

In the Magazines

Who are we? Where are we going? What role has a religious pacifist organization today? Such questions are part of the self-examination being undertaken by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and at a recent national meeting the process was inaugurated (*Fellowship*, Winter, 1972).

One spokesman, sociologist Gordon Zahn, noted that "if, as some recent observations might suggest, we stand in the antechamber of a dying anti-war movement (as opposed to the *peace* movement) it is well to make some preliminary estimates of the prospective inheritance and some tentative decisions as to how it can best be put to use."

The distinction "between the 'anti-war' and the 'peace' movement is basic," Zahn asserts. "It is the former which is dying, and it is up to [groups like F.O.R.] to make sure that the latter does not perish with it. The anti-war movement has always incorporated some elements with narrower and others with broader objectives than those established by and for the peace movement. What we are witnessing now is a falling-away or, better, a peeling-off of the former. . . . Peace, as we know all too well from past experience, has its 'summer soldiers' too."

"An important part of the [organization's renewed] task will be to, if not restore, at least rediscover (and where necessary, create) adequate vehicles for the expression of the religious truths we claim to serve.

"The heart of that truth, of course, is the commitment to one's fellow man out of love for no other reason than that he is a man, created like us in a divine image and possessed of a divine potential. It is imperative that all believers, but a religious pacifist organization in particular, find appropriate ways to demonstrate that commitment. . . ."

"Assuming that the war in Vietnam will come to an end (and that no 'other Vietnams' develop in Latin America or elsewhere), one must expect the religious pacifist organization to return to its normal and primary emphasis upon education and persuasion. The activism of the recent past will not be abandoned altogether, but the role assigned to it will be greatly diminished. . . ."

Walter Laqueur covers considerable ground in his essay on "Zionism, the Marxist Critique and the Left" in the December issue of *Dissent*, yet happily, for our purposes, all paths do converge in his conclusion:

"Marxists agree with the liberal critics of Zionism

in regarding assimilation as desirable, and rejecting Zionism for trying to impede this inevitable process. Such a vision does not lack consistency; it certainly entailed fewer complications than the Zionist endeavor. Its main weakness is that it does not provide clear answers for the present and the foreseeable future. The Marxist appeal to Jewish toilers and intellectuals to share in the class struggle in their native countries was not practical politics in Germany in 1933, and it has encountered obstacles to a greater or a lesser degree everywhere. Zionists concede that it was a historical misfortune that the Jewish national movement appeared so late on the historical scene; the emergence of a Jewish state in the 19th century would have created fewer problems. They will accept the view that the nation-state is not the final goal of human history but only a transitional stage. Yet while it lasts, what are the Jews to do in those countries in which assimilation is just not possible?

"To this vital question no convincing answer has come forth from the Marxist critics of Zionism. They could argue, as some did, that the problems of individual nations have to be subordinated to the higher interests of the world revolution and that, seen from this vantage point, the Jewish problem was not the most important. The Jews are expendable: other nations too have come and gone in history. Persecution, the slaughter of millions of Jews, is a regrettable episode, but the revolutionary socialist is concerned with the future of all mankind; what does the future of a small people matter in the global context? Zionists were unlikely to be impressed by this argument for more than one reason. Those advocating abstract internationalist principles are usually influenced by the interests of the nations to which they belong. Furthermore, Zionism rejects as unreasonable the demand that the Jews should subordinate their national aspirations to the higher interest of the future ideal world state—which may (or may not) come into existence one day, and may (or may not) be superior to the present order.

"Zionism no doubt can be subjected to trenchant criticism from different points of view. But as a national movement and a *Weltanschauung*, its validity can neither be proved nor refuted; it is as legitimate, or illegitimate, as other national movements—or nations. And as far as anti-Semitism is concerned, Zionism has a strong case; its analysis has been more fully confirmed by recent history than the predictions of its critics."

"Allende is making a revolution under more difficult circumstances than Fidel Castro did in his assault from the Sierra Maestra." Says who? Says novelist Graham Greene, author of *The Quiet American* and *Our Man in Havana*—obviously no stranger to political movements and machinations—and a recent visitor to Chile. For "this revolution requires from its leader less a heroic charisma than extreme political prudence, a sense of humor, and an unspectacular courage. And optimism, of course, always optimism" (*Harper's, March*).

Greene notes that "the sense of unity among the six parties" represented in the Popular Unity "strikes even a pessimistic outsider as remarkable. This is not the kind of popular front formed in an emergency against a common enemy, containing great fissures of dissent that widen when the emergency is over. . . . Here Communists and Socialists are working together without suspicion, perhaps because both parties are Marxist. All the Communists I met seemed to belong to that new class of Communist that appeared so briefly and prematurely during the Czechoslovakian spring. They are open and experimental, with dogma as the ground of argument and not as an article of faith—men who have studied Trotsky as well as Marx and Lenin. . . ."

Will Chile be able to follow "the legal road to revolution"? A Chilean worker asked Greene a similar question "one night as we sat at dinner: 'Do you think we have a chance?' and I thought of the generals in Brazil and Bolivia and of Mr. Davis [former U.S. ambassador to Guatemala, recently appointed to the post in Chile] and the CIA, of the rain and desolation of Lota and the slums of Santiago, and then of the proud moneyed miners of Chuqui and ex-President Frei waiting in the wings. Two lines of Shelley came to mind:

. . . to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

"'I think you have a sporting chance,' I said, and he nodded in agreement—that was about the measure of it."

In their article on "The Impact of U.S. Investment in Southern Africa" (in *Social Action's* March issue), Reed Kramer and Tami Hultman ask—and respond to—questions frequently posed by those who doubt the wisdom of withdrawal of American business from the area:

"1. *There have been recent loosening of the bonds of discrimination. Coloured and Asians, and sometimes Africans, are doing jobs formerly performed only by whites. Time magazine calls it a 'crack in the apartheid wall.'*

While this is true, the practice of elevating other workers to jobs vacated by whites is not an innovation, but a well-established South African pattern

which progressively frees white employees for more complex jobs. Economic gains for the black worker are not commensurate with the increased responsibility. Through 'job fragmentation,' work formerly done by a white worker is broken into new components. Though the black employee who moves into the job may receive a salary which is less than a quarter of that of the white who was replaced, the firm still claims to give equal pay for equal work, because the job is now 'different'. . . .

Rather than leading to political power, increasing dependence on the skills of black labor seems to generate ever more repressive legislation to militate against the possibility of social change. The postwar period of economic growth has seen the rise of a sophisticated network of discriminatory legislation. As Africans', Asians' and Coloureds' share of the work force has grown—accounting for 64% of the total in 1946 and 77% in 1970—their political rights have increasingly diminished. . . .

"2. *If a U.S. firm withdraws from South Africa, it will quickly be replaced by a German or French or Japanese company.*

The logic of international economic practices disputes the 'replacement theory.' If the pressures against economic involvement are too great for a U.S. firm to resist, companies from smaller, less wealthy nations are unlikely to risk moving in to fill the gap. In any case, can a Christian legitimately argue in such a fashion? One might as reasonably say, 'If I don't push heroin, someone else will.'

"3. *Won't isolating South Africa only strengthen the resistance of whites while forsaking blacks?*

Past history indicates that strong pressure has been the only effective recourse for outside people seeking to influence South Africa. Widespread demonstrations in Britain and Australia against South Africa sports teams, as well as South Africa's increasing isolation from international sport, did not spawn a negative reaction. Instead, the result has been the 'new sports policy' which for the first time in recent memory allowed black and white athletes to compete together on South African soil. . . .

But a call for business withdrawal should not be interpreted as an attempt to isolate South Africa from the world. Interaction with the white power structure closes one off, in important ways, from the majority of the population who are not white. Conversely, withdrawal can be a form of concerned involvement—a way of supportive affirmation for those inside the country who are working for basic change.

"4. *Is not a policy of communication the more Christian approach? Isn't it our task to encourage reconciliation?*"

There can be no true reconciliation unless persons meet as equals. Without a realignment of the economic and political structure, the South African government may maintain calm, but there will be no peace."

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