

ident Anwar Sadat outdoes Brando conceived by Cecil B. DeMille.

"He initiated the present phase with the electrifying trip to Jerusalem. He followed that by meeting Prime Minister Menachem Begin at Ismailia. Then came a sheer piece of stagecraft—a break in the negotiations for no apparent reason. That set up another superb scene—a visit to Washington and the charming of President Carter, the Congress and the American public."

Yes, I believe it is important to point out Anwar Sadat's posturings lest he believe that he can continue to charm and bamboozle the Carter Administration into thinking that he need do nothing more for peace than he has already done—and that all the risks for peace must be taken by Israel, and Israel only.

No progress for peace can come from such an attitude and such a policy.

Richard Cohen

*Conference of Presidents of Major
American Jewish Organizations
New York, N.Y.*

"The Search for Disaster"

To the Editors: Richard Neuhaus ("The Search for Disaster," *Excursus*, March) attacks the "cheerleaders of crisis" who see "disaster" as the "portent of desirable change." High on the list of undesirable "catastrophists" are those who presumably did not "want" (his emphasis) oil to be discovered under the North Sea. While those who speculate about the future cannot be said to share the same vision, the Neuhaus attack deserves some response.

A transformation of, or a transition from modern industrialism (capitalist or socialist) to some other social form need not be seen as "disaster" or "catastrophe." A world not dependent upon the automobile might not be all that bad. Recognition of planetary limits to growth might lead to more equitable food distribution as well as widespread sharing of all resources. And many of those who do the speculating hope to pave the way to *avoiding* catastrophe.

Admittedly, one who forecasts that something is likely to happen can be accused of *wanting* it to happen. Indeed,

I once heard Neuhaus label as "obscene" even a discussion of how we might stumble into "triage." Actually, a refusal to discuss it does not hide the fact that we *already* practice it, in that we are deliberately cutting back farm production to whatever can be sold at market price—even though those starving could use the food. Disaster, in other words, is built into the system we have now (capitalist or socialist). Perhaps inadvertently, Neuhaus opts for the status quo by implicitly rejecting projections that are not sufficiently optimistic.

Neuhaus is absolutely correct on one point, if for reasons he would not accept. Because of the oil shortage, conventional war is no longer possible on any substantial scale. Old-style international conflict must inevitably lead to nuclear war—the only type of war now available to us. We can avoid it only by acknowledging the need for social transformation.

If there is a clear and present danger, it is provided by those like Neuhaus who, resolutely shutting out the available information, continue to assume that the oil under the North Sea (or in Alaska, Canada tar sands, or Colorado shale) really makes a difference. Now *there's* a recipe for disaster!

Frederick C. Thayer

*Graduate School of Public
and International Affairs
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pa.*

From Shortage to Glut?

To the Editors: In his essay, "Energy. Investment. Hua," in the March issue of *Worldview*, Norman Macrae presents the common short-term rich-nation view of a global problem. He states that we will have a glut of energy in the 1980's with present and projected prices. This may be true for a few of the rich nations, but that fact should be no surprise. The rich have always been able to provide themselves with a generous supply of material goods, particularly when prices go so high as to deny their use by the poor.

The idea that the energy problem is solved when enough of the poor drop out of the market to leave a large supply

for the rich is profoundly disturbing. It indicates a callous disregard for the role and fate of the major part of the global population. It totally disregards the reaction to the economic oppression within this deprived majority, a reaction that will certainly arise.

The global nature of the problem and recent changes in demand pattern are illustrated by the following facts. Since 1973 world energy demand growth rates have dropped from 4-6 per cent per annum to less than 1 per cent. But who has done all of this belt-tightening? Not the United States, with a continuing energy use growth rate of 4 per cent. Not even Western Europe and Japan, with recent energy growth rates of 1-2 per cent. The belt-tightening has occurred largely in the marginal industrialized countries. Italy has reduced energy consumption 5 per cent from 1972-73 levels. Spain, Greece, and Turkey have been stalled in their development efforts. The real conservation, in the harshest sense of the term, is being practiced in the underdeveloped nations. The truly poor nations are all being pressed toward total default on debts as they desperately try to cover costs of energy with new borrowing. Yet it is in such countries that we see per capital energy use declining by 10 per cent or more per year. The hope of economic development recedes before the pressure of an energy price that only inconveniences those who are higher on the economic scale.

Mr. Macrae does acknowledge the existence of problem areas in his discussion. He suggests that we may see more new Italies than new Germanies and Japans. I agree wholeheartedly. He also suggests a continued long-term growth in energy supply through massive investment in new sources such as breeders and fusion power. Again, this is energy for the rich at prices far beyond the reach of those who recently aspired to join the industrial development era.

We must address ourselves to the problem of inducing conservation practices involving major shifts in life-style in the rich nations. The global depressions and bankruptcies that will stem from present energy problems and responses will have a negative impact on all rich-nation economic performance that cannot be offset by Macrae's false glut.

James D. Head

Freeland, Mich.