

program with the Soviet Union is still exposed to a test of time, though its cultural benefits *per se* appear obvious. However, cultural exchange with the non-Communist world is bound to harvest not only intellectual but also political fruit.

There is evidence from the past which supports this statement. The British and the French have had a long tradition of offering educational opportunities to the intelligentsia from their dependent territories. True, some of these students became radicals and even revolutionaries, leading the movement of liberation against their foreign rulers. However, as the national goal was achieved and a more balanced philosophical view allowed the memory of the past intellectual and cultural association to set in a proper perspective, most of the British-educated leaders turned into sincere friends of Great Britain, just as the French-educated leaders have not shed, in spite of painful experience, the unique heritage of the French culture.

Untainted by a colonial past, indeed, long recognized as a torchbearer of libertarian tradition, this country could surely make use of cultural and educational diplomacy with unparalleled effectiveness. We have barely scratched the surface of the formidable potential of such a program. Though the present Administration has committed itself to a major upgrading of the exchange program, speed and thorough planning are essential.

However, whether we use old or new tools of diplomacy, whether we use them in the service of combatting Soviet policy or gaining and maintaining friends, none will be effective if they are not wielded by a sturdy arm. Even if one thousand Talleyrands could conduct the diplomacy of the democracies of the West, and if they were, in addition, gifted with the persuasive words of an Odysseus, their efforts would be worthless unless they maneuvered from positions of power, resulting from a firm, courageous, purposeful and inventive foreign policy.

## other voices

### A NOTE ON THE PRESENT CRISIS

**J. L. Hromádka**

Ever since the end of the last World War we have been confronted with more and more newly arising problems indicating the depth of the contemporary crisis of humanity. Almost every year, the international situation was such that we expected either an approaching catastrophe or a new beginning of post-war reconstruction. And the crisis has been growing deeper and deeper and the beginning of the reintegration of mankind more difficult. The same situation is repeating itself in the present time. In many sections of the world a kind of war hysteria or a feeling of frustration makes a constructive step forward almost impossible. In a way only today, sixteen years after the war, has humanity come to realize what was hidden before the eyes of the majority of citizens: the catastrophe of the era 1914-1945 was a manifestation of a crisis of human history that we have only gradually been in a position to penetrate into its very nature and to understand

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fully the meaning of its consequences and repercussions.

In all probability the slow advance of what we call normalcy has been due to the fact that we have been unwilling to take seriously the depth of the human upheaval and the incapacity of the old society to face all the main problems with courage and wisdom. Only today many leading statesmen in Western and other countries are beginning to realize that all former ways and means of the international order have become inadequate and have been outdated by the changes and revolutionary transformations of the postwar era. All too long were the leading statesmen of the Western world under the illusion that the advance of the East European and Asian socialist reconstruction was of only temporary character and that sooner or later the Western society with its criteria, norms, political and cultural blueprint would in the end prove to be superior and the only real dynamic power of the new international order. Hence their unwillingness to look beyond purely political, diplomatic and military aspects of the contemporary tensions to think hard, to make new and courageous decisions, and to visualize the new world transcending all the habits, ways of life and thought, political and social forms of the liberal, democratic Western society.

We can hardly blame an average citizen of Western Europe or America for his lack of understand-

ing of the basic issues after the war. The war 1914–18 was understood and interpreted as the victory of progress, freedom and democracy over the world of reaction, restoration, monarchy and feudal privileges. How could an ordinary man be prepared to take into consideration an entirely new character of the contemporary situation: that the criterion of progress and liberty, international ethos and human rights might have changed so profoundly after the revolution of 1917 and after the victorious survival of the Soviet Union in the war of 1941–45—and, of course, after the profound reconstruction of China? That his conception of a responsible society and the new international order has become inadequate, incapable of coping with the postwar crisis, tensions, and of the foundations of a just and durable peace?

The illusion of the merely temporary nature of the postwar East European and Asian state of affairs has proved to be fatal and dangerous. West Germany has fallen victim to these illusions of the Western world and become the danger spot of the present moment. The idea of the Western German statesmen that West Germany is the only real representative of the German people has contradicted all the main facts resulting from the end of World War II.

But this idea was strengthened by the strategy of Western powers which avowedly or unavowedly considered the organization of Eastern Europe in the year of 1945 and after as only temporary and anticipated the gradual withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Central Europe and the unification of Germany within the sphere of Western supremacy. The proposals and suggestions coming from the East that the settlement of German and other problems could be carried out on the basis of a peaceful co-existence between the East and the West were met either with suspicion or rejected as a false conception of a static and permanent status quo. Anti-Communism was cultivated, and is still cultivated, as an ideological, social, political and international basis of Western aspirations, of Western strategy with all its spiritual, philosophical and political implications.

What we have just outlined as a meaning of the present world atmosphere and situation must be understood not as one-sided propaganda. The crisis of today is too serious, yes, mortally dangerous to permit a Christian theologian to engage in cheap propaganda. We have to do with a most real fact of history. And we have to ask ourselves whether—let me repeat—our understanding of the events is intellectually adequate and whether we, Christians, possess an adequate vision of our mission and a courageous faith to wrestle with our problems, past failures, omissions and tardiness in order to proclaim in an efficacious way our message and to make our communion of faith, love and hope relevant and effective. As long as we live in a world of illusions, self-

deception and blind hesitation to face the real facts of our history, we are bound to replace the relevant creative faith by sanctimonious slogans and by obsolete traditions. We have to reexamine all we have done or have failed to do ever since we made a start on the postwar way. We have to reexamine the results, resolutions and pronouncements within the ecumenical cooperation. The reexamination may be rather painful but there is no other way. My words are dictated by an utmost loyalty both to the Church of Jesus Christ and to the ecumenical fellowship. To what extent have we dealt adequately with the basic issues of the postwar history and to what extent have we yielded to a misleading conception of the superiority of what we call Western civilization and of the unquestionable right of the leadership of Western man?

Our reexamination of ecumenical action must proceed to the reexamination of our theological thought. We take all too much for granted the self-existence of theology and assume the inner coherence of theological thought and its independence from the general human social and historical situation. We very often withdraw into the inner temple of exegesis, hermeneutics or dogmatics, not realizing to what extent it might be either an escape or a reflection of the mentality and mood of Christian people. We pretend to save our integrity by ignoring what is going on in the world, by assuming our theological freedom, by withdrawal into the ivory tower of the illusory theological *Eigengesetzlichkeit*. To ignore what is going on around us does not mean to be free of the social or political situation. We deceive ourselves if we assume an attitude of security and if we pretend to avoid any political or social onesidedness. A theology without a courageous confrontation (or self-confrontation) with the world, with secular problems and aspirations, without courage to be soiled, to be under attack from outside, ceases to be a real theology of Incarnation, the Cross and Resurrection. With a high admiration for theological research, for a sacrificial theological self-concentration, I cannot fail to realize that we stand under a continuous challenge from the outside world and that our disinterested freedom from the world might be the most dangerous self-deception.

And vice-versa again, our confrontation with the world, our interest in its problems connected with its struggle for bread and right interrelations between man and man may manifest a real sovereignty of faith and integrity of theological thought. What is needed is both the depth of faith, the burning fire of the Gospel, the openness to the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit—and our open mind toward the misery and frustration of human society, toward the high aspirations and hopes of man in his struggle for more bread, for more intellectual life, for better education, for real equality, for better health and for real cooperation in peace and justice.