. Rather he is simply moving into a city and taking his peasant culture with him. He also finds himself culturally estranged from his own educated elite who once would have given him cultural direction. This elite's Westernization is based upon material and technical advance denied the peasant. This has created, in societies with great indigenous civilizations, the "peasantization" of the city. It has also left the peasant in a mood of revolt, a revolt principally directed against Western culture. In this Report I shall examine both the political and religious forms this revolt is taking and will possibly take in the future.

In preface, I would like once more to define the word peasant, since so many people have trouble with it. As noted in the earlier Report, the word is inescapably freighted because all over the world, at all periods of history, the terms applied by city people to rural people have tended to imply contempt or condescension, although often mixed with a certain admiration for the simple and natural life. This writer defines peasant as a man who makes a living and has a distinct way of life through cultivation of the land, producing food largely for his own family. A peasant can also be a fisherman or petty artisan who lives in a village and shares the peasant culture. (Hunters and herders, those vanishing breeds, are not peasants.) The true peasant is to be found in regions of ancient civilizations, such as in India, China, Indonesia, and Egypt; their village culture is deeply influenced by constant contact for thousands of years with urban centers of intellectual thought and development. Such peasants possess an assured sense of cultural identity and belong to the Islamic, Hindu, or Far Eastern civilizations. There are also part-peasants, such as black Africans moving out of tribalism or the two kinds found in Latin America: transplanted European peasantry or descendants of African slaves as found in Brazil, or Indian peoples influenced by pre-Colombian civilization and later Spanish culture but still in an incompletely developed relationship with their centers of intellectual thought. Their geography, relatively smaller numbers, and much readier acceptance of the West and its values somewhat remove the Africans and Latin Americans from this discussion.

American anthropology today leans toward the notion that there are no more peasants; I disagree. The best yardstick is technology. From the day man followed his cattle down onto the Mesopotamian Plain and invented the plow and irrigation (about 4000 B.C.), nothing really big happened, aside from the invention of gunpowder and the Gutenberg printing press, until about 1800. After 1800, in the West, everything suddenly went whoosh. Real gross world product has risen eightyfold, the distance a man can travel a day between a hundredfold and a thousandfold, the killing area of the most effective megadeath weapon a millionfold or more, the amount of energy that can be released from a pound of matter over 50 millionfold, and the range and volume of information technology (computers, telecommunications, etc.), several billionfold.

Peasants are the three-fourths of the living generation who got left behind, in most cases way, way behind. The man of 1800 used much the same energy sources as the man

of 1800 B.C. (animal power, wind, water, and sun); he could travel much the same tiny maximum distance per day; he used much the same materials for tools (iron and wood) and fuel (firewood and forage for draft animals); and had much the same average life expectancy (to his late 30s or early 40s.) Though the average peasant today can expect to live to his mid-50s (except in Africa where it is still early 40s) and earns something like $650 a year compared with the 1800 man's $200 in today's money, his tools, fuel, and the distance he travels (and hence his horizon) remain much the same. What has gone wrong in that Western technology has led to a 6-fold increase in world population since 1800, which will redouble in 30 more years, and the peasant, like the rest of us, has become part of a highly complex, interdependent global economy.

Gunnar Myrdal and others have convincingly demonstrated that for the rest of this century most of the peasants cannot be absorbed in industry but must continue to earn their livelihood in agriculture; at the same time the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome calculates that total food supply must be doubled between 1970 and 1985 and trebled by 2000, just 21 years away. Most economists urge a more rapid transfer of Western farm technology, land reform, better price policies, trade liberalization to protect traditional markets, and much more investment in agriculture. The problem is that, with the exception of China, where Mao Tse-tung created a philosophy and a system of government that put peasants first, we have a world political system in which nearly all the poor countries (under $500 per head) rig their economic policies against their farmers—and then find that the universally high elasticity of supply in agriculture means that their countries are short of food. The problem is compounded because nearly all the rich countries (over $1,000 per head) rig their economic policies in favor of their farmers—and then find they are saddled with huge surpluses.

Calcutta, one way to survive—peddle tea and cheap meals.

Nor has the initial phase of the transfer of American farm technology that began in the 1960s been labor-intensive. China is showing how to make a more egalitarian breakthrough in increasing the number of crops per field per year, rather than simply yields, since double cropping almost doubles the demand for labor, as well as village incomes. In India, for example, only 62 million of 350 million cultivated acres grow more than one crop. If scientists can alter the length and timing of traditional growing seasons, double cropping would not only increase India's food supply, but slow down peasant migration to the cities. Technical advances remain very promising; as Dr. Norman Borlaug has pointed out, 80 to 85 percent of the world's peasants have yet to be touched by modern agricultural science. Trade liberalization, which could bring the poor countries an extra $30 billion a year (in 1975 prices) would in the short term increase unemployment in the West; it therefore will not happen. Nor is anything like a Marshall Plan for the East in sight; foreign aid is stuck at just 0.36 percent of GNP for the 17 members of OECD—barely half their 0.7 target. The West has also refused a general moratorium or rescheduling of the Third World's $180-billion debt burden. In 1976 President Carter called for a new, wider international economic system to tackle global problems. "We know," he said, "that a peaceful world cannot exist one-third rich and two-thirds hungry." But generous words and intentions are not acts and policies.

This economic picture matters because all the major contemporary revolutions—in Russia, Mexico, China, Indochina, Algeria, Egypt, Cuba, and Angola—have been caused by the same three related global crises: (1) overpopulation; (2) economic instability both on the world market and by local treatment of peasant land as commercially negotiable property; and (3) a transfer of authority from traditional tribal chiefs, mandarins, or landed noblemen to labor bosses, soldiers, and businessmen. Peasants have taken part in these revolutions, but in every case in local reaction to much bigger social dislocations, set in motion by the commercialization of traditional property, population pressure, and the erosion or collapse of traditional authority. No cultural system is ever static, but normally there is time to make adjustment to change. If change comes too

"Congestion," a scene in Dacca, Bangladesh.

quickly, the system grows incoherent and those caught up in it find the old solutions inapplicable and the new incomprehensible.

Such incoherence rarely appears all at once, in all parts of the system, so that a society may for some time follow one alternative and then another contradictory one. But in the end, a breach, a major disjuncture, will make its appearance somewhere in the system. A peasant uprising under such circumstances can, without conscious intent, bring an entire society to a state of collapse. As Eric Wolf pointed out in his *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*,[1] in every revolution population growth, though nowhere on the present scale, first put a serious strain on the peasants. Then, once land, rent, and labor came to be treated as commercially negotiable property, market behavior no longer depended upon peasant subsistence; rather peasant subsistence became subsidiary to the market as the city turned against the village that had originally created it. In Mexico, Algeria, and Cuba, there was outright seizure or coercive purchase of land. In China and Vietnam a stepped-up capitalization of rent led to a transfer of land from those unable to keep up to those able to pay. In Russia successive land reforms threatened peasant access to pasture, forest, and plowland. Commercialization threatened peasant access to communal lands in Mexico, Algeria, and Vietnam, to unclaimed land in Mexico and Cuba, to public granaries in Algeria and China, and threatened the balance between pastoral and village people in Algeria. These rural disruptions took place as some peasants were migrating to cities, either retaining their village ties, as in Russia, China, and Algeria, or migrating between city and village and back again, as in Vietnam. At the same time a weakened traditional authority, no longer able to cope, lost power to an unstable economic elite (in Redfield's terms forcing the peasants from an Orthogenetic to a heterogenetic transformation—see Part I of this Report). Wolf noted that no peasantry has ever successfully rebelled against the established order "under its own banner and under its own leaders"; in China it took the external power of Mao's Red Army or in Russia in 1917 returning soldiers from the front, arms still in hand. Wolf also argued that peasant revolutionaries are likely to be drawn from the more prosperous land-owning class or from some isolated region beyond an absentee landlord's control.

Peasants are natural anarchists, but not good revolutionaries and no Marxist-Leninist movement has won their support without the populist slogan of "Land to the Tillers," land that is seized again once state power is in the revolutionary leadership's hands. The universal peasant ideal is a free village where tax collectors, labor and army recruiters, and landowners and officials do not exist.

Wolf is an anthropologist who has lived in peasant villages and he notes that even in the midst of social upheaval:

The peasant has always set his dreams on deliverance, the vision of a mahdi *who would deliver the world from tyranny, of a Son of Heaven who would truly embody the mandate of Heaven.... Under conditions of modern dislocation, the disordered present is all too frequently experienced as world order reversed, and hence evil.... The true order is yet to come, whether through miraculous intervention, through rebellion, or both. Peasant anarchism and an apocalyptic vision of the world, together, provide the ideological fuel that drives the rebellious peasantry.*[2]

Frantz Fanon shared this view. He described the peasant as the stubborn defender of traditions whose interests lay in maintaining the existing social structure:

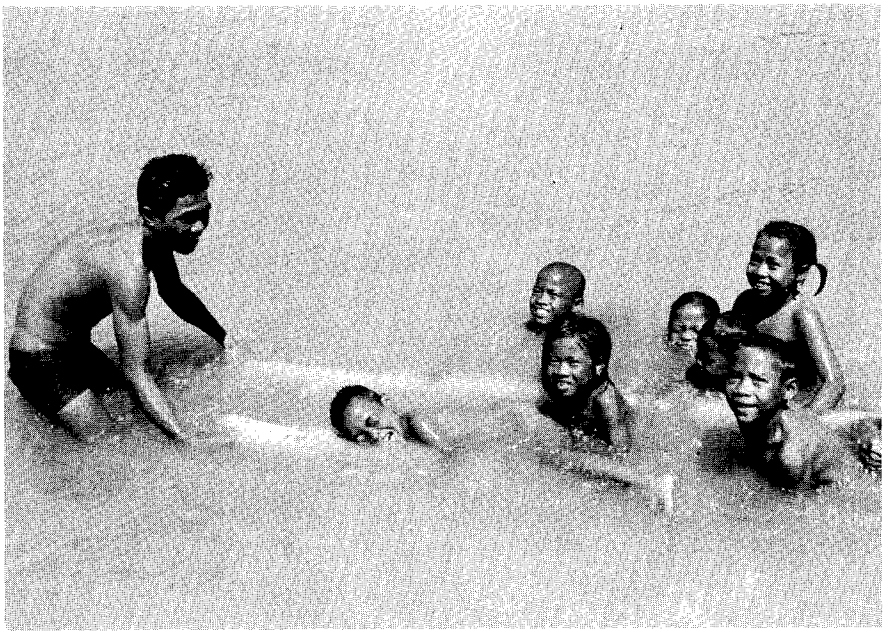
It is true that this unchanging way of life which hangs on like grim death to rigid social structures, may occasionally give birth to movements which are based on religious fanaticism or tribal wars.[3]

To Karl Marx, the peasant was anathema. He was reactionary, his small-scale capitalism had no place in socialist society, like grains of sand peasants were impossible to organize into revolutionary movements; Marx described peasants as "a class that represents the barbarism within civilization"

whose behavior was "an undecipherable hieroglyphic to the understanding of the civilized," as "clumsily cunning, knavishly naive, doltishly sublime, a calculated superstition, a pathetic burlesque, a cleverly stupid anachronism...."[4] Marx even praised the hated West for forcing peasants off the land and into factories. He envisaged a new communist society that would transform peasants into landless rural proletarians whose culture and way of life was to be reshaped to eliminate differences between village and city. Small family farms would be replaced by big cooperatives worked by brigades of workers with machinery. David Mitrany has described how European peasants became aware of Marxist doctrine and were almost universally hostile to communist movements. Marx's aim was to eliminate peasants.

Lenin was more expedient.[5] To him the necessity to seize state power overrode any theoretical objections to bringing the peasants in as partners of the revolution. Lenin's basic principle was to "exploit internal contradictions in the enemy camp"; he saw that in Eastern Europe and Asia where most poor people were peasants there could be no revolution without their temporary support—they were to be eliminated as a social and economic class later. Lenin took Marx's theory of internal proletarian revolution and transformed it into global class warfare between the West and the East, most of whose people were of course peasants.

Lenin's technique was to win over the peasants by promising them land. Landlords and traditional elites were to be identified with feudal exploitation and foreign imperialism. The appeal was to the peasant's land hunger and resentment of domination by outsiders, usually Westerners—both yesterday and today powerful and universal peasant feelings. This served to conceal the basic contradiction between Marxist-Leninists and peasants. In Leninist strategy, once state power is achieved, the



In Java the peasants preserve the higher culture.

peasants are betrayed. Then the Marxist-Leninist program to eliminate them as a class is put into operation. First, land reform, another calculated deception to win peasant support to eliminate landlords is carried out and the promise of "Land to the Tillers" is fulfilled. Second, agricultural cooperatives are formed on an ever-larger scale. Third, land is taken from all peasants to become the property of the state. Fourth, peasants are forced to work harder for less return to generate surpluses for rapid industrialization. It is only then that peasants realize their former allies have deceived them; they have been used as instruments to achieve power and modernize the state. Their own identity is now to be submerged into a single class of urban workers and landless rural proletarians. In practice, this has never quite happened in any communist society, peasant resilience being what it is (Marx was probably farsighted to vent his wrath on them).

In Russia itself members of the *kolkhoz* or collective wheat farm today possess about 30 million private garden plots which provide 16 percent of Russia's total food production and fully half its livestock. In theory, however, these cultivators spend two-thirds of their time on the collective farm. Russia also has *sovkhoz*, or large mechanized farms worked by squads of men and women who have no other connection with the land. But large corporate farming, as Iran, Sudan, Egypt, China, and almost every country one can think of has learned to its dismay, is never as efficient as the family farm. As early as five years after the Russian Revolution, Maxim Gorky was bemoaning the peasants as having become "half-savage, stupid, heavy people." Gorky asked, "Where is the good-natured, thoughtful Russian peasant, indefatigable searcher after truth and justice, who was so convincingly and beautifully depicted in the world of nineteenth century literature?"[6] The writers of that literature could have told him. Chekhov has no faith in political doctrine or systems or the Russian intelligentsia, proletariat, or even in the peasants *en masse*, although he shared the populists' belief in the essential moral soundness, indeed superiority, of peasants. Chekhov put his trust in the individual; a man's own conscience was the sole arbiter of right and wrong. Similarly, of all Tolstoy's characters it is the illiterate peasant, Platon Karatayev, pious, resigned, patient, laughing, talking in proverbs, who best

Egyptian youth.

exemplified the author's own overwhelming love of life, his sense of human destiny and how everything close to nature was good.[7]

Only Mao Tse-tung in China tried to carry Marxism-Leninism to its logical conclusion. In 1949, when the communists seized power, 80 percent of the Chinese people were peasants. China suffered high rates of tenancy, high rents, high interest rates, and extremely small holdings fragmented into tiny plots. Methods of cultivation had scarcely changed in 2,000 years. Savings went for expensive religious rites or were siphoned off by the landlord-official class. Initially Mao followed the classic Marxist-Leninist model, promising "Land to the Tillers." He was also able to use anti-Japanese sentiment to capture peasant support. In 1950 land reform eliminated "feudal landlords" and redistributed land to peasants. The process was substantially completed by August 1952, and China's landed gentry, the main buffer between the peasants and state power, was eliminated (either executed or sent to be "reformed through labor"). Gradually land, tools, and animals were placed in collective village pools and, by 1958, almost all of China's peasants had been organized into cooperatives of about 160 families or 800 people each. That year the Great Leap Forward was launched to put all the peasants into 26,000 "people's communes" with an average size of 24,000 people. China was to pass from the socialist to the communist stage of society and achieve Utopia. As with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-67, with its concept of perpetual or constant struggle, Mao felt revolutions either kept moving forward or, as in Russia, reaction would set in. The human ant heaps that resulted are familiar and after initial fantastic rises in agriculture and industry startled the world, it was evident the Great Leap Forward had been a colossal failure. Too much labor was shifted away from agriculture, the confiscation of private plots led to a steep fall in food production, there was little material incentive to work, and the mess halls, disruption of family life, long hours of labor, and militarization of every waking hour made commune life a nightmare and demoralized the Chinese people.

After 1960 the Chinese peasant was given back his own house, his private garden plot, his kitchen utensils. The mess halls closed in 1961. Today peasants are allowed to sell their garden produce for profit. There has been a steady retreat to smaller and smaller work teams. Mao's death in 1976 and the routing of his most radical followers suggests the Chinese experiment, like the Russian before it, has peaked.[8]

Yet Maoism itself may survive because Mao was an unusual leader for our age in that he carried through implementation a philosophy that, broadly, aimed to eradicate precisely the mood of privileged acquisitiveness he thought had degraded China in the past (and curses so many Westernized elites in the poor countries today). Certainly, life in Canton is more pleasant than in Calcutta, and the mood Mao created may have the virtue of being one of those uplifting happenings that create real happiness among some people by creating general elan, pride, and a not-too-virulent chauvinism. Yet it is already evident that post-Maoist China will adopt a new Hegelian synthesis between the old acquisitiveness and its Maoist antithesis.

Dr. Borlaug, whom I interviewed for six hours one day in Mexico just after he had spent the summer of 1977 touring rural China, was full of praise for the one peasant society in the world that has given agriculture its foremost attention. "I have great admiration for Chinese wheat, maize and rice," he said. "They are carrying out the world's most spectacular Green Revolution." He continued:

The Chinese are investing vast sums of money into producing agricultural inputs. For example: in 1960 virtually no chemical fertilizer was used in China. They composted animal and human waste and in that way maintained the organic strength of the soil. In China they developed coal mines and got the coal out to villages for cooking fuel. India has the coal but it's never been exploited. Instead cow dung is used as cooking fuel which is why India's soil is so poor in comparison to China's. Then in 1960, China began setting up chemical nitrogen fertilizer plants. In 1974, on my

Calcutta's main Chowringhee Street.

previous visit to China, they had 1,200 or more small factories scattered around the country, I suppose because it simplified distribution and transport. By 1974 China was the largest importer of nitrogen fertilizer in the world. But most of it was coming from Japan. When petroleum imports to Japan fell after the oil-price rise, Japan abruptly cut way back on fertilizer production, mainly producing just to supply its own farmers. Within six weeks, China decided to build ten 1,000-ton-per-day capacity anhydrous ammonia plants. They hired the top people in the world to build them, Kellogg Engineering of Houston for the ammonia component and Dutch, French and Japanese for the urea. Now they've added two more with a 1,000-ton-a-day capacity for a total of twelve. It represents the largest investment in chemical fertilizer within a short time the world has seen.

You can see the priority China gives agriculture in other ways. But this speaks loudly. Fertilizer was going for $45 a ton in 1972, then it rose to $240 a ton in 1975 and then collapsed. Freight increased all out of proportion and then collapsed. China's prepared itself to escape this kind of instability.

Yet the pressures of population can destroy the Chinese system just like any other. Right now it looks good. You see power lines, smokestacks everywhere in the countryside. Rarely a pregnant woman or large hordes of small children. There's still great unharnessed capacity along the upper reaches of the Yangtse and Yellow Rivers. And the Chinese can do amazing things with hand labor. And a lot of China's production increases are coming in triple cropping, especially south of the Yangtze. Two crops of rice and one of spring wheat. And between the Yangtze and the Yellow you've always got wheat and rice, two crops a year. Only Manchuria has a one crop wheat system. Now the Chinese are starting to interplant, first two rows of corn in the wheat and then, when the wheat ripens, two more rows are planted. The Chinese have great potential in multicropping, as do the Indians.

Dr. Borlaug felt the Chinese are adopting new agricultural technology better than any other developing country. In terms of success in the Green Revolution, he put China first, followed by India, Argentina, Egypt, and Pakistan in that order, though he felt India had serious distribution problems and that Argentina and Pakistan, because of weak governments, had only done about a third as well as they might have.

China imported several hundred kilos of experimental seed from Pakistan and Australia in 1971, though they had been testing the dwarf wheats since 1965. Then in each of 1973 and 1974, China imported 15,000 tons of the dwarf seed and its Green Revolution was on. I don't believe all the talk that China has neglected basic research in favor of applied science. Applied science gets the publicity, but underneath there has been plenty of basic research going on.

"Alienation from the westernized elite," a Moroccan immigrant on the outskirts of Paris.

Within the next few months the whole position on theoretical and basic science in China should become clearer now that Madame Mao and the gang of four are out of the picture. But I admire what Mao did. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution aimed to prevent the buildup of a bureaucracy that would stifle all progress. China throughout its history has been dominated by a bureaucratic elite. Mao was fearful that unless he found some way to perpetuate the revolution, the old historical pattern would take hold. It would go the way of Russia with its heavy-handed bureaucracy. Mao sent the professors and intellectuals out to the villages to live with the lowest, poorest rural masses. It's something we're beginning to need in the United States. All my best senior staff members grew up on farms, they know what it is to work in the rain and dust and have mud under their fingernails. But only 4 percent of America's total population now live on the land and farm. Our greatest problem in recruiting agronomists and plant breeders and so on is to find someone with a background in actual farming. We get all these young men with Ph.D. degrees and I have to baptize them in the dust, mud, and sweat out on farms with farmers before they are any good. I sometimes worry about American civilization. This revolution in social behavior, social values that is going on. If it defeats our will to work, if our work ethic goes, what sort of a society will we have? In China, everybody's working. And they look contented. I've never seen a hungry person in China. The people look healthy. No luxuries. A wristwatch or a bicycle is a luxury in China.

Dr. Borlaug said the rural Chinese still lived in family units and villages and that there was a distinct difference in prosperity from one village to the next depending upon the local soil and rainfall. "There are inequities based on nature, soil, and weather," he said. I asked, "What about inequities of human nature, the intelligent versus the dumb, the lazy versus the industrious?"

"I found the occasional lazy person faced group pressure and was condemned as a 'social parasite.' In the villages, the slogan is: 'If you don't work, you don't eat.'" He observed many, though not all, the Chinese villages allowed private garden plots and produce was sold at weekly markets for profit. "But," he added, "the needs of the state come first in China."

Judged strictly in technical terms, it seems safe to assume that China in 1977 has a better philosophy and system to modernize agriculture than any other peasant society. (And Dr. Borlaug said the mass of Chinese people definitely remain peasants.) Yet there is still no evidence in China, and certainly not in Russia, that once private ownership of the means of production is swept away, human rationality and benevolence will automatically reign supreme. Far from it. As William H. McNeill has observed:

Given the harsh realities of initial Communist practice—compulsory

The peasant as guerrilla war victims in Vietnam.

saving and high rates of investment requiring a ruthless exploitation of the peasantry in order to provide capital for industrial construction—the discrepancies between rosy dream and drab fact, between generous aspiration and ugly practice become peculiarly sharp, and difficult to sustain over long periods of time. Clearly, the Russians already feel this strain. An aging and prosperous revolution cannot indefinitely justify failures to attain the promised land of communism by pointing to the dangers of capitalist encirclement.[9]

Under Mao, China's peasants, workers, and soldiers all accepted the doctrine of sacrifice for the common good. Without him, it is already evident everybody wants a bigger share of the cake. And as Dr. Borlaug pointed out, the Chinese probably had to pay a terrible price for their present advance; he said, "Nobody knows how many were sacrificed during the revolution."

During his journey in China, Dr. Borlaug saw peasants that looked like peasants and villages that looked like villages; the same seems to be true of Russia. As of now it appears Marxism-Leninism has failed in its stated objective of eliminating peasants as a class. As Lenin himself warned in March 1906: "The peasantry will be victorious in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and these cease to be revolutionary as a peasantry."[10]

The peasant as urban migrant—Java.

Throughout the communist world, those private garden plots and small herds of domestic livestock just keep getting bigger. The Russians still campaign "to prevent the liquidation of the revolution" by peasants attached to their own animals and land; the slogan "individual farming is spontaneous capitalism" is still heard in Chinese internal propaganda. In its struggle with the peasant, Marxism-Leninism has by no means emerged the victor.

But neither has the West. The Club of Rome's controversial *The Limits to Growth*[11] demonstrated through computerized models how some peasant societies could reach what was rather dully described as "overshoot and collapse" within this century. Whatever people do, they don't "collapse," "explode," "go down the drain," or "go to pieces." They respond. One response is the violent one. Yet all this century's large-scale violence—two global wars, localized wars in Korea, Indochina, the Middle East, the India-Pakistan frontier, the China-India frontier, seven major revolutions, bloodbaths in the partition of India in 1947, in Indonesia in 1965-66 and Bangladesh in 1971—has had almost no appreciable demographic impact, even when the victims numbered in the millions. (Unlike, for example, the decimation of the populations of China, Persia, and Russia by the Mongols in the thirteenth century.) The prospect ahead is not necessarily inevitable violence. It is not change itself that matters but the speed with which it comes; the most densely populated areas in Java, Egypt, and India have shown man can adjust to extreme density if he has time to adjust culturally.[12] The trouble is that a redoubling in just 6 years, as is forecast for Mexico City, or less than 20 years, as for Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines, does not allow much time. But on balance, perhaps it must be said that our civilization will soon be, in Toynbee's phrase, *in extremis.*

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Virtually every peasant today faces the enormous compulsion of working out new meanings to his life. This is true whether he stays home in his village where there are too many people for the land and available food supply or he goes to a city where he can earn enough to eat but must live in far more terrible conditions. The peasant may come to have a nagging wonder whether life is worth living. His old view of the world is losing its coherence. He must ask the ultimate question of all metaphysics: if the world and life have a meaning, what can it be and how will the world have to look to correspond to it?

Historically, this answer has been supplied by a prophet. His revelation is that of a unified view of the world derived from a consciously integrated and meaningful attitude toward life. To a prophet, both the life of a man and the world have a coherent meaning. To this meaning

the conduct of mankind must be oriented if it is to find salvation, for only in relation to this meaning does life obtain a unified and significant pattern. This is why prophets arise during periods when life, to large numbers of people, seems to have lost its meaning, that is, in such situations as you find today in the worst slums of Cairo, Calcutta, or Jakarta, or in the most impoverished villages of Bangladesh, Java, or Mexico.

Prophets are almost never priests, but rise from humble people, usually peasants. Priests serve to preserve a sacred tradition; the Vatican, for instance, has rarely and only then reluctantly been an instrument of change. The prophet's claim is based upon personal revelation and charisma; like a magician, he exerts his power simply by virtue of his personal gifts, which may include divination, magical healing, and counseling. Some prophets try to renew an older religion; others claim to bring completely new deliverance. Max Weber identified two kinds of prophets, the "ethical prophet," such as Abraham, Jesus, or Mohammed, who has only emerged in the Middle East and demands obedience to a personal god, and the "exemplary prophet," best represented by Gautama Buddha and most characteristic of India, who directs himself to the self-interest of those who crave salvation, recommending them to the same path he has found himself.[13] The ethical prophet, with his emphasis on outward social behavior, or as in Islam, a program of social action, seems more in line with Toynbee's expectations. Toynbee felt an Eastern religious resurgence could even be Muslim. He described the extinction of race consciousness between Muslims as one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam and wrote that if the growing gap between the poor black, brown, and yellow peoples of the earth's poor south and the rich white peoples of the north ever precipitated a race war, Islam might rise again.[14]

When it comes to peasants in their villages, Islam today possesses an extraordinarily vital spiritual force—that inward power which alone creates and sustains the outward manifestations of what is called civilization. Christianity, even among the Roman Catholic peasants of Latin America and a few other outposts like the Philippines, tends to be vitiated in villages by European priests tainted with colonialism and by the unprecedented material wealth, secular disbelief, and scientific doubt of Christian Europe and North America. The Reformation and the emergence of the ethic of ascetic Protestantism can be blamed, or credited, for all three. In a memorable passage by William McNeill in 1962:

Irrigated wet zone cultivation—Bali.

> *The Protestant reformers set out to achieve a radical sanctification of all human endeavor before God, but, in fact, after the lapse of a couple of generations, provoked in parts of Europe a disciplined application to the business of making money such as the world has scarcely seen before.*[15]

Every Muslim peasant I have studied—in Pakistan, Iran, India, Egypt, and Morocco (Indonesia with its syncretic Hindu-Islamic-animistic religion being a special case)—retains his burning faith. His belief: The prophets of Israel were all right and Jesus was God's last and greatest prophet before Mohammed (the six prophets of

The peasant as herdsman—Mesopotamian desert.

Islam are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed). The Muslim quarrel has never been with the Prophet Jesus of Nazareth but with the Christian Church (Roman Catholic, Greek and Russian Orthodox, and Protestant) for capitulating to pagan Greek polytheism and idolatry. From this betrayal of the revelation of the One True God, or Allah, Muslims believe, Islam retrieved the pure religion of Abraham and in Islam's survival lies the hope of mankind. This faith—and one cannot exaggerate its hold on the Muslim peasant's heart and mind—is quite unlike the eroded belief and agnostic questioning that has come to characterize so much of Christianity ever since Francis Bacon first declared that science was the modern religion.

Maoism, though a philosophy and ethical system not a religion (but then so was Confucianism), will probably survive long after any Chinese can remember life under the mortal Mao Tse-tung. Mao's egalitarian dream was never fulfilled, but he did leave behind the best way we have so far found to modernize peasant agriculture with Western science. His legacy included a technique of peasant revolution and warfare, a strong work ethic, a concept of man motivated by moral rather than material incentives, and a social system that accepted, though it is beginning to look as if it were only temporarily, the doctrine of sacrifice for the common good. It could turn out that ordinary Chinese have bitterly resented the regimentation all along. We shall know eventually from what happens in post-Mao China. But I found it intensely interesting that Dr. Borlaug, a product of the ascetic Protestantism of the American Bible Belt (Cresco, Iowa), should be such an admirer of the Maoist work ethic and so concerned about its decline in our own country.

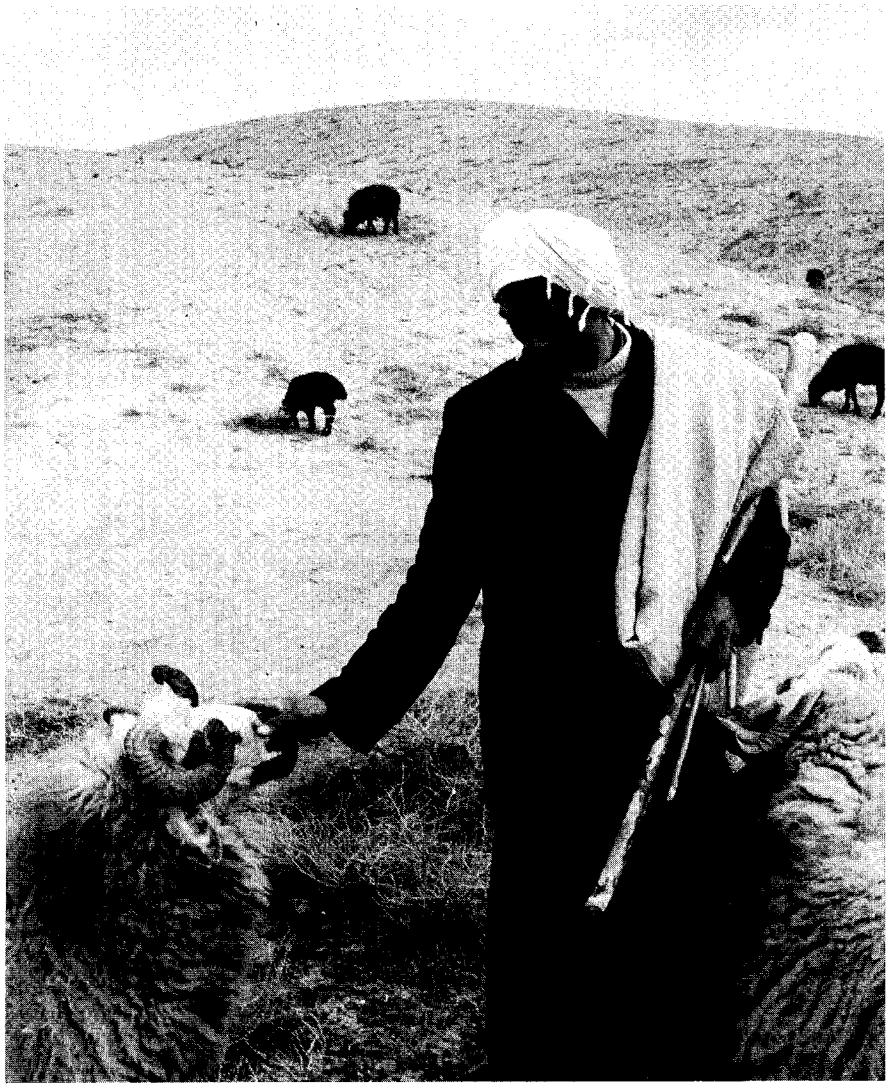
One way to trace the history of civilizations is, of course, the work ethic. As Will Durant has observed, all civilizations begin with agriculture, prosper with commerce and industry, luxuriate with finance, and then, cut off from the old agricultural work ethic and moral code, begin their decline.[16] (We seem to be hitting the luxuriate stage in full stride now.) What Spengler saw as simply a law of nature, Toynbee sought to explain in terms of spiritual failures.[17] Max Weber observed that of all the great religions, only Protestant Christianity created religious motivations for seeking salvation primarily through hard work and a more rational, methodical control of life. Weber died almost 60 years ago just as Mao was coming on the scene.

A work ethic, Weber wrote, was never true of the "nonintellectual classes of Asia" with their "magical religiosity." I think this still holds true of the peasants today. "Nor," wrote Weber, "did any path lead to that methodical control from the world-accommodation of Confucianism, from the world-rejection of Buddhism, from the world-conquest of Islam, or from the messianic expectations and economic pariah law of Judaism." To Weber, the world-affirmation of ascetic Protestantism, which Toynbee, McNeill, Durant, and most historians credit for the West's extraordinary technological advance of the past 200 years, stood in direct contradiction to the world rejection of Jesus, a total world rejection to be found elsewhere only in

Buddhism. Jesus was "a magician" who exorcised demons and preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. Weber described the message of Jesus as "a nonintellectual's proclamation directly to nonintellectuals, to the 'poor in spirit.'"[18]

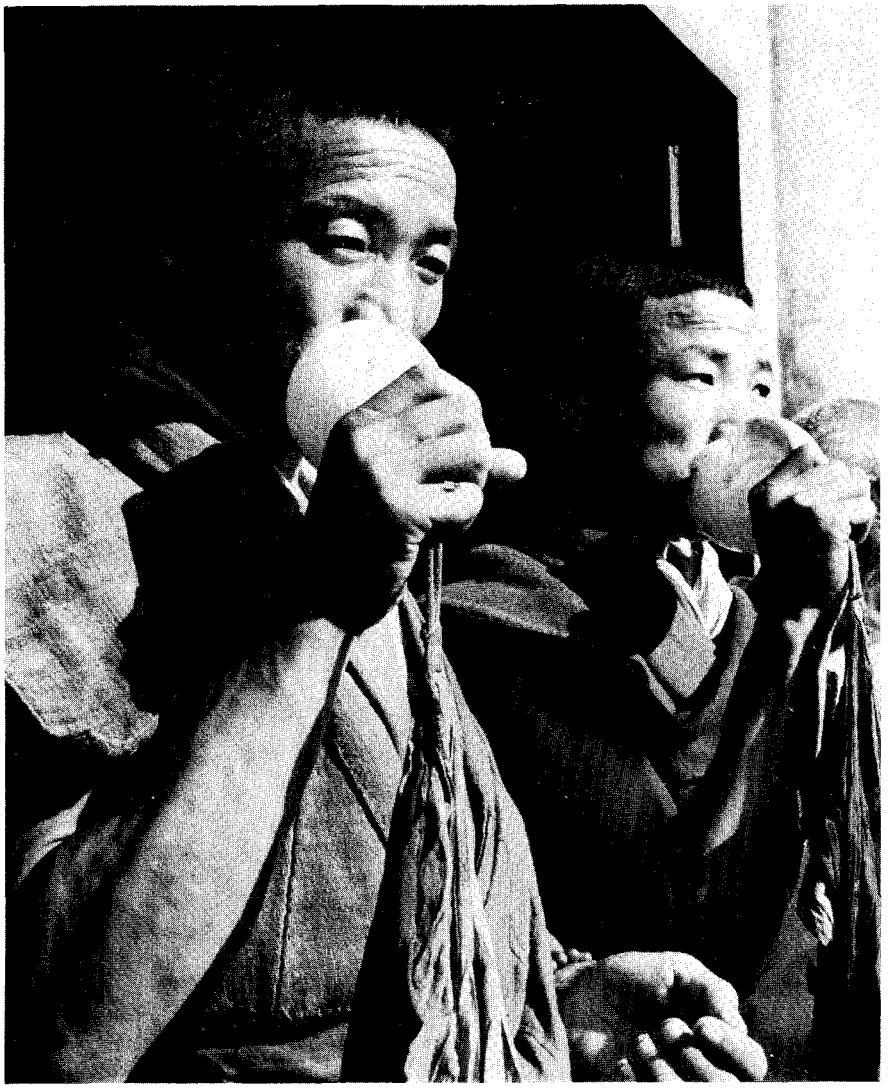
Today the Eastern peasant (excepting the Chinese, providing Mao's world-affirming work ethic really does endure), in his culture, his closeness to nature, his belief in magic and the supernatural, and his hopes of miraculous deliverance from a social and economic dislocation he cannot comprehend, is far closer to the founder of the West's religion than any Westerner. Anthropologists, who go out and live with peasants the longest and in the largest numbers, have disappointingly shown less interest in peasant religion than in its influence on their social organization and behavior (though, according to Dr. Foster, this is starting to change.) One exception is Clifford Geertz, whose *The Religion of Java,*[19] indispensable in understanding Indonesia, draws its theoretical inspiration largely from Weber. Java's syncretic religion and culture, merging forms from Islam, Hinduism, and animism, along with Hindu Bali, is of special interest for its role in violently throwing off an attempted Marxist-Leninist revolution in the 1960s; until now no Islamic or Hindu culture (as opposed to countries with Western Christian or Far Eastern cultures) has yet proved compatible with communism. Also in Java we see an instance of peasants preserving a sophisticated, higher religion (Redfield's great tradition), which is dying out among the Westernized elite and culturally disoriented poor in the cities. In Java, but also in Egypt and parts of India, we can already see the peasant actively working to preserve the highly valued achievements of the traditional social system now that the elite are no longer providing a sophisticated justification for its existence and survival.

This is something new. The historical pattern has been for religions to originate with peasants, then, once they are taken up by the educated city elites, the peasant comes to be regarded as religiously suspect; this has happened in Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. As Weber observed, "The religious glorification of the peasant and the belief in the special worth of his piety is the result of a very modern development [Weber blamed, among others, Russian literary figures like Tolstoy and Chekhov].... None of the more important religions of Eastern Asia had any such notions about the religious merit of the peasant."[20] (Peasants in India, for instance, come at the bottom of the caste structure, below priests, soldiers, and merchants, and just above Untouchables.)



The peasant as herdsman—Iraq-Iran border (Mesopotamia).

Christianity, as we know, was very quickly transformed, even by the Gospel writers and St. Paul, from the simple message of Jesus into a complex religion stated in terms of sophisticated Greek philosophy. Very early it became and remains to this day primarily the religion of the urban middle class. It is only in recent years that modern Biblical scholarship, perhaps beginning with Albert Schweitzer's *In Quest of the Historical Jesus*, has shown us just what Jesus actually said and taught. The urban middle class is naturally inclined to a rational, ethical religion that tells it honesty is the best policy and faithful work will be justly



Tibetan monks in Nepal (Kathmandu) blowing conch shells: "magic and the supernatural are universal qualities of peasant religion."

compensated. Yet all the great religions, including Christianity, have had to develop a dual character to accommodate their peasant origins and what Weber called "the magical religiosity of the peasant" with the more intellectual and philosophical emphasis in the cities. Mohammed himself set a precedent in Islam by transforming the ancient heathen Arab pilgrimage rites into the Muslim *hajj* to Mecca and by sanctioning the widespread peasant belief in good and evil *djinn*. Islam has even, in some areas, had to condone idolatry in the cults of local saints (just as Catholicism has been forced to do in Latin peasant villages.) Village Hinduism is polytheistic, magical, and unphilosophical whereas the higher forms of Indian religion are theistic and ethical. In philosophical Taoism, the emphasis is on the subordination of man to nature; in peasant Taoism it is on the acquisition of human morality through magical means, a direct contradiction.

Magic and miraculous deliverance are universal qualities of peasant religion; in every instance they have been replaced or rationalized by philosophy once the religion has been taken up by urban intellectuals. Nor has it taken long for the original magical peasant faith to become deprecated (remember the Grand Inquisitor's words in *The Brothers Karamazov*.)

If we are to understand the peasant awakening and the kind of Eastern spiritual challenge Toynbee envisaged as a possibility, we need to draw a distinction between peasant religion and the great religions as we know them today. One way is to take Christianity, since it is the most familiar to us, and the portrait of Jesus set down in the Book of Mark, the only one of the Gospels not written by an urban intellectual and hence for our purposes suspect. Even Mark's straightforward journalism only takes us up to the Crucifixion; the final passages were added later by early theologians. Mark, the Biblical scholars tell us, was literate but not literary; his version, possibly taken in dictation from Peter in Rome about 30 years after the death of Jesus, has no evident theological bias. In the Near East today there is still a strong tradition of memorization; some Muslim peasants as children memorize the entire Koran, about the length of the New Testament, and can still recite it as middle-aged men; this is easier for them than it would be for us since in most cases the Koran is the only thing they read in their lives. So it can be assumed that in Mark we have a fairly accurate account.

Keeping strictly to Mark, it becomes apparent at once that Jesus was a man of peasant culture. We know that he was the son of a carpenter and probably worked at carpentry himself until his thirtieth year. His neighbors were peasant cultivators and as a young man he must have helped them in the fields during the harvest or other times of heavy work as all able-bodied youths do in villages now. As a carpenter, he would have also made plowshares, hoe and sickle handles, hay forks, and other cultivation tools. The metaphor Jesus used is that of the peasant, rich in such imagery as the ears of grain, the mustard seeds, and the tenant who tried to seize his landlord's vineyard. In my village work I accumulate a great deal of dialogue and this is the stuff it is made of. Much happens that is commonplace in contemporary village life: the meals of loaves and

Balinese peasant girls preserve the great tradition.

fishes, dogs under the table eating crumbs, swarms of curious children who have to be shooed away, the solemn emphasis upon respecting one's father and mother, the metaphor of the camel passing through the needle's eye, loosing the colt, cursing the barren fig tree when you are passing by hungry. Once Christianity moved to the cities and became Hellenized, the little tradition becoming a great tradition, this peasant quality of the real historical man and his setting became obscured.

Some years ago I spent time in the desert on the Iran-Iraq border with a tribe of Bedouin shepherds. For the first time the metaphor of the Twenty-third Psalm really came home to me. The herdsmen ran about in their long, flowing robes, carrying rods and staffs for practical purposes. They made their herd of some 400 sheep stop—not always an easy task—whenever we found some sparse green grass on the fairly barren desert. To water the flock we had to move the herd several miles down the Karun River to a place where there was no current so the sheep could drink without danger of drowning. In the desert hills there were ravines where the sun scarcely penetrated; some had caves along their banks, the lairs of hyenas who dragged their prey back for the final kill; these were heaped with sheep bones. What better image of the valley of the shadow of death? Such imagery, drawn from the prosaic daily life of herdsmen, is found throughout the Old Testament.[21]

When one turns to Jesus, it is peasant culture that strikes you. Nobody but a peasant would say:

... there went a sower to sow; and it came to pass, as he sowed, that some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.[22]

Take away the poetry and this is exactly how peasants in the Middle East speak; but one has to have a lot of experience sowing beforehand to speak like this; no city person does.

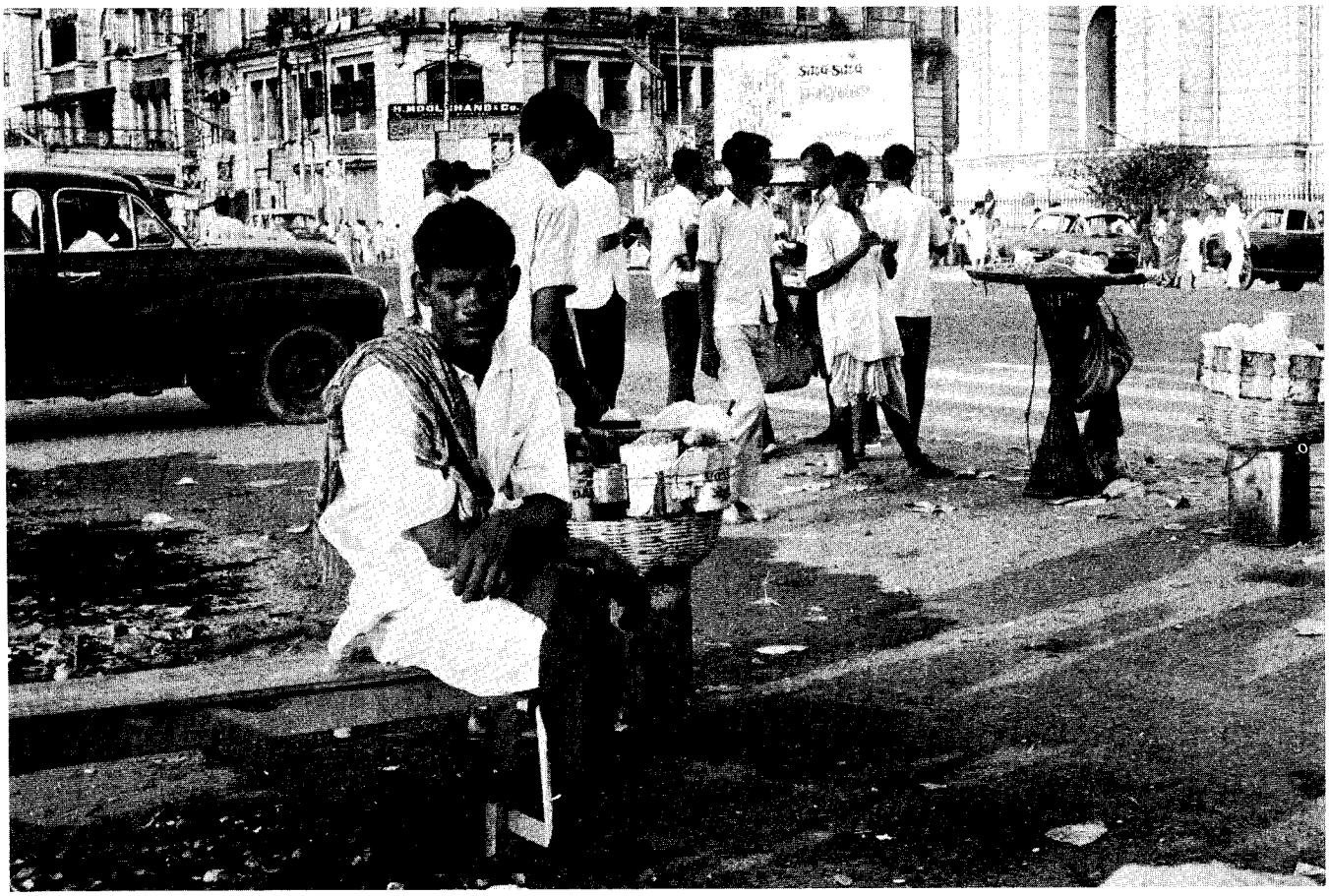
Jesus of course did not intend to start a new religion. Like most peasants, he did not want to remove even a letter of existing religious law. Scholars generally assume that Jesus was literate (the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest he may have used the Essenes' library), but that he was lowly and unlearned as most peasants are, even when they can read. Jesus took no notice of the centers of Hellenistic culture nearby (possibly regarding them as peasants generally do—the Westernized wonders of the heterogenetic city today—as alien). Jesus was not as strict on ritual as

Small dry landholdings—Mexican wheat harvest.

were the Hellenized, urbanized Jews; peasants could not entirely keep the ritual anyway. But like all contemporary peasants, he was much stricter than the city intellectuals when it came to adultery and divorce. What made Jesus a prophet was his awareness that although a humble villager, he possessed a healing power and a speaking ability far surpassing those of the sophisticated city intellectuals. This gave him confidence. His magical power to exorcise demons, however, did not work in respect to his own family, his village neighbors, the wealthy or high-born, or scholars. His magic power depended upon faith. He found such faith among peasants, fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes, and all sorts of simple people, even Roman soldiers. These are the types of people who have faith in village magic today and swear by its power. As I have observed elsewhere, not only does the belief in the supernatural exist in most peasant villages, but the supernatural itself does seem to occur.

The case that Jesus was a peasant can be argued other ways. His extreme present-time orientation—let man pray for his daily bread and be unconcerned for tomorrow—represents a spontaneity and fatalism common among peasants. Another characteristic peasant trait was his strong rejection of scholarly arrogance. Most peasants I have known are sensitive about their ignorance; while they esteem learning they tend to reveal a strain of anti-intellectualism if they feel someone is looking down on them. The universal ethic of mutual help, found in all peasant villages, is also pervasive in the teachings of Jesus. Peasants almost universally believe that preoccupation with wealth destroys the sense of brotherhood; mutual help is necessary to gather the harvests. It is this notion that is at the heart of the matter when Jesus tells the rich young man to give away his worldly goods. Jesus, of course, carried this common peasant trait much further; the peasant ethic is merely to help your neighbor in expectation of a like response.

Jesus departed from peasant culture when he taught unconditional forgiveness, unconditional charity, unconditional love even for enemies, and unconditional suffering of injustice without requiting evil with force; this lifts his ethics above any to be found in Islam or any other great Eastern religion. Jesus demanded an ethical heroism possibly beyond human nature. God alone would punish and reward in an implied equalization in heaven; to be rich in this life endangered one's prospects in the next. Like Chairman Mao, Jesus placed moral over material incentives, yet he was no Marxist-Leninist revolutionary; there was no merit in deeds for which earthly payment was expected. On the contrary, what Jesus held most decisive for salvation was an absolute indifference to the world and its concerns. The Kingdom of God was at hand. Of what value was money or material goods or state power? Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. One simple commandment mattered: to love God and one's fellow men and this



Calcutta—peasants go to city but remain peasants.

was to be judged solely by its faithful demonstration.

I have chosen Jesus as portrayed by Mark to illustrate what a religion of purely peasant character is like. One could do the same with Mohammed, Zoroaster, or the other founders of great religions. (The same thing could not be done with Confucius, Plato, or Socrates, urban philosophers; or Shankara, Ramanuja, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley, urban religious reformers; none of these men were prophets). If we make an effort of the imagination and strip away all the accretions to Christianity from Hellenization, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the two extremely world-affirming modern offshoots of ascetic Protestantism and Marxism-Leninism, we end up with the kind of world-negating spiritual creed Toynbee foresaw possibly arising once more in the East as a response in the peasant's encounter with the West. In broad terms, religions in their rural origins are characterized by peasant culture, social attitudes, a certain world view, present-time orientation, spontaneity, fatalism, belief in demons, magic and the supernatural, and rejection of worldly good obtained at the cost of one's neighbor.

* * * * *

I hope to have suggested the kind of message the peasant is longing to hear. He does not think as we do. For him today the spheres of reason order, and justice are terribly limited and no progress in our science and technical resources has yet done much to enlarge their relevance. Man is alone and it is a short way to the grave. Blind fate, the solicitations of Satan and his demons, or the blind fury of his own blood, awaits every man in ambush at the crossroads. There is no use asking for rational explanation; things are as they are, unrelenting and absurd. We find this same mentality along the Upper Nile, on the slopes of Javanese volcanoes, or on the sidewalks of Calcutta's Chowringhee Road. It is a stark insight into man's condition and something we in the West seldom have to face so nakedly. Yet in the very excess of his deprivation lies the peasant's claim to dignity. His only hope may be for miraculous deliverance, some incomprehensible repose, a resurrection of the spirit and a better life, if denied in this world, then the next.

My aim in this two-part Report has been to focus attention on the peasant as a person whose spiritual resources, despite poverty, compare most favorably with our own. Though his way and view of life is very different from ours, he is a recognizable human type who greatly outnumbers us and whose culture has endured thousands of years longer than our own. To reach for a higher generalization about what is happening and is likely to happen to this human type, with

some control on the result from facts accumulated by observing individual peasants over a long span of time, helps, I hope, to broaden the area of scholarly and journalistic investigation and to suggest the more particular and specific questions to investigate while retaining something of the natural integrity of the peasant and his world. In future Reports I will confine myself to only one narrow and particular aspect of the peasant's present predicament at a time: social alienation and criminality, his problems as herdsmen, tribesmen, or fishermen, the peasant as a magician or true believer, his transformation into a modern commercial farmer or urban dweller, and the peasant in his various roles as refugee, frontiersman, aboriginal Indian, victim, and guerrilla.

For the social scientist, economist, anthropologist, or other scholar who studies peasants, the perception of resemblances and of natural unity needs to work its way down to precise words and procedures that yield generally accepted proof. A journalist is not so bound. His task is merely honest and accurate portraiture: he must assign himself the role of reporter or witness, someone who, without presuming to solve any problems, merely poses them or records the way others pose them. "Man will become better when you show him what he is like," runs an entry in Anton Chekhovs notebook. Yet even for the journalist some overall vision is helpful, even indispensable, in the effort toward understanding the truth.[23] And perhaps his wider perceptions, though in no way science, can help us in our frank facing of man's estate.

(January 1979)

[This Report concludes the series "The Peasant and the West."]

NOTES

1. Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971).

2. Wolf, "On Peasant Rebellions," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 21, 1969, as reprinted in *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, edited by Teodor Shanin (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975 editor), p. 273.

3. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 47-101. Originally published in 1961.

4. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (London and New York: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950), first published in 1850-1852.

5. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1962), IX, pp. 235-236. *Ibid*, X, p. 259.

6. Maxim Gorky, *On the Russian Peasantry* (Moscow: Ladyzhnikov, 1922), pp. 4-21.

7. Platon Karatayev came into existence only in the third draft of Book IV of *War and Peace*, according to Tolstoy's biographer, Henry Troyat.

8. For analysis of the Chinese revolution, see Jack M. Potter's paper in *Peasant Society; A Reader* edited by Jack M. Potter, May N.Diaz, and G.M. Foster (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967); Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works (Peking: Foreign Language Press); Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, 1966); David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1951); Sripati Chandra-Sekhar, Red China: An Asian View (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961); T.A. Hsia, *The Commune in Retreat* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1964).

9. William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West* (New York: The New American Library, 1964), p. 874. This is the best analysis of the role agriculture has played in Western civilization that this writer has seen.

10. Lenin, *op. cit*, X, p. 259.

11. Dennis Meadows, et al., *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972). The author was quoted, p. 147 (43). for providing "a specific example of the social side-effects of the Green Revolution in an area where land is unequally distributed." See Critchfield, "It's a Revolution All Right," *Papers* (New York: Alicia Patterson Fund, 1970).

12. See Critchfield, "Ant and Grasshopper," *The Economist* (London), November 20, 1976.

13. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). Originally published in Germany in 1922 under the title, "Religionssoziologie," from *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Weber's analysis of prophets, pp. 46-59.

14. Arnold J.Toynbee, *The World and the West.*

15. McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 641.

16. Will Durant, *The Lessons of History* (New York: Simon and Shuster).

17. Oswald Spengler, *Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1919, and Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History (London: Oxford University Press, 1957).

18. Weber, *op. cit.*

19. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960).

20. Weber, *op. cit.* Weber's passages on the peasant and religion, pp. 80-85.

21. See Critchfield, *The Golden Bowl Be Broken; Peasant Life in Four Cultures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), pp. 11-44, for portrait of herdsmen daily life on Iran-Iraq border.

22. *The Gospel of St. Mark*, Chapter 4: 4-8.

23. For fuller treatment of some of the issues raised in this paper, see Richard Critchfield, *Lore and Legend of Nepal* (edited and illustrated) by Kesar Lall (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, third edition, 1971); *The Indian*

Reporter's Guide (Bombay: Allied Pacific Private, Ltd., 1962) on reporting a peasant society; *The Long Charade*, on the peasant in an insurgency; *Papers*, Allicia Patterson Fund, on peasant life in Iran, Mauritius, India, Indonesia, and Morocco; *The Golden Bowl Be Broken*, on peasant life in the first four cultures. Articles specifically dealing with the "peasantization of the city" include: "Overcrowded Egypt: The Living Occupy City of the Dead," *The Washington Star*, August 12, 1976; "On the rooftops, in the cemeteries," (Cairo), *The Economist,* September 27, 1975, p. 59; "Let them eat bread," *The Economist*, April 3, 1976; "Sin city is a pressure cooker," (Jakarta), *The Economist*, May 26, 1973; "Small is beautiful but still small," (Salvador, Brazil), *The Economist*, March 5, 1977; "Indonesia: the poor amid riches" and "In Husen's Java, the old values fend off the new" (Jakarta), *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 12 and 13, 1973; "Bangladesh" (Dacca), *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 31 and November 1, 1973; "Calcutta: somehow it will always survive," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 1, 1974; "Warning: This Man is Dangerous," (Casablanca and the Arab Ghetto of Paris), *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 30, 1974; "Down and Out With a Marginal Man," (Casablanca and Paris), *Human Behavior*, October 1974, pp. 55-63; "Sex in the Third World," *Human Behavior*, April 1977; "The Illegales: Americans Talk of Fences While Mexico's Villagers Look North With Hope," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1977 (Mexico City), and "Meet the Legendary Mexican Who Sired the Children of Sanchez," *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1977. The most detailed treatment of the peasantization of the city appears in "Hello, Mister! Where Are You Going?," *Papers*, Alicia Patterson Fund, 1971. The psychological turbulence caused by change is dealt with in "A melancholy song on the Nile; for villagers like Shahhat, the Aswan Dam in unraveling the fabric of daily life," *International Wildlife*, May-June 1976, pp. 28-32, and in *Egypt's Fellahin: Part I: Beyond the Mountains of Kaf and Part II: The Ant and the Grasshopper.* Superstititious supports of religion in "Passing the Buck to Demons," *The New Republic,* November 8, 1975, pp. 15-17; "Religion: Culture Conflict in the Sudan," *Africa Report*, March-April 1976, pp. 46-49; "Egypt Gravitates Toward Moslem Orthodoxy," *The Washington Star*, June 1, 1976, p. 1; "How Can A Man Shape His Destiny?" *RF Illustrated* (newspaper of the Rockefeller Foundation), June 1, 1976. The agricultural moral code in *Carnival and Guapira's Children: The Moral Challenge, Parts I and II* [RC-1,2,.-'77], *AUFS Reports*, East Coast South America Series, Vol. XXI, Nos. 2 and 3, 1977. This rather random sampling of articles is given both in case a reader is interested in some particular issue and to suggest how the generalized views of this paper were formed in the research and writing of literally hundreds of journalistic articles on the peasant world over the past two decades. The particular research for this paper was undertaken at the library of the United Nations Center for literacy training for Latin America (CREFAL) in Patzcuaro, Mexico, and the anthropological library of the University of California in Berkeley.