

The United Nations today is dominated by a Third World ideology (vaguely Marxist in its conceptual underpinnings, but mostly having little continuity with what has been the Marxist tradition in the West) that contains one fundamental assumption: The poverty of the Third World was in the past and is today the consequence of imperialist exploitation; conversely, the affluence of the West was and is caused by the same exploitation. This assumption is false, both with regard to the past and to the present (notwithstanding the fact that, of course, exploitation has been a reality in many places). The assumption leads to a militant mendicancy: It supplies a moral justification for every economic interest of countries that manage to define themselves as victims, past or present, of Western imperialism. It allows these countries to disclaim responsibility for their condition and to couch every economic demand they make upon the West (and indeed upon the world economy) in terms of "reparations." In the face of this ideology Western countries have a number of options.

One option, at least theoretically, is a penitential stance: The West would then admit all the charges, plead guilty as it were, and proceed to negotiate the size of the "reparations" to be dished out. A number of Western intellectuals find this stance plausible; it is difficult to imagine sovereign nations taking it (though some governments in Western Europe, such as Sweden, have come rather close). Moynihan, in a number of recent statements, has vigorously repudiated this possibility, which he aptly called "plea bargaining"; the Kissinger address does not even mention it.

Then there is the option, which seems to have characterized United States statements in the world organizations in recent years, of mainly ignoring the specific economic demands made by Third World countries. The position smacks strongly of contempt as well as indifference to the human suffering of the poor. The Kissinger address marks a reversal of this position.

A third option is counterbelligerency on the rhetorical level, perhaps positing a blustering new Americanism in the face of the militant mendicancy of the Third World ideology. There was some apprehension that Moynihan's appointment to the United Nations portended such a move (*furor hibernicus* unleashed against all those Africans). If Moynihan's demeanor since his appointment has already dispelled such apprehension (he has been reassuringly ambassadorial), the Kissinger address has made it very clear indeed that this would not be the American posture for some time to come.

Thus the address seems to open up a fourth option, more promising than the aforementioned three. It indicates a stance that is dignified, responsive to the urgent needs of Third World mis-

ery while remaining unresponsive to Third World cant, practical, self-assertive without bluster. The address is hardly an earthshaking manifesto. But it is a very hopeful step in the right direction, and it deserves domestic support across party lines.

PLB

EXCURSUS V

Open Season for Madness

It is no wonder that exorcism and astrology are popular these days. This is a season for political madness, and ostensibly sane people act in ways only marginally different from the zanies.

Normally, for example, movements and leaders try to defend their interests, and failing that, at least to make themselves and their cause look noble or moral. These days it is the fashion to discredit or attack one's own side. The Portuguese Communist Party, for example, followed a maximalist strategy which—besides being very likely to fail—was guaranteed to make the West remember what the cold war was all about. Not to be outdone, General Franco's regime executed a number of dissidents, reminding us why so many, in the days of the Civil War, felt it was worth fighting against Falangism to the bitter end.

Things are not much better in the United States. In the Patty Hearst trial the defense—designed by attorneys who are militant leftists—is attempting to discredit the Left, arguing that only "brainwashing" could account for Ms. Hearst's ostensible conversion to the SLA. And it is the state that is contending that a young woman born to privilege and wealth could quite sanely join an unusually insane revolutionary movement. If the state is right, our institutions are in deep trouble indeed.

Politically, Senator McGovern at least managed a high moral tone, denouncing the CIA and the Administration for covertly supporting Portuguese socialism, presumably because it made it more difficult for us to expostulate with the Soviet Union about its support for the Portuguese Communists. Of course, the Senator had already argued that the Vietnamese refugees were duped into exile by the belief that they would die if they remained at home, thus supporting the theory that preserving one's life is the only political value of importance. It is, however, a cheap shot to criticize McGovern, whose instinct for reducing his own political attractiveness must now be proverbial.

It is more interesting that the Government of the United States now seems to regard New York City as the major enemy of the Republic. Washington

will not help New York, and President Ford finds time to deliver moral lectures on the city's lack of fiscal rectitude. But the government finds reason for aiding and praising Egypt and the Soviet Union, not to mention still seamier regimes, and Egypt, certainly, is hardly known for its concern for balanced budgets or austerity in relation to public employees. A New York City default, moreover, might have a psychological fallout in the nation's financial markets not very different from the impact on the world economy of the failure of the Credit Anstalt that helped to set off the world depression. But then, the Administration has given signs before this of believing that its real antagonist was the American economy.

Paradoxically, there is a kind of sanity in the efforts of Ms. Fromme and Ms. Moore to assassinate President Ford. On its face, these are the most bizarre and pointless of all assassination attempts. Why would anyone want to shoot someone as decent and inoffensive as Gerald Ford? No one even tried with Mr. Ford's predecessor, certainly an excellent candidate for assassination on many grounds. And yet this well-meaning, sincere, relatively gentle man seems to inspire a fury peculiar to himself. I suspect that the reason, interpreted through the unconscious of these agonized and tortured women, is the recognition that the President of the United States cannot afford to be inoffensive. The stakes are too great; the country itself matters too much; we are all of us in a state of not-so-quiet desperation, sensing our individual impotence at a time when new departures and great politics have become mandatory. The vogueish suspicion of political leaders and institutions is only another form of contemporary political madness, an attack on ourselves. We need and will have leaders who are more than ordinary good folks; if we cannot find statesmen who are noble, we will at least find leaders who are offensive and who give us something to hate. And it is only a more powerful argument for democratic statecraft and leadership that hate is the other face of love.

WCMcW

QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Refusing to Acquiesce In Murder

We are convinced the OAU will deserve the condemnation of the world and the peoples of Africa as an organization of hypocrites, if it acquiesces, or appears to acquiesce, in the murders and massacres which have been perpetuated by the present Ugandan government. For these murders and

massacres have not been a temporary aberration; they are its style and means of existence. This is the style of government of every fascist regime in the world. Tanzania cannot accept the mockery of condemning colonialism, apartheid and fascism in the headquarters of a murderer, an oppressor, a black fascist and a self-confessed admirer of fascism.

—The government of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania explaining its refusal to attend the meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Uganda

Press Freedom in Africa

When I last spoke at an Assembly in Hong Kong five years ago I said it was no better than even money that press freedom would survive in Africa. In the event those odds proved to be much too generous, for in Black Africa today there is no press freedom in any recognisable form.

The unpalatable fact is—and this is something that sticks in the throat of every self-respecting African who will face it—that there is more press freedom in South Africa than in the rest of Africa put together.

The cant and hypocrisy with which most African politicians talk about the press is in the best traditions of the colonialists, whose rule was largely based upon these qualities. Perhaps the worst thing about this, certainly the thing that gets the gall of the many, many decent African journalists all over the continent, is that as the politicians grind the media deeper and deeper into the dust, they will at the same time proclaim how free their media is.

—Frank Barton, Africa Director of the International Press Institute, reporting to the 24th IPI Assembly, *IPI Report* (June)

The Biochemistry of Cabala

Monday, September 29 marks the beginning of this year's Free University at the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Rutgers University which offers University students and interested members of the community a wide range of courses and special events in which to participate.

Highlighting the first week of classes will be an in-depth encounter with the mysteries of Cabala when Rabbi Zalman Schachter will present the first session of "The Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism"....The series will also include two other sessions on October 7 and 14. Each three-hour session will be divided into a two-hour lecture/discussion period and a one-hour mystical lab. Schachter is professor of religion at Temple University and one of America's most creative and charismatic spiritual teachers.

—Item in the *Rutgers Targum*, a student newspaper, September 25