

A VIEW OF THE WORLD

Abraham Martin Murray

"AND ALL THAT." American young people, according to a recent educational study, know very little about American history. One fears they know even less about world history. Recently on a Midwest campus a college senior revealed that he did not know that Hitler had conquered France during World War II. More amazing, no one seemed to find his ignorance remarkable. Apparently Europeans, at least European diplomats, have a longer memory. In all the discussion about what happens to NATO if Communists enter European governments it turns out that a major factor is fear of Germany. "What we and the Americans drop, the Germans will have to pick up. Do we want the Germans to lead Europe again?" asks one Danish diplomat. For all their complaints about U.S. "interference" with internal European affairs, it seems unlikely Europeans will want to encourage a U.S. withdrawal that would accelerate a German ascendance. Also, although often in private, most Europeans do not deny the common sense view that the U.S. has a valid interest in maintaining the conditions upon which its alliance with Western Europe is premised. Alliance is by definition not a one-way street. Facing the twin uncertainties of "democratic" Communists in government and of West German hegemony, thoughtful Europeans will, we expect, become more articulately pro-American in the year ahead. Unlike too many of our college seniors, they do remember Hitler, Stalin, the League of Nations, "and all that."

PINPOINTING TORTURE. The grim fact is that torture seems to be more and more accepted as routine around the world. This about the treatment of Basque dissidents by the "liberalizing" regime in Spain: "The prisoner was beaten (one eardrum was shattered, the other badly infected), hung by the arms for three days with his toes barely reaching the floor and repeatedly submerged in a bathtub filled with human excrement and vomit until he nearly drowned." The methods are not terribly novel, varying little from South Korea to Chile to Cuba to the Ukraine. The novelty is that there seems to be less outrage at the systematic use of such police methods. It might be argued that it is unfair to single out Spain, which, after all, is moving toward more humane and democratic policies on many fronts. The truth is that it is never unfair to single out torturers. They have lost their claim to fair treatment in civilized public opinion. To be sure, groups such as Amnesty International are criticized for providing more details about the violation of human rights in non-Communist societies. But that is part of the price paid by more open societies; their crimes are more exposed to public view. In a twisted way the very imbalance in reporting on such atrocities is evidence that there is still some truth in talk about

"the free world." Under strong international pressure the Chilean junta is finally permitting a U.N. team to inspect alleged human rights violations. There is no such pressure on China, Cuba, or the Soviet Union.

KISSINGER'S HISTORY—HISTORY'S KISSINGER. Kissinger is meeting widespread disbelief with regard to his newly enunciated commitment to black aspirations in Africa. In part this is spillover from the unpleasantness in connection with Angola. After seven years of studied neglect of Africa, Kissinger suddenly pinpointed a little-understood conflict in Angola as a kind of superpower Armageddon. In part the disbelief stems from the suspicion that the Ford Administration is not all that enthusiastic about a rapid shift to coherence on Africa, especially since Senator Harry Byrd's sympathy for Ian Smith's regime in Rhodesia has widespread support among Republican conservatives. Perhaps the main cause of disbelief, however, is that it is assumed—and it is assumed that Henry Kissinger assumes—that Kissinger will not be Secretary of State come next February. The claim is that Kissinger is merely "setting the record straight" before leaving office. In this view, he knows the historians will likely criticize his stewardship for having neglected the Third World in general and Africa in particular. Thus such ringing pronouncements as his Lusaka (Zambia) speech in May have less to do with changing U.S. policy than with getting a jump on future critics. This may be an excessively cynical interpretation, but Washington has known people who have gone to curious lengths to affect what is called "the judgment of history."

THE MILITARY BUDGET. Partisans of defense cuts have had a totally dismal year. Despite widespread fears that the U.S. is suffering from the weakness of world weariness in facing up to the Soviet Union—or more likely because of such fears—this Congress has sustained virtually the whole of the \$106.7 billion requested by the White House. The incidental cut of \$800 million is the smallest in more than a decade, and ten years ago the Vietnam war was at full blaze and broadly backed. Last January Secretary Kissinger was reported to have said privately that he did not care so much about specific military "needs" justifying expenditure. "The chief need is that a full budget be sustained in order to signal our determination to remain strong." At the time critics said this was a perfect formula for Pentagon waste and wantonness, but it appears Kissinger's logic has won the day. "This is not the year to rock the boat," remarked Representative George Mahon, Chairman of House Appropriations. Within the twelve-month shadow of

Indochina's collapse, and in the continuing debate about what Angola was all about, if anything important, the majority appears to agree with Mahon. Of course an additional factor has been Ronald Reagan's virtual veto power over the Administration's foreign and military policies by invoking the specter of "softness" on national security. Nor are the Democrats immune to such politically potent fears. To the chagrin of many liberals, Jimmy Carter has signaled little sympathy for the nostrum of a major transfer of defense monies to domestic programs. No matter who the nominees chosen this month, the Presidential campaign will require a hard line on national defense. In sum, after a decade of supposedly massive disillusionment with the military, the candidates do not expect to lose votes by supporting a strong military budget.

W.H.O. OF THE U.N. The suicidal impulse proceeds unchecked at the U.N. What were once thought to be relatively "unpolitical" U.N. agencies are increasingly sucked into the destructive dynamics that produced last year's infamous resolution equating Zionism with racism. First it was UNESCO and now it is the World Health Organization. In May WHO refused even to consider a report it had commissioned on health services in Israeli-occupied Arab territories. It seems the expert report came up with the wrong conclusion, namely, that health services have undergone "a slow but steady" improvement since 1967. Under the Arab-led coalition of developing countries, the vote to refuse to consider the report carried by 65 to 18, with 14 abstentions. Voting in favor of considering were most Western European countries, Canada, Japan, and the U.S. As former U.N. Ambassador Moynihan remarked after the Zionism vote last year, those voting in the minority represent something of an honor roll of decency among the nations of the world.

TRIAGE OR BREAD. Bread for the World is a citizens' lobby aimed at reviving American values and policies in a way that contributes to solving the problems of world hunger. Not surprisingly, there is little love lost between Bread for the World and the proponents of triage, lifeboat ethics, and other ideas for solving the poverty problem by getting rid of the poor people. So it is that Arthur Simon, director of Bread for the World, directs our attention to a two-page advertisement in the March issue of *The Smithsonian* magazine. The ad is titled "The Real Crisis Behind the 'Food Crisis,'" and argues, predictably, that the real crisis is too many people. The thesis is that "there can be no moral obligation to do the impossible." The signers allow that "No one really likes triage—the selection of those nations most likely to survive and the concentration of our available food aid on them," but goes on to note that it's not such a nasty idea, since "some people will die no matter what the disposition of the inadequate food supply will be." With what the late C. Wright Mills used to call "crackpot realism," the proponents

underscore that "some hard decisions will have to be made." Among the signers are the expected champions of ecohysteria, plus one name that is both surprising and deeply disturbing. Isaac Asimov, Paul Ehrlich, Garrett Hardin, J. Paul Getty, and Philip Hauser all signed up. And Zbigniew Brzezinski! Brzezinski, who is allegedly Jimmy Carter's chief foreign policy advisor and, in the opinion of some, front runner in the unseemly race to be next Secretary of State? The same. The *Smithsonian* ad would seem to represent precisely the opposite of the moral values held and articulated by Carter. It is provocative, to say the least, to think the next Secretary of State may believe that triage is the appropriate response to world poverty. Bread for the World has contacted Carter headquarters for a clarification but has received no response to date.

CIA & THE CLERGY. When we earlier commented on the ambiguous relation between the CIA and the clergy (*Worldview*, March), we quoted White House Counsel Philip Buchen: "The President does not feel it would be wise at present to prohibit the CIA from having any connection with the clergy." Director William Colby agreed. Many religious spokesmen disagreed. Now new CIA regulations have been issued, but they continue to assert the right of the agency to seek information from missionaries and church personnel. And again the regulations are under fire. Father Bryan Hehir, Associate Secretary for International Justice and Peace in the U.S. Catholic Conference, has declared the new CIA regulations unacceptable. Referring to the CIA, he said: "The function of mission organizations and the institutional Church should be precisely to instruct people not to cooperate." The lines could hardly be drawn more precisely than that.

A FLOURISH OF ARMS. "The international trade in conventional arms has flourished in recent years, with the United States playing a leading role. During the past decade, the annual pace of international arms transfers has more than doubled and the U.S. has exported almost as many weapons as all other nations combined." That's the opening sentence of an interim report on controlling the international arms trade prepared by the UNA-USA. The report, which was prepared by a knowledgeable national panel (including Paul C. Warnke, Frank Pace, Jr., Cyrus R. Vance, Robert Kleiman, Richard N. Gardner, and Harlan Cleveland), recommends a number of things that might be done and should be done to bring this trade under a degree of control. While the massive sale of arms makes the U.S. budget look better, it actually reduces U.S. influence in countries around the world. It's a bad bargain. The issue deserves serious discussion in Presidential campaigns and party platforms. (The report itself can be obtained free from the UNA-USA, 345 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Ask for *Controlling the International Arms Trade*.)

Abraham Martin Murray is the collective name of those who contribute to "A View of the World." The opinions expressed sometimes coincide with those of the editors.