

crackdown. Last year they responded to an M-19 arms raid by arresting some two thousand people and condoning the use of torture, which has not been practiced in Colombia as it has in some military dictatorships. The public outcry then forced the government to pull back, but it may cross the line again after the hostage situation is resolved.

If anything can finally shatter the politics of indifference and anesthesia, it will be torture. It would deeply divide the *pais politico*, which has not yet confronted the ultimate implications of militarization. The remarkably independent judiciary, while undercut by the constitutional reform of 1979, is still able to react. A National Commission for Human Rights includes leaders of significance from all sectors of society, and the press remains largely free of censorship. The trade union movement, which organized the country's first national strike in 1977, is still capable of mobilizing to protect workers' interests.

The relative openness and pluralism of Colombia's politics give special influence to international institutions such as Amnesty International and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, both of which have sent missions in 1980. Amnesty's findings of torture and repression by the army, for example, will become issues in Colombia's own political process (and not just a problem in foreign relations, as they tend to in harsher military regimes to the south). Indeed, they may finally focus political debate on the power of the army, which has clearly been responsible—in its courts, prisons, and militarized zones—for the worst human rights violations that have occurred.

The power of the army, however, is not just the result of military ambitions (or, certainly, of the guerrilla threat), but of the weakness and illegitimacy of the country's political institutions. Those institutions have been saved many times in the past by the ability of Colombia's party politicians to strike workable arrangements for sharing power. They have demonstrated a willingness to accept responsibility for resolving national crises, rather than going to knock at the barracks door. It is a laudable tradition, but one severely bent by the drift of recent years. Those institutions stand today at the point of being destroyed, like the infamous village in Vietnam, in the name of being saved. If politicians truly want to save them, they must have faith enough to use them.

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EXCURSUS 4

Richard John Neuhaus on NEW OCCASIONS, NEW DUTIES FOR RELIGION

Is there still a peace movement? Was there one ten years ago? Certainly there was an antiwar movement. Not antiwar-in-general, but very specifically anti-America's war in Indochina. Where today are the hundreds of thousands who massed in protest in the '60s?

The vast majority have gone on to the other things, fondly recalling their protest as a burst of youthful idealism and disguising as maturity their abandoned efforts for peace. For many, protest was mixed with the temporary

self-interest of avoiding the draft or with sundry counter-cultural fixations which were viewed as the wave of a new American revolution. The more conformist have simply switched sides, from "Peace Now" to "Nuke the Ayatollah," in obedience to the temper of the times.

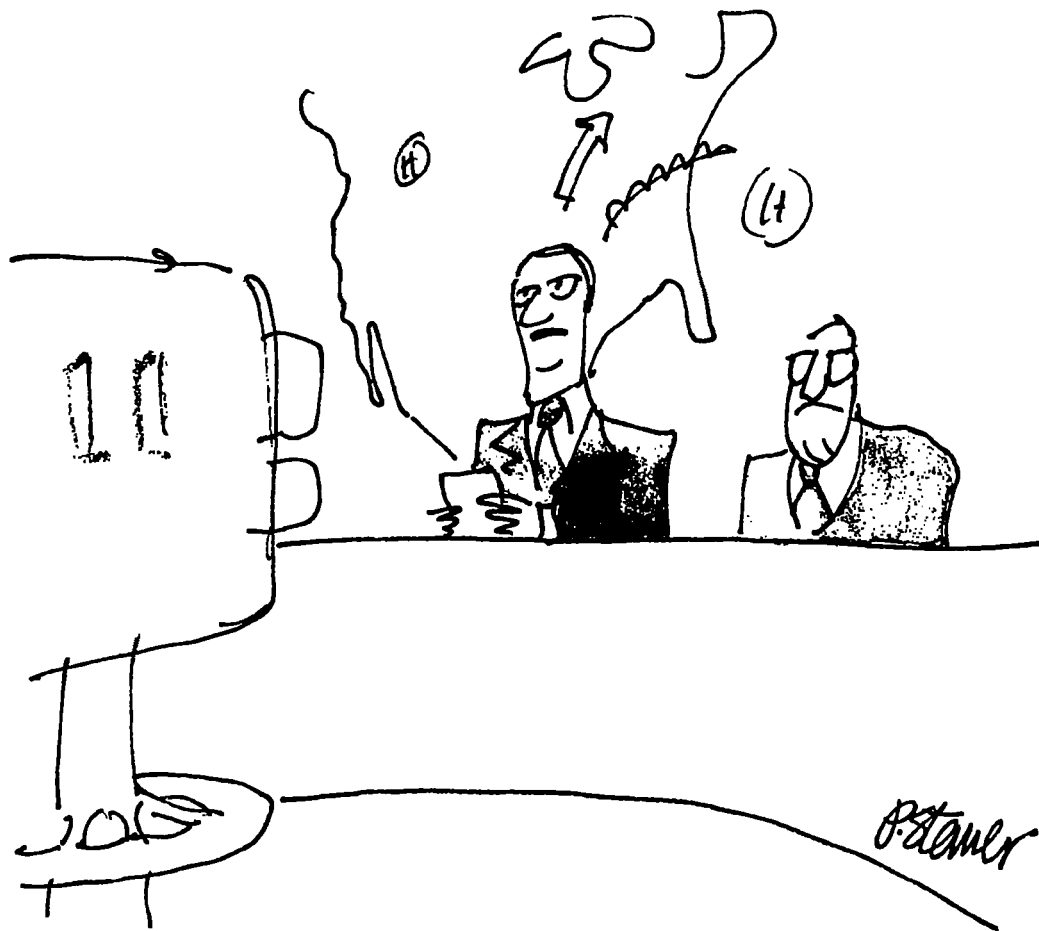
Some from the '60s have sustained their interest in international affairs and alternatives to war: in government or various institutes or, like the indomitable Robert Pickus, in organizations such as the World Without War Council. Then there are those who come closest to a real peace movement, those for whom the Vietnam agitation was a momentary upsurge of interest in a continuing commitment. They are the pacifist groups, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Mennonites, and the Quakers. Finally, there is the small but not unimportant group "radicalized" by the '60s, arriving at the firm conviction that American power is the chief cause of global oppression and injustice.

The antiwar movement was a much more variegated phenomenon than most of its apologists and opponents would like to believe. A fundamental difference existed between those who wanted to extricate America from a militarily disastrous and probably unjust course and those who backed Hanoi in the hope, as it was said, of getting America "on the right side" of the world revolution. The basic disagreement was whether U.S. policy in Vietnam represented a *distortion* or *revelation* of the true nature of American world power. Was Vietnam a disastrous mistake or a manifestation of systemic evil? Those of us who believed that—on balance, and considering the alternative—American global power is benign and essential, protested the squandering of that power.

Others opposed the war for fear of damage to the democratic process at home. From Lyndon Johnson's lies as the "peace candidate" in 1964 through the last days of the Kissinger-Nixon manipulation, the war was an exercise in official mendacity. In reaction to this, these people frequently, and perhaps naively, backed the "third force" in Vietnam—politicians and Buddhist leaders opposed to both communism and the Saigon regime. Most of this third force were imprisoned under Thieu and have since been killed, driven out, or imprisoned under Hanoi. Their American friends are embittered, feeling that the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam in the same way it had entered—with callous indifference toward a country's people and their own search for an alternative to tyranny.

In the shadow of the boat people, mass imprisonments, and the genocide in Cambodia, no thoughtful person today can confidently assert that whatever position he took then was self-evidently right. Despite the I-told-you-so crowing of some, supporters of the war have not been vindicated. No one can say what would have happened had the war been fought by different means and to different ends. If a national decision on America's world responsibilities depends upon a clear-cut determination of who was right and who wrong about Vietnam, America will remain divided and indecisive in the years ahead.

Although it may not be as revelatory an event as President Carter seems to think, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan marks the beginning of a new period of popular consciousness concerning the threats and obligations facing America. In shaping a new consensus, and avoiding a regression to old belligerencies, the churches of America have an important part to play. Most of them are not well equipped for the part. In the last decade many of the churches established peace programs—or, lest peace tend to inhibit support for favored revolutions, "peace and justice" programs. Such programs are fre-



"And now, with a response to this evening's weather watch, here is James Williamson."



quently staffed by people who are persuaded that the main villain in the global drama is the capitalist interests represented by American power. Church-and-society offices of the World Council of Churches and of some denominations, plus groups such as Clergy and Laity Concerned, have become the havens for refugees from radicalism's past. Deploring what they view as the current trend of reaction, they search for new events that might trigger a return to the exhilarating years of "The Movement." For example, witness the ragged re-run of draft resistance demonstrations in response to the president's proposed registration.

Historian Winthrop Hudson describes in *Religion in America* how in the 1920s proponents of the social gospel movement failed to respond to a new situation and thus the movement "was mostly confined to clerical ranks and had ceased to be important as a powerful ferment in the life of the churches. The clergymen who continued to issue social pronouncements were generals with few troops." In the 1930s Reinhold Niebuhr did battle with the religious pacifists who, writes Martin Marty, "continued to live in the world of the Kellogg Peace Pact of 1928, even during the years of the rise of Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany." Still later, in the 1960s, many broke with the end-of-ideology complacency about liberal democracy that they associated with Niebuhr and others. The class of the '60s is now in charge of most of the institutions of religious social witness in the West. They are today's generals without troops, and no amount of

prophetic fervor will enable them to shape creatively a situation with which they've lost touch.

James Russell Lowell's famous hymn puts it well: "New occasions teach new duties;/Time makes ancient good uncouth;/They must upward still and onward/Who would keep abreast of truth." One need not accept Lowell's facile progressivism to recognize that there are indeed new occasions that imply new duties. One such occasion is the horror of what has happened in Indochina since 1975. That must temper the shrill certitudes of all sides in an old debate. Another is the massive arms build-up by the Soviet Union and its manifestly aggressive purpose that makes ludicrous sentimental appeals for a unilateral disarmament that would, beyond human endurance, tempt an opponent to attack. Yet another new occasion—or an old occasion newly elucidated by Solzhenitsyn and others—is the nature of totalitarianism and the lesser evil of authoritarian regimes whose cooperation may at times be necessary to the preservation of a larger freedom. (Or must one still apologize for believing that the distinction between freedom and unfreedom is meaningful and important?)

With these occasions come duties both new and refurbished. Religious witness must continue to strive to be a zone of truth in which all partisan lies are exposed and the victims of whatever brand of oppression are cherished. Churches and synagogues have a singular responsibility to emphasize the moral *urgency* and the moral *ambiguity* of all efforts toward peace and justice, underscoring indi-

vidual and national fallibilities and nudging politics from merely "the art of the possible" toward a sober exploration of what can be done. The present task of socially concerned religion is much more difficult than it was during the civil rights and antiwar movements. Then the churches lent moral power and institutional strength, or sometimes just a panache of piety, to national currents of clear discontent and change. Now the task is to temper, inform, and activate millions of constituents caught in a mixed mood of uncertainty, resentment, and world weariness.

Religious witness serves the nation and the world very poorly if it offers only the choice between American jingoism and anti-American liberationism. Against aging antiwar leaders, we must pray that there will be no return to the movement of the Vietnam years, the good old days of the bad old days in U.S. foreign policy. Against the new majoritarians, we must protest a revival of America's manifest destiny, while keeping alive the suspicion that ours may be a hidden and fearfully complex destiny that can only be worked out with a patience that withstands the passions of conflicting certainties. As for that peace movement, it remains as elusive as ever. Religious social witness has enough to do if it contributes to a morally reflective exploration of what is required to keep the peace.

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EXCURSUS 5

Robert G. Gilpin, Jr. on TRADE AS A WEAPON

There are some, both in and out of government, who see economic sanctions as a symbolic act, a middle ground between inaction and war. But there are problems with this idea. It's true sanctions *do* symbolize the distaste of one government for another, but they also symbolize impotence. The question is, then, Which image does the U.S. want to project? Nor are sanctions *just* symbolic acts—they can and do lead to war. For instance, U.S. and Allied sanctions against Italy after the invasion of Ethiopia were largely responsible for driving Mussolini into the arms of Hitler. Today, of course, we are worried about pushing Iran into the Soviet camp.

History proves that without a high degree of market power it is impossible to effectively implement sanctions. With Iran, for example, the U.S. does not possess high market power, at least not as much now as in the past. At the same time, sanctions impose a heavy cost on the sanctioning nation—both economic and political. Sanctions almost invariably give rise to internal dissent; they create many problems with one's allies; and, notably with the present U.S. administration, can cause a nation to be perceived as a politically unreliable partner. President Carter is using trade sanctions far more often than previous administrations—in Argentina, Brazil, Libya, the Soviet Union, and Iran.

This raises another very real problem: Having imposed sanctions, how does one back out of them? For example, what if the Soviets *never* leave Afghanistan—do sanctions continue for five years? ten? indefinitely? The most attractive aspect of the president's call for an Olympic

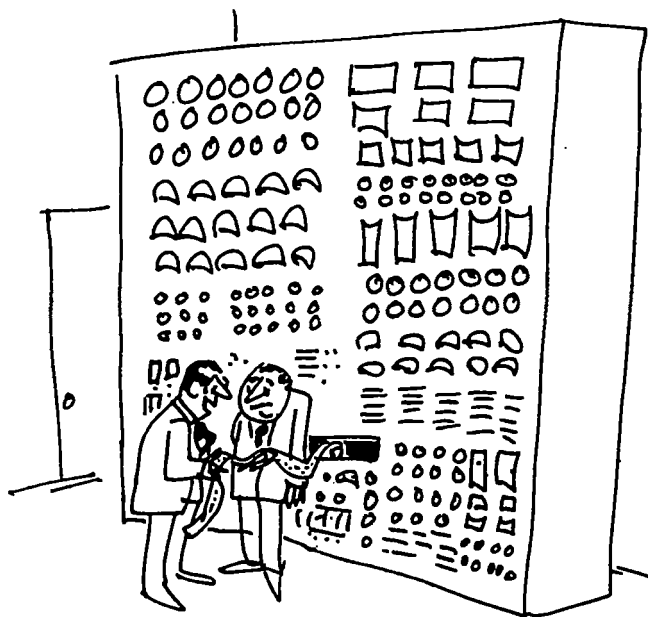
boycott is that it has its own built-in schedule. There is an end in sight.

Finally, we must ask ourselves what we are willing to do to make economic sanctions work. Are we to stop selling grain to Poland because it might be transferred to the Soviet Union? Granted, sanctions will raise prices, but they won't stop the supply of goods. After all, higher prices create a greater temptation to other world suppliers. The result is that the sanctioning country can be hurt most.

In the case of Iran, it's unlikely sanctions by themselves will prove effective. Most countries have a lot of room for tightening their belts. If we go to the *next* step, a blockade, they will be hurt. But a blockade is something else; a blockade is an act of war.

President Carter's policy is the result of Brzezinski's strong belief in the power of economic sanctions; former Secretary of State Vance is on record as being critical of them. In Iran, Carter has bought some time, nothing more. There were two possible policies for handling the hostage crisis: a conciliatory approach or a power approach. Carter has vacillated between the two.

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"It's announcing its candidacy for president"