

and the aggressive Arab nations all around. They are not at home in either, and they see their homeland invaded with Jewish settlements.

It is important to get to know both peoples, to study their religion and history. I strongly object to what I hear and see happening in the West Bank, perpetrated by the Israeli military authorities. It is not supported by the majority of the Israeli population who in fact ignore most of it. Like everywhere else, the military has too much power as a consequence of the people's trust in it for defense. Now, it is not defense, it is vengeance, sadism, cruelty—as if that monster is dormant in every human being and becomes active in times of great stress. Israel is under stress since its creation.

I see an honest genuine blindness in the Jewish population, convinced of its claim to a homeland-state. The claim is legitimate, but they fail to see that the means to fulfill it are the same others used against them in the past. They make others suffer what they have suffered, and so the infernal cycle continues.

Now, above this tragic confusion, let's try to find good-willed people, not too taken by passion, still objective, cool-minded, and work with them. There is a lot of goodness here, a lot of hope. I want to help the people survive the crisis and LIVE. Peace may come, but it's a hard hard way. Shalom!

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#### Could There Be An American Ark?

For the past 20 years, a French community of work has been in the forefront of peace action. Called the Ark, it consists of around 100 permanent members. Since the death of its founder Shantidas (Lanza del Vasto) in 1981, the Ark has expanded in France and started new communities in Spain and Italy. Each community includes 6 - 25 Companions, plus as many or more people in various stages approaching full membership.

The Ark consists of traditional families and celibates. This may seem odd to many American peace activists who see the peace movement as liberation from certain moral conventions such as monogamy. The Ark strikes many of its visitors as quite radical, even perfectionist, as it avoids meat, electricity, TV, motor vehicles (usually). Daily life is organized around prayers, a hand laundry, manual farm work of many kinds, and frequent celebrations.

But to consider all this radical or utopian is to miss the greater power of tradition and conservatism. I hesitate to use this latter word because it has come to mean embracing the onward march of technology and corporations. But how else to name the practice of the ways of our wise forebears? French culture is ancient and self-confident, easily the equal of our own. That may explain somewhat how a traditionalist, ecumenical, agricultural village without private ownership can flourish in the modern world.

In a way, their life is an "island of peace" as Shantidas called it. Its 1200 acres include a valley and mountain slopes all around. A visitor may drink deeply of quiet nature, healthy work and food, good company and worship. Afterwards it is painful to think of returning to the world of making money, obscene stimulation and silly politics. But the Companions are well aware of all this, even if they choose not to surround themselves with the symbols of modernity. *Le Monde* is read aloud at the common meal. Each day's mail brings letters from friends very much in the thick of society's crises. The Ark's outreach includes direct action in cities or countryside. For instance, their successful 12-year struggle to preserve sheep farming on the Larzac plateau where the Army planned to evict everyone and use the land for weapons tests. Above all, the flow of visitors who sometimes outnumber the residents, assures a lively exchange with the world.

Might something like the Ark take root in America? One French couple (both Companions) have been