

## ON CHANGING THE WORLD

TWO lines of basic questioning are pursued by all human beings—inquiries pressed upon the individual by the flow of changing circumstances and life itself. One is concerned with the nature of the world outside, the other with himself. What is the world and what can be done to improve its condition? How shall he, as a man, conduct his life, and what are the fulfillments one ought to seek?

There are various ways to generalize these lines of questioning. One could say, for example, that the approach to the world is through science and the approach to oneself is by religion. Carrying this division further, it could be pointed out that there have been historical epochs when the area of thought covered by science has been thought to be no more than a small department in religion; and, conversely, times when subjective inquiry has been largely displaced by the methods of scientific investigation. Conceivably, the most revealing way to study human history would be in terms of the tension between these two basic forms of questioning. What sorts of social systems, moral problems, educational endeavors, ideals, and formulations of goals or objectives result when the emphasis is on questions about the individual? Or, what are the general consequences when inquiry is preponderantly focused on the external world? Finally, what sort of balance ought there be between the two kinds of questioning? Do the answers returned to questions about the world affect the judgments a man makes about himself? How do the self-perceptions of men contribute to their thought about the external world? Is there some law of reciprocities involved in these relationships?

The art forms of a civilization often embody the answers which have been made to some of these questions. Take for example the closing scene of the widely admired Japanese film, *Rashomon*. The old Buddhist priest, reflecting on the several human dramas which have been shown to grow out of the egocentric predicament, muses on the constancy, in

experience, of desire and delusion. A sense of passive destiny suffuses the conclusion—an Oriental way of saying that all, all is vanity. There is no hint of Western, let-us-be-up-and-doing activism. The play is pervaded by a feeling-tone that would make this spirit an irrelevant interruption.

The contrast between this quietist serenity and, say, an American scientist's comment on the lethargy or static element in human affairs is very great. Some passages from a novel by James Hilton—*Nothing So Strange*, first published in 1947—illustrate the insistent questioning, and the frustration rather than serene acceptance, that are characteristic of active Western minds. Changes in attitude which accumulated over five hundred years of European history are represented in the scientist's focus of attention. In this part of the story, the relation of science to political power is being recognized by scientists as of growing importance. The time is the late 1930's, when advanced physicists were wondering vaguely about the potentialities of atomic fission. A typical stance is reflected in the protagonist of *Nothing So Strange*, who is a young mathematician working on problems connected with nuclear energy. After he has expressed his dislike of politicians, a friend asks him:

"So you don't think any more that science could save the world?"

"I don't know what you mean exactly."

"Whatever you meant that night."

"Probably I was thinking of mere technics."

"What's that?"

"Oh . . . crop management, reforestation, sanitation, health and welfare . . . that sort of thing."

"Nothing very mere about it."

"True and I expect there *are* a hundred men in the world today—most of them names one hasn't heard of—who could blueprint a paradise on earth and organize it into existence . . . provided everyone else would take orders from them for a few generations. But what chance is there of that?"

"Sounds like a good idea."

"It would be, until the politicians got hold of it. Then you'd see some changes made. Where would *they* be without the vested interests that make and duplicate their own jobs?"

"So you'd require science to stage a world-wide revolution as a first step?"

"That's a big order too. There's supposed to be a science of revolution, but I never heard of any scientist who was interested in it—only the politicians, for their own ends. Where are we, then, after all this argument? We agree that the world needs saving, and that's as far as we get."

"We also agree that the world could save itself by letting scientists save it if they *would* save it."

"Maybe the world doesn't want to save itself. It often behaves as if it didn't. Anyhow, until it makes up its mind, science has enough to do to follow its own natural aim—which is to discover truth simply because it is *truth*."

Much later in the story, a few months before the explosion which destroyed Hiroshima, there is another dialogue on this subject, this time between two physicists.

"The real secret," he said, "is what's going to be done if and when we've made the thing. Is it to be *delenda est* Berlin or Tokyo, or will there be a trade show on some uninhabited place? That's the sort of secret that keeps a sane man awake nights. Because it seems to me that if we *do* use the thing ruthlessly, then we can never again call anything in war an atrocity and the fact that we finish the war with it and so save life numerically is merely the end-justifying-the-means argument that Hitler used when he machine-gunned refugees on the roads during the blitzkriegs. Of course you can say that our war's righteous and his isn't, which is true enough comparatively, but it's an argument that won't make it easy to outlaw the total use of the thing when the war's over and other allegedly righteous nations want to use it for *their* wars. . . ."

I replied that, the way I saw it, all countries in war adopted an end-justifies-the-means policy, because the use of physical force implied that. The real problem wasn't the technics of war but war itself. . . .

"And the scientist should tackle that not only as a scientist but as a citizen. What I dislike about the present setup is not so much that the powers-that-be want us to make bombs, but that they don't seem to

want us to do anything else. They never invite us to use the scientific method plus unlimited funds on the general problems of world affairs or the organization of society."

The conversation now takes another turn, with one of the scientists saying that "if the development of atomic energy was, as might be claimed, the biggest landmark in human knowledge since the discovery of fire, then the decision of whether or not to use it for destruction was the biggest ethical question mark since the one that faced Pilate." This man went on:

"And the odd thing is that even in a democracy this decision has been or will be made without the mass of the people having the ghost of an idea of what's afoot. Is that bad? Or is it inevitable? Or both? . . . Mind you, I'm not suggesting you can hold an election or a referendum about it in the middle of a war. But if the ethical question should crop up any time in the future, would it be a valid excuse for an average citizen to plead that he didn't know what was going on in his own country? Because that's the excuse we'll get from a lot of Germans when we blame them for the concentration camps."

"But in their case it won't be true."

"Oh, I don't know. Middle-class respectable folks are so damned innocent—what does my Aunt Lavinia know about the brothels that exist only a few blocks from her house? . . . But the time's coming when ignorance *won't* be an excuse, it *mustn't* be, it ought to be the last of all excuses one can ever accept. Which, incidentally, is why I'm all for free speech and free education. *Mehr Licht*, Goethe called it."

I asked what he thought an individual could do, and he answered: "Little enough, till the war's ended, except think things out and occasionally talk things over with a kindred spirit—as we're doing now."

If we disregard the—more or less unconscious—self-righteousness of these very bright men, if we admit the intelligence and even deep ethical awareness they display, and ask what, actually, have they concluded about the practicability of changing the world, we find that they have made two unequivocal judgments. One is that the dishonesty and self-interest of politicians block a proper scientific management of practical affairs. The other is that the only hope lies in more general education of the people at large.

These are views which have certainly been typical among scientists for a long time. The disdain for political activity is still common enough, but much less than it was thirty years ago. This change in attitude of scientists and technologists toward the question of power may be looked at from three points of view. One is focused in the expressions found in *the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, a monthly magazine founded by scientists to gain voice as responsible citizens as well as men better informed than the general public is concerning the threat of nuclear weapons, the consequences of nuclear testing, and other activities on which specialized knowledge may be crucial for national decision. The second view of science in relation to politics was clearly outlined by Daniel Bell in his study (in last summer's Cal Tech *Bulletin*) of the gradual movement of scientific and technical intelligence toward the seats of power in the United States. There is a sense in which scientists are already deeply involved in the political process, not only from the migration of technicians to Washington, but also in the increasing reliance of government officials on the "systems" approach developed by such organizations as the Rand Corporation, which have multiplied greatly in number and influence during the past fifteen years. No longer are these institutions concerned only with military questions. Broad social problems such as city planning, traffic management, conservation, and general investigation of broad secular trends are increasingly assigned to these centers of scientific and technological intelligence.

The third point of view, which applies to the scientific community to the extent that scientists are regarded as intellectuals concerned with the general welfare, was well put by Christopher Lasch in the *Nation* for Sept. 11. This article gives factual background to the scientific suspicion of political power, and its general conclusion is of profound importance to all highly educated men who feel the pressure to participate in public affairs. Prof. Lasch wrote:

[There is] a point about the relations of intellectuals to power that has been widely misunderstood. In associating themselves with the warmaking and propaganda machinery of the state in the hope of influencing it, intellectuals deprive

themselves of the real influence they could have as men who refuse to judge the validity of ideas by the requirements of national power or any other entrenched interest.

Time after time in this century it has been shown that the dream of influencing the war machine is a delusion. Instead the war machine corrupts the intellectuals. The war machine cannot be influenced by the advice of well-meaning intellectuals; it can only be resisted. The way to resist it is simply to refuse to put oneself at its service.

Men of learning and scientific background who suppose they will be able to change State policies soon suffer disillusionment, and then, too often, are caught in compromises again and again because they don't know what else to do. Such failures to enlighten policy, as Prof. Lasch says, do not lead the intellectual "to conclude that he should not allow himself to be used"; on the contrary, "they merely reinforce his self-contempt and make him the ready victim of a new political cause." Prof. Lasch then comments:

The despair of the intellect is closely related to the despair of democracy. In our time intellectuals are fascinated by conspiracy and intrigue. . . . They long to be on the inside of things; they want to share the secrets ordinary people are not permitted to hear. The attractions of power and the satisfactions of inside-dopesterism are stronger, in our society, than the pull of any particular position.

Let us return to an earlier consideration—the feeling on the part of scientists that politicians stand in the way of the good the scientists could do if they were given a free hand. Admitting for the sake of argument that they could do it—that there are substantial human benefits to be obtained from the intelligent application of technology to the basic material needs of mankind—there is still this simple blaming of "the politicians" to be considered. Little serious attention is given by scientists to the problems which politicians are meeting from day to day. We do not here suggest that men in government are all high-principled public servants working devotedly at thankless tasks. This can be said of some of them, but we are thinking, rather, of conclusions of the sort drawn by Lincoln Steffens. Typically, men in the professions or in business make simple moral judgments of politicians.

Steffens began his career sharing this habit, but in his *Autobiography*, in which he recorded a lifetime of investigation of political corruption, he admitted to admiring some of the "corrupt" politicians more than he did the "reformers." He saw what happened when businessmen and reformers entered politics. Comparing them, he said:

. . . a "good merchant," like Mayor Strong of New York might be a "bad politician." One reason for this was that while a business man is trained to meet and deal with the temptations of business, he is a novice and weak before those of politics. Another reason is that what is right in business may be wrong in politics. Richard Croker, the Tammany boss, was not so "bad" in business as Mayor Strong was "bad" in politics. Nay, Croker was not so "bad" in business as he was as a politician. When he confessed under public cross-examination that he "worked for his own pocket all the time" he was denounced and politically doomed. But W. L. Strong, as a merchant, had done that all his life, and he was not condemned for making a profit. That was a matter of course in commerce. As a successful profiteer, the rich merchant was promoted to be Mayor of New York and failed as a reform official because his business ethics and training did not fit him for the job. Revising my ethical teachings, therefore, I drew another, more interesting, tentative moral theory, viz.: that the ethics and morals of politics are higher than those of business.

Well, the point may be arguable, and the parallel with the present imperfect, but the comparison is nonetheless of interest. Steffens' more general contention is that "specialist" ethics unfit men to serve society broadly, and in a society subdivided into areas ruled by specialists, the task of pulling everything together and getting it all to work, somehow or other, is practically *bound* to fall to some kind of immoral breed. Where no one takes *general* ethical ideas seriously, only scavengers and freebooter types may be willing to do what is necessary to hold the entire enterprise together and make it go.

You could say that the apparently justified contempt for politics of highly educated men, or men of great technical ability, is simply another face of their long indifference toward the problems and needs of the *polis*. And when, as Johnny-come-

latelies, they speak of the "ignorance of the masses," of "public apathy," and refer to other burdens borne by the elites—these expressions may all reflect a basic misconception of the role of intellectual intelligence and the almost indestructible vanity of men who seem to have no idea what their role in the common life ought to be or have been. They are victims of a "double ignorance"—that is, they do not see that the most truly advanced of mankind are those who most successfully *identify* with those who have a great deal to learn. They imagine that their intellectual attainments put them ahead of the mass, when the fact is that their real work as human beings has not even been begun. Least of all have they a right to complain about either the masses or the politicians.

Unfortunately, the so-called "scientific" study of society has been pursued almost entirely by leaving it, or getting outside of it, in order to regard its processes "objectively," when the crying need is for identification *with* it. Only in the past few years has this begun to be recognized. To understand society, one must pursue endless acts of self-perception *within* society, in as many as possible of the relationships which constitute its major structures and the foci of its problems. The ignorance of the masses is not the obstacle to progress. It is the project and the means.

So, in the final analysis, the way a man thinks about the world and the way he thinks about himself cannot be really separated. By thinking about himself as inextricably related to the world, its problems his problems, a man begins to find out what he truly is, or inwardly wants to be. The only insoluble problems are the problems which come from evading this discovery. It is perfectly natural that human beings in the mass should seem to present insuperable obstacles to the dreams of highly trained technical men who have all their lives studied a different order of reality, to the almost total neglect of man.

## REVIEW

### THE WAR "DEFIES COMPREHENSION"

THE disturbance of thoughtful Americans over the war in Vietnam is taking on the proportions of a national agony. Even "hard-headed" critics are becoming explicit in their condemnation of the war. In an article in the *New Leader* for Nov. 6, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., said:

Our escalation policy in the last 32 months, far from discouraging North Vietnam from serving as an instrument of Chinese aggression, has had precisely the opposite effect: It has increased North Vietnam's dependence on China, increased the number of Chinese in North Vietnam, driven the two states closer together than they ever were before. . . . a basic premise of the Administration argument has been refuted by events.

It is the contention of Senator Edward M. Kennedy that the present continuation of the war shows little or no relation to the original reasons given for intervening in South Vietnam. Instead of helping that country to become independent, the military action, and what goes with it, are disorganizing and demoralizing the people, to say nothing of spreading death and destruction. In the same magazine (*New Leader*) for Nov. 20, he wrote:

It is a brutal and alarming fact that because of the war nearly one third of the population of South Vietnam is displaced. The tragic and disruptive consequences of this tremendous movement in the life of the individual refugee and the society of which he is a part staggers the imagination, and almost defies comprehension. The war has created a rootless people, it has destroyed the familiar rituals and traditions of village life, it has fostered apathy, disorientation, and even distrust and hate for our efforts within a significant cross-section of the South Vietnamese people. . . .

In early 1965 there were 200,000 refugees counted in South Vietnam, mainly refugees from Vietcong terror. Today there are 2 million refugees in South Vietnam, refugees in large part from U.S. and South Vietnamese military efforts. But even these figures are suspect. How can we tell how many refugees there are when, for example, last month in Binh Dinh Province 200,000 refugees were listed one

day and none the next, simply because the 200,000 have been on the books for three months and after three months refugees are considered resettled.

According to a recent note in *Time*, more than fifty books on Vietnam have appeared in 1967. One of these, *The Village of Ben Suc* (Alfred Knopf, 1967, \$3.95), by Jonathan Schell, is the story of the eviction and relocation of 3,500 villagers by American forces—an action the author witnessed last January as a reporter on the scene. The book is written as a *tour de force* of objectivity—no judgments are made, no emotion is shown—and like John Hersey's report of the bombing of Hiroshima, which was doubtless its model, it appeared in briefer form in the *New Yorker*.

One might say that Mr. Schell gives vividly appalling documentation for what Senator Kennedy maintains in his *New Leader* article, but the events and attitudes described in *The Village of Ben Suc* go far beyond proving or illustrating particular contentions about the war in Vietnam. Most of all the book exhibits the triumph of meaninglessness—the acting out of formulas that lack touch with any version of reality. People are just going through the motions. If they are supposed to believe in what they are doing, they earnestly repeat the words, and even rehearse the corresponding feelings, but the meaninglessness is what shows most of all. An American Army Colonel, a senior adviser to the South Vietnam troops who took part in the resettlement program, said in answer to a question about "the war in general":

This is war with a difference—a weird and beautiful difference. Personally, I feel challenged by it. I'll tell you one thing—it's a heck of a lot more challenging than running a string of gas stations or supermarkets back in the States. But we don't have all the answers yet. The Vietcong is a tough soldier and highly dedicated. When you see people that dedicated, sometimes you wonder: Am I right? Should we be killing them? It gives you pause. But, even with all these problems, the soldier we've got over here today is the best soldier I've seen in three wars. Morale is tops. What I mean by that is that

there is less of the kind of complaining from the troops that we used to have in the Second World War and the Korean war. You saw those soldiers helping to unload those trucks for the refugees. They just pitched right in without a word.

This curiously bland notice of deep contradiction, either implicit or explicit, haunts the entire book. The story unfolds a driving counterpoint between grandiose policy decisions at the top and a line of action which progressively exposes the impossibility of accomplishing the objectives the policy declares. All are overtaken by the senseless destiny of the war. It's senseless for the bewildered villager who is shot dead for riding in the wrong direction on his bicycle. It's senseless for the young men who are questioned and tortured in an effort to get them to confess they are Vietcong. It's senseless for the questioners, who hardly know what to do about the confused information they get by these methods. The entire operation seems senseless in terms of any known or imagined objective.

The South Vietnamese rice farmers are resettled in an area a few miles away from their home—under wall-less canvas canopies raised over night with great efficiency and despatch—but here, in the new location, there's no land suitable for rice and absolutely nothing for the people to do. An American officer, confronted by this situation, wondered briefly, "Maybe they'll grow vegetables." The removal of the villagers, then of their village—razed to the ground by demolition experts—was the blind application of policy stereotypes from beginning to end. Everybody walked through the meaningless charade. The orders came down and the military believed because they believe in orders. The Vietnamese villagers "believed" because they wanted to survive. One should add that *Time*, in its quasi-omniscient and casually righteous way, believes that Mr. Schell set aside the "real" meaning of the operation by neglecting to report the capture of an important Vietcong "propagandist," the destruction of tunnels and bunkers, and the discovery of "thousands of secret documents."

However you look at this unspeakably ignominious war, you see the screaming inconsistency of grown men who, in the name of high principles of human good, are doing things which, when they are described, create a nightmarish, irrational context. To "explain" or justify such actions is to amplify the meaninglessness of it all. It is no wonder that, increasingly, the popular reaction to the war comes in the form of irrepressible, undiscriminated, moral emotion. This is a quite natural and even accurate answer to the quality of the event before their eyes.

Yet there is no lack of reasoned objection. On November 1, the Ad Hoc Committee of Sociologists for Peace in Vietnam published an open letter to the President, the Vice-President, and the Congress of the United States, signed by 1300 "individual fellows and active members of the American Sociological Association." This letter protested "the continued bombing of North Vietnam and the killing of innocent civilians in the face of evidence and testimony from many knowledgeable individuals including our own Secretary of Defense that such cannot succeed in forcing peace negotiations." The letter further protested—

the destructive effects of the war on the very society it is supposed to succor, including the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, forcible removal and destruction of entire communities, crop destruction, a million people left homeless, and the fostering of a military regime which has failed to effect land reform and has suppressed religious and political dissent.

These sociologists urge an immediate and unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam, an effort at genuine negotiation with all parties concerned, and an "orderly, phased withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam." Among the signers of the letter are the following well-known sociologists—Robert MacIver, Robert K. Merton, David Riesman, and Pitirim Sorokin.

A news note in the November *Newsletter* of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science

shows the penetration of concern about the war by repeating two questions presented to their readers by the editors of *Computers and Automation* last March. The questions, along with the answers, published later, were as follows:

1. When thousands of human beings are being killed in a war with some help from computers, computer people (should) (should not) examine the conflict and try to do something constructive about it, including discussing it in a computer field magazine.

122 voted affirmatively,  
15 voted negatively, and 11 specifically asked that such matters not be discussed in a computer field magazine.

2. If a computer scientist thinks that one side in such a conflict is in the wrong, he (should) (should not) accept employment in a company which is producing weapons for the wrong side.

16 would accept such employment.  
114 would not accept such employment.

It is not easy to isolate the level of effective moral protest in a society as large and as complexly organized as ours. The pain of the war overtakes people at a great distance from the processes of actual decision. The grip of habit, the reflex response to long-honored ideals, the vulnerability of the population to manipulative techniques, the "specialist" progress we have so much admired, which requires delegation of power and responsibility—all these factors, plus the authority of institutions which have had to assume control over all public matters toward which most people are indifferent, have a part in creating the dilemmas represented by the Vietnam war. There would be immediate moral satisfaction, but no long-term gain, if we could find a quick way to stop the war without looking into and beginning to change those aspects of our common life which made this horrifying spectacle possible. No doubt we need to be horrified, and we have numerous writers and analysts who are expert at providing the necessary shocks. But to generate insight into how to avoid such horrors in the first place, and to develop the moral determination for doing what must then be done—this defines another sort of undertaking, one

which probably has little to do with winning arguments or finding scapegoats. We need some books about this.

**COMMENTARY**  
**THE STATE IS NOT SOCIETY**

THERE is a sense in which modern man would find it enormously profitable to make a new application of the "As if" philosophy of Hans Vaihinger. For Vaihinger, this position grew out of Kantian skepticism, but for us it could express what Prescott Lecky called "dynamic unification"—which results from taking a view of what ought to be and acting on it, even though the external forms of the ideal do not yet exist.

The ideal, in this case, would be a human society in which the free expressions of individuals embody the quality and character of an emerging civilization, as contrasted with the dull, funded mediocrity and morally abominable policies of the modern technological and military state.

"Blaming" the state seems a useless exercise, since the state, whatever else it may be, is chiefly a compensatory phenomenon embodying broad social reaction to moral indifference and anti-human preoccupations. Emerson pointed this out with great clarity, many years ago. The state will not be reconstructed by calling it names and pleading with it to "change." The state, in its present form and authority, does not need to change. It needs to disappear. But it cannot disappear, or even diminish, except as people conduct their lives without depending upon it. They need to act, that is, "as if" it did not exist. They need to make of it neither an instrument nor an excuse. There may be areas where this seems either impractical or visionary, but there are many other regions of action, largely neglected, where it would not be at all impractical, and where much independent good could be accomplished by men who deliberately extend their individual free behavior in inventive ways. The state can be overshadowed, eventually diminished, and finally forgotten, by no other means. It has only the dignity and power that men gave it to perform tasks they should never have relinquished.

Areas to be cultivated in the common life, almost without notice of the state, include forms of basic education, peace-making through cultural interchange, various modes of economic cooperation, world-wide brotherly action, and vital publishing activities devoted to people everywhere, "as if" states did not exist, or if they do, are of little human importance.

This is not to suggest that governments have no value or function. But however governments began, and whatever they have become, the value of government does not lie in its sovereignty over the people, and its function is not to police and control their behavior in relation to their moral and cultural life. Our proposition is that the only way to reform the role of government will be through deliberate creation of a strong, independent, moral and cultural life.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves WORLD EDUCATION

THE formulation of what education is or ought to be is undergoing radical alteration. From being a question of how to transmit to the young our accumulated knowledge, it is turning into a question of how to *change* the characteristic patterns of human behavior. This new view of education is reflected in a discussion by Hudson Hoagland in the *Council Journal* for October. The various crises of the times, he points out, result from advances of science and technology within a framework of partisan loyalties. Dr. Hoagland asks:

How can human behavior be directed into channels of concern for man to replace parochial group rivalries and hates? Clearly new patterns of thought are needed as never before to meet the crises of our time. Most of the beliefs we hold so strongly are established by accident of birth and what we learn, hit or miss, before we are seven years old. Emotionally charged prejudices are propagated from generation to generation by adult authority and by the use of myths and symbols. The strongest beliefs one holds may bear little relation to the facts and realities of life as related to the common good. Irrational aspects of human behavior—chauvinistic nationalism and racial intolerance—keep us locked in patterns of conduct highly dangerous in the nuclear age, and dangerous in relation to other changes brought about by science.

It is these irrational drives that make us adhere to myth and symbol with great emotional vigor, that frustrate the kind of changes that must be wrought if mankind is to survive and advance in our new revolutionary age of science and technology.

The education of our children for this new world is our major hope. Brock Chisholm has pointed out that concern for the welfare of the human race is not within the tradition into which any of us was born and has no conscience value. It must be learned intellectually against the pressures of many emotionally charged, competing loyalties.

In *WIN* (for Nov. 15), an independent magazine sponsored by the War Resisters League,

issued twice monthly, Paul Goodman describes an international meeting of youth leaders in Veszprem, Hungary, last July. What he says illustrates the problems the young inherit from the older generation. Present were twenty young people from communist countries (Russian bloc) and twenty from Spain, Italy, France, England, Holland, and the United States. While Goodman saw that these representatives of youth had more in common with each other than with their various national allegiances, there were formidable barriers to working together. As he put it:

First, the rapidity of change in technology, urbanization, ecology, and the unification of the world has been such that the older generation has become incompetent; it is not at home in the new conditions and its inflexible ideas and various ideologies are really disastrous. Second, everywhere the old authority structures—whether Western or Russian or Eastern—are more rigidly enforced than they were, the processing of the youth is speeded up, their exclusion from decision-making is prolonged, and all this must be resisted. In any case, the language of youth alienation is remarkably similar in statements from Berkeley, London, Prague, Warsaw, or Madrid, and I rather think that, if we had the texts, it would sound the same from Peking.

Since, today, all the major powers are stockpiling nuclear bombs and working to improve their delivery systems, Goodman hoped that these youth could unite in protesting such developments wherever they occur. He offered a resolution to this effect, proposing demonstrations, boycotts, non-cooperation and other activist measures against all these war preparations, without regard to national loyalties. Except for three objectors, the proposal was approved by the Western contingent. The Yugoslavs and Czechs supported it. However—

The East Germans made the sad complaint, "You are right but we do not dare to demonstrate. We have suffered too much." The young Hungarian said, "Foreign policy is the business of the government. If a youth group spontaneously initiates a demand on a point of foreign policy—even if it is the government position—it is a subversive act. We are patriotic Soviet Hungarians." The Poles were apparatchik types and accused me of bourgeois

idealism because I isolated the question of nuclear war from the general context of political conflict.

The Italian Maoists and the English Trotskyist were more abusive. They said that the present necessity was for China to develop its atom bombs, and my proposal was divisive and (probably deliberately) counter-revolutionary. "It would be better," they said, "that all mankind be destroyed than that 700 million Chinese be disadvantaged, for they represent the future."

One effort to wear away at barriers of this sort is embodied in the Friends World Institute—expected to qualify as a College in the near future—which began a program of education in September, 1965, under the direction of Morris Mitchell. The general conception of the undertaking is described by Mr. Mitchell (in another article in *Council Journal* for October):

If a world society is to be born, a revolutionary change of attitude toward the nature and function of the educational process is of absolute necessity. No longer can education be employed as a tool to transmit tribal beliefs, tribal attitudes, tribal structures, tribal skills, tribal habits, and tribal knowledge. Education must undertake a loftier purpose: that of individual knowledge and social growth, based on reverence for life, as an end in itself. What is needed is a concept of World Education, education that has made of itself a reverent search for universal truth appropriate to our age.

Speaking of the program now going into effect for the students enrolled (there were forty at the beginning, in 1965), Mr. Mitchell says:

This is clearly the first college-level institution to employ the world, literally, as its campus. It embraces the concept of several Centers of World Community, each bearing its local designation. For there is no natural cultural center on the face of our sphere. Community must grow as from the joints of a web, tying by its filaments all mankind into a sense of oneness. The plan for a world campus is to send students systematically around the earth with six-month stops at each of the seven centers and to engage in thousands of miles of study-travel in each of seven regions. They are loosely defined, largely for convenience sake, as Africa, South Asia, East Asia, North America, Latin America, West Europe and East Europe.

The plan is to admit students, ultimately 100 every six months, at the Study Center within each of the seven regions. Each student attends first the Center of the region of his origin. Then by plane he moves to the next Center to the east for the next six months. By seven stages, the student encompasses the globe.

Since there are eight six-month periods in the four-year program, but only seven Study Centers, each student automatically returns to his own area for his last study period. The students move, the faculty remain. In this way, each student encounters senior scholars (faculty) native to each region. . . .

The graduate of such a program will have had a truly liberal education. For he will have shed, hopefully, all provincialism and nationalism and will make in whatever areas he works and moves, a decisive contribution toward the realization of world community.

Inquiries concerning this program may be addressed to the North American Center of the Friends World Institute, 5722 Northern Blvd., East Norwich, New York 11732.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Letter from South Africa

THE first impressions one gets of South Africa are superficial: the beauty of the country and the landscape; the prosperity, efficiency and boom; the apparent passivity of the black population—their way of gratefully accepting any mite thrown into hands cupped to a begging-bowl. There is the hypocrisy of the official policy and a fear of communism almost as deep as in America, with the same odd mixture of tutelage and freedom. (In America you can buy guns for six persons by mail-order, but you aren't allowed to swim in the pool of an apartment house unless a licensed guard watches you.) In South Africa impossible regulations are all around, with people gleefully trespassing them. The press is often vocal in its opposition, with occasional satire, as when somebody suggested that the new South African national flag (now under discussion) should be completely white, first as symbol for the abject surrender of the population to nationalist policies, but also because, as we all know, being white is really quite important.

Another initial impression is that of isolation—the white South Africans regard news from the rest of Africa with a detachment that might be expected toward reports of happenings on the planet Pluto. Schoolbooks hammer home the claim that the blacks are troublesome persons who have led idle useless lives. The Boer conquest is admired in the same terms that Hollywood reserves for the genocide by which the American West was won. Yet everywhere there is fear. I came to Johannesburg shortly after Detroit and perhaps I imagined things, but everywhere I felt a hidden fear, nobody daring to go out after dark, in the same apprehension as a skier on the crust of snow—it *might* carry you, but if it cracks you cut through, all the way down.

Apartheid has surrealist aspects. When I arrived at Jan Smuts airport there was a piercing voice from the crowd outside the gate: "Please,

Nelly, come here so I may touch you just one little bit." The pretty white teenager received an understanding smile from the immigration officer and flung herself in the arms of her old black nanny. A black sweeper can clean the objects in a museum but no black school children can look at them. A white cannot sit beside a black in a bus but once they get out they stand beside each other in the elevator. Restaurants are teeming with black waiters who cannot serve a black guest. The blacks cannot enter a white post office but they can enter the white Woolworth's. The waitresses in a cafe are all black but if the husband of one of them wants to buy a coke he must do it through a hole in the wall. An Indian can go shopping in any big department store and buy whatever he likes except a meal. A black servant can live on his white master's premises but the black shop attendant across the road must travel twenty miles to a location. A white child must not have black playmates but spends the first fifteen years of its life with a black nanny. White South Africans claim that Africa is their only home and refer to themselves as Europeans. A Chinese is also European but only if he is born in China. If a Chinese married couple have a child born in South Africa, the parents are Europeans and the child Asian.

On a Sunday morning I sat at a stadium on Witwatersrand outside Johannesburg to watch the mine dances—under the thatched roof covering half the amphitheatre. The world's biggest gold-producer cannot afford to erect a thatched roof above the half reserved for the blacks. The printed program stresses that we must not throw money to the dancers. Don't feed the animals.

It also says that there is to be a presentation of a golden helmet. A table and four chairs are moved into the arena, one put at one side of the table. A black miner is pushed up to it. He is shy, a little awkward, in clean but worn work clothes and clumsy boots. Across from him are three podgy whites in club blazers. One of them stands up, a somewhat pompous director with the

respected name Pretorius. He starts off, in English—it is translated into xhosa; maybe he doesn't speak xhosa, maybe he just wishes to impress the English-speaking tourists. He tells of an accident in the mines and how this black miner risked his life to save several other people. A very brave man, says Pretorius; he does not suggest any reward or promotion—but he will give him a golden helmet. Mr. Pretorius emphasizes that when there is an accident in the mines, men always come to each other's rescue, regardless of skin colour. He puts the golden helmet on the head of the brave man, then removes it so the press photographers can get a good picture, and says a few encouraging words. Mr. Pretorius poses beside the brave man; eventually Pretorius himself produces a camera and takes a picture of the brave man.

That is the end of the spectacle. Mr. Pretorius and his two colleagues contentedly exit through the "whites only" portal, while the brave man trudges back across the arena and out through the entrance for blacks.

The whole scene is mad. In Durban I notice that the film *Khartoum* is running. As it is banned in my city, I try to see it, but cannot buy a ticket because this is an Indian cinema and I am white. (I lived five years in India and must have gone to Indian cinemas hundreds of times.)

A photograph in the *Rand Daily Mail* shows a white woman and a Negro child. The white woman is the child's mother. Through a coincidence of genes, which biologists explain at great length, the child has Negroid characteristics which were dormant in her parents—people who, although classified as whites, actually belong to the coloured race which began nine months after the arrival of the first Boers. The child was expelled from the white school to which her "white" brothers and sisters went. This emergency brought a change in the law so that these apparently white parents may be presumed to have technically white children, and the little girl can now legally go back to the school. But

she cannot, really, because the parents of her class-mates are now boycotting it.

Under "separate development," the Bantu—as the blacks are called—have their own areas where they are their own masters. Transkei for instance is a Bantu homeland. So I go to Transkei and I find that the cafe in a town there has 98 per cent of its space reserved for whites only. The liquor store—like every other store in South Africa—has one stock of merchandise and display but two separate entrances so a white customer doesn't risk being contaminated by brushing against a black. A black delegation from Ovanboland in South West Africa goes to admire the Bantu homeland in Transkei but cannot eat a meal in the restaurant at Port St. Johns because it is for whites only.

The white South Africans say that there are areas developing into self-rule. When I visited Natal, the first South African town in history was installing an Indian city council—All-Indian. This town of Verulam has 8,000 Indian inhabitants and twenty-five white families. Now the white families have to leave. Up to now Verulam has had an all-white city council. It was acceptable for the tiny white minority to govern 8,000 Indians but is unthinkable that the Indians could govern twenty-five white families.

Because, in general, the whites must "lead." We are best off and cleverest, they say, but add with characteristic modesty that this is not the main reason. You see, the whites are the biggest uniform population group. Foreigners often make the mistake of thinking that all blacks are alike, but they aren't. You have xhosa and zulu, fingo and sotho, and lots more groups and they are very different from each other. The whites have the largest homogeneous population and you mustn't lump all African peoples together. Yet at the entrances to banks and post offices, to lavatories and police precincts, and all over South Africa I see the same signs: Whites only and Non-whites.

One can also look at such matters the other way round. An Olympic Committee is presently

in South Africa to investigate whether the country may after all qualify for the Games. The Committee is composed of three men—an Englishman, a white Kenyan, and the Chief Justice of Nigeria who is as black as they come. They stayed at the Langham in Johannesburg, the Edward in Durban, and Mount Nelson in Cape Town, the best hotels in the Republic. So I asked a South African Information Office for an explanation, learning that because there are no first class hotels in the Bantu districts a black VIP from a foreign country must stay in a white hotel. I don't know if they thought that the Committee would have split up if there had been a first class hotel for blacks, but it doesn't really matter. The main thing is that it is slowly dawning on them that there may be black people from outside South Africa that they *must* receive courteously. I am reminded of an incident in Washington when a Senegalese diplomat moved into a white neighborhood, to be ostracized and spat upon. He complained to the State Department, which sent an official to explain to the neighbours that this was a Senegalese diplomat. Deeply contrite, these good people immediately formed a deputation with flowers for the wife and sweets for the kids, and explained: "We are frightfully sorry, we didn't know you were foreigners; we thought you were Americans."

What, then, does this point to? First of all, obviously, to the need for Africans to be given chances to turn themselves into viable alternatives to apartheid, to show that multi-racialism is not ruled out. Second, easing the boycott would help the economic expansion which makes it interesting for South African shopkeepers to open their stores and houses to black purchasing power and encourages white employers to turn to black candidates even for skilled jobs when white applicants do not suffice. Moreover, economic stagnation in South Africa is likely to hit expenditure on Bantu welfare before it reduces any other expenditure.

But most of all, the boycott should be replaced by increased exchanges with the rest of the world, to make the whites understand that black Africa has changed, that there is a difference between class consciousness and race consciousness, that the possibilities of man must not be curtailed because of pigmentation but also because of other qualities. I am one of the few to welcome the establishment of a Malawi legation in Pretoria, because even if the chargé is white, the No. 2 man will be black, and henceforth the colour bar will thus be eroded each time the diplomatic corps attends a function. Instead of boycotting South Africa, we must expose this country to a progressing world, help its people out of their isolationism, their ignorance, and their prejudice. To bring South Africa into the community of decent nations, one needs to build bridges, not burn them.

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