

VI.1 BackgroundBackground Materials

Although this period of history is much closer to us in point of time we are likely to have a less objective view of it for it takes centuries to determine the relative importance of materials. Our background material could be developed into a course in itself but we present this general data.

Technological Advance

While the 19th century saw the industrial revolution the 20th witnessed a technological revolution. Technological in this sense refers to the insistence on new machined and methods of scientific advance. One can see it in the development of atomic energy, computerization, and advanced mechanization of almost every sort of industry. This technological advance has tended to give man an exalted opinion of himself and his skills. It may be that a continued emphasis on these areas will result in a lessening on human self-reliance but that has not happened yet. With the advent of space travel and kindred scientific advances, the development of medical transplantation, etc., the human ego has been swelled to epidemic proportions. But that there is a limit to this is also apparent and it is perhaps ironic that in an age when men are supremely confident of their abilities, church membership and participation has, on the overall average, increased. It may be that the technological advance is providing a kind of fear of the unleashed capacity of man to end himself.

With this thrust of technology has come the age of technique...methods of establishing and gaining goals. Much more than is observable in the past is the idea of "how" a goal is achieved and this part of our culture is machined (so to speak) so that there is "technique" for every aspect of life and if men were to know the right "technique" all else would fall in place. As I have indicated above, we receive mixed signals from this arrangement of life. Voices for primitivism rise above the smoother calls of technical advance and there is an undercurrent arguing for simplicity of lifestyle in everything from the church to the dietary occupations.