

in the magazines

Despite agreement arrived at prior to the recent twelve-day meeting of world Communist leaders in Moscow, that "the meeting would not condemn anyone," reports K.S. Karol in the *New Statesman* (June 27), "reality proved different." For "on the second day an illustrious unknown, Mr. Macielle (in the name of a party which is not exactly famous for its vigorous approach to theoretical questions, the Paraguayan C.P.) spoke of 'the great Chinese problem.' Later the same day, the Australian delegate, Aarons, equally rashly raised the Czechoslovak question. Mr. Ceausescu's appeals to the comrades to keep to the rules went unheard. Mr. Brezhnev then fired a series of red bullets against the Chinese — 'who want war' — and his Warsaw Pact allies could hardly do less. Tongues were loosened at last, and by the end of the conference even the San Marino delegate, Gasperoni, speaking 'in the name of a big party in a very small country,' was arguing openly with the faithful Latin American cohorts who, as we all know, are very small parties in big countries. In the end, paying homage to 'great socialist China,' he refused to sign three-quarters of the final document. The delegate from the Dominican Republic went even further, announcing that he would sign nothing and that the communiqué was 'fit for priests and social democrats.' There was not much respect, and no religion, left in St. George's Hall. It was the Italian C.P. that inflicted the most grievous wound on Mr. Brezhnev. This, after all, is a big party in a big country, and its intellectual prestige among Communists everywhere has been enormous since the days of Antonio Gramsci. Now its delegate, Enrico Berlinguer, demolished stone by stone the ideological edifice so carefully built up by the earlier conferences. He pointed out with regret that there had been no mention of contradictions within socialist society, that no concern had been shown over the principles outraged by the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and that the final document was a piece of propaganda that could not be taken seriously. Finally, he said that he was prepared to sign only the section which proclaimed the need for a struggle against imperialism; in other words, he took the stance of the proverbial preacher who was 'against sin.'

"So, at a glance, the conference ended up pretty badly for the Soviet leaders. . . . However, Mr. Brezhnev must have figured out the risks he was taking in assembling this conference, and probably he is less disappointed than most people think. He knows that the Soviet people have short memories. Togliatti's famous memorandum was published in *Pravda*, but this did not prevent Brezhnev from driving all those who backed the Italian viewpoint out of East European Communist parties. While Berlinguer was holding forth in Moscow, they were hard at work in Prague

expelling men like Frantisek Kriegel and many others who were saying no more than the Italian delegate on the subject of the invasion. In Moscow, non-conformist intellectuals are in jail for the same offense. When the Soviet leaders called the conference, they had a precise purpose: they wanted to get world Communists to swallow their pill, and in this they succeeded — though on conditional terms. In the future, they will be able to invoke 'scientific Marxism' to justify their repressive internal measures and their anti-Chinese crusade. After all, nobody at the conference queried their credentials as Communists. Nobody protested when they talked about the struggle against imperialism while acting as watchmen of the status quo throughout the world. . . ."

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Leslie Dewart on "Truth, Error and Dialogue" (in *Concurrence* — a quarterly "Review for the Encounter of Commitments" — Spring, 1969):

"It need hardly be stressed that intellectual freedom is due not only to the individual believer in relation to his intellectual community, but in the very first place to that community in relation to the Church as a whole. It is not for the benefit of the individual, but for that of the Christian academy, that the academic freedom of individuals should be preserved. Likewise, the academic freedom of the academy must be preserved, not for the academy's sake, but for that of the whole Church. For the Christian academy best serves the interests of the Church when it freely devotes itself to the cultivation of the intellect and the promotion of enquiry. The Christian academy that restricts the academic freedom of its members or renounces its own has abdicated its responsibilities to the Church. It should be noted, then, that insofar as it can be said to be a *right*, academic freedom is not the right to maintain particular views against general consensus. It is the right to *participate*, discharging one's vocation, in the common task of Christian community. Likewise, the academy as a whole has the right, correlative to a duty, to participate in the growth and development of the truth of faith which belongs to the Church as a whole.

"Historical experience bears out these conclusions. The last one hundred years of the history of the Church have shown with unprecedented clarity the imprudence of casting out dissent. Nothing so facilitates the proliferation of error and the stagnation of the intellect as does enforced conformity, which automatically rewards inertia, myopia, passivity, uncreativity and mediocrity. Who can be aware of recent history and yet fail to agree that the consequences of several generations of internal intellectual intolerance in the Church

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are painfully surfacing today? Intolerance is not even efficient. In the end it never really succeeds in preventing error. Worse yet, sometimes it makes error all the more insidious, if it is unacknowledged, and renders it all the more deceptive, if it is hidden under the self-delusion of truth. On the other hand, perhaps the whole of the post-Conciliar unhappiness of the Church is not an excessive price to pay to Clio if she will really teach us the lesson that the Christian academy is not a society for the preservation of past truth and the avoidance of future error, but a collective Christian endeavor freely dedicated to the cultivation of truth — an end to which it converts all it possesses, including, upon occasion, error itself.”

In an editorial written not long before June 20, when Rhodesia's electorate lent its approval to a new constitution, the *National Review* expressed its opinion of the document (June 17):

“The proposed constitution . . . is fundamentally racist and fundamentally despotic. It is fundamentally racist because its provisions exclude, on the grounds solely of race, the possibility that non-whites could win a parliamentary majority and thus control the formation of a government. If this constitution holds, the Africans (the constitution's official term) must remain politically subject to Europeans (again, the constitution's term) no matter what their increase in literacy, income, wealth, virtue or any other quality — or, of course, in numbers, wherein they exceed the Europeans by fifteen to one.

“This constitution is fundamentally despotic not only because, in the government's own words, ‘the new Declaration of Rights will not be enforceable by the courts,’ but because ‘the Bill of Rights’ is an Orwellian inversion. It authorizes — not as an emergency exception or under judicial control, but routinely — arrest by quasi-judicial authorities, preventive detention and arrest, regulation of the press and other media (i.e., censorship) etc.

“We do not believe it within our function or competence to tell the Rhodesian government how to manage its affairs, and we do not consider it within our government's function and competence to intervene in the affairs of other nations except insofar as these constitute a serious threat to our own national security and interest. We have tried to understand Rhodesia's fearsome dilemmas sympathetically, and we have sharply criticized the irresponsible, sterile hostility that so much of the world has directed against Rhodesia. All the more reason to state our conviction that the proposed constitution is immoral, unnecessary and imprudent.

“Self-evidently it is immoral: see above. Unnecessary, because the distant future cannot in any event be controlled, and non-racist educational and income voting qualifications are adequate insurance against the premature coming to power of a manifestly unfitted majority. Imprudent because it will wound so many of those who have not joined the anti-Rhodesia pack, and, crucial for the longer run, because the provisions of this constitution leave Rhodesia's black majority no hope for political and legal equality — no hope for becoming fully human — except through violence.”

What preparations for the anniversary celebration, as the U.N. nears 25? “Some of the members of the 25-nation Preparatory Committee . . . have offered suggestions that could be productive,” *War/Peace Report* says (April, 1969). “A number of governments, including Cyprus, India, Ghana, Italy and Guyana, have made proposals involving broad-gauge studies of the essence of the world organization. One idea that has been given attention, offered by Evan Luard, M.P., and forwarded by the United Kingdom delegation, is that a ‘Committee of Wise Men’ be appointed by the secretary general to act in their personal capacities to consider the record of the U.N. and make recommendations for its future. The report of the wise men would then provide the focus of debate for the U.N.'s special 25th anniversary session.

“Somewhat surprisingly, the old suggestion of revising the U.N. Charter has arisen in the committee's deliberations

“The American government's attitude toward the U.N.'s 25th anniversary seems, so far at least, to be one of boredom. The U.S. has not reacted to the proposals for a political and structural study of the U.N., nor has it come up with a single original idea of its own. It has ignored suggestions that a special session of the General Assembly be held in June of 1970, either in San Francisco or in New York, to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Charter on June 26. It has not reacted to U Thant's proposal that the event ‘be attended by as many heads of state or government as possible.’ Instead, it has suggested that three days to a week be set aside just before the regular 1970 Assembly session for addresses by the Secretary General, the President of the World Court, heads of specialized agencies, and representatives of member nations — all of which would amount to very little more than what happens at any regular Assembly session. . . .

“By and large, despite the number of proposals, it does not seem that the ideas are big enough, specific enough and imaginative enough to make the U.N.'s 25th anniversary amount to much. . . .”

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