

A VIEW OF THE WORLD

Abraham Martin Murray

COALITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. It's too early to say where it will go and what it will accomplish, but the National Conference on Human Rights that was held in New York on October 6 is a promising venture. The governing principle behind the conference is dramatically simple. Since the Carter administration has espoused a lively interest in human rights, not only have new organizations interested in human rights come into existence, but organizations that have devoted their energies to human rights over the years, often with little fanfare, have become almost swamped with sudden attention and demands.

The problem is evident. There exists a good deal of confusion about human rights, their violations, and the agencies to deal with such violations. The conference proposed a coalition of existing human rights organizations to coordinate energies and programs. Bayard Rustin, long-time activist and president of the Coalition on Civil Rights, suggested in his opening remarks to the conference a philosophy that might inform the desired coalition:

I believe we must oppose suppression of human rights anywhere, *whatever the ideology of the oppressor*. We must oppose dictatorships of *both the right and the left*—unequivocally and without qualification. In addition, I would like to propose that such a coalition stress the importance of social and economic well-being for all peoples. We must, in my view, look to the development of human well-being that embodies the *full range* of human rights and aspirations.

The discussion that followed the opening remarks of Bayard Rustin showed (1) that there was profound support for the basic ideas he developed and (2) that many individuals and organizations would have to subordinate some of their parochial interests to a larger purpose if they were to be a useful part of the coalition. The names of some of the principal speakers and their organizations are enough to suggest some of the problems and the opportunities: Sol C. Chaikin, President, ILGWU; William Korey, Director, B'nai B'rith International Council; Ambassador Allard Lowenstein, U.S. Representative to the U.N.; John Richardson, President, Freedom House; Leo Cherne, Chairman, International Rescue Committee; David Hawk, Amnesty International, USA; Clarence Mitchell,

NAACP; Leon Shull, ADA; Monsignor George Higgins, U.S. Catholic Conference; Roger Shinn, Union Theological Seminary.

Not all of these individuals or the organizations they represent have landed on the same side of important debates. Nor are they likely to in the future. But they have agreed that the question of human rights is one that demands serious reflection—and then action. They have also agreed that it's going to be a long haul, that it demands long-term commitment.

The task proposed was both formidable and honorable, the beginning was auspicious, and we will follow the development of the proposed coalition with great interest.

Tabloid. Have you seen a copy of *The Inter Dependent* recently? Yes, *The Inter Dependent*, "the monthly newspaper of the United Nations Association." And if you think such a publication has to be dull, full of familiar, rehashed statements overlaid with a heavy syrup of good intentions and bland injunctions—well, you're wrong.

The Inter Dependent is a small, well-designed tabloid with a number of short articles, news updates, references to other pertinent publications, interviews, and pointed analyses. Recent articles have asked "What's behind the Carter smile?" when he smiles at the Third World; have asked whether U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young is getting his act together; have asked whether the U.S. is toning down its rhetoric on human rights—and has then pushed on to some hard answers.

The newspaper is lively, pleasantly irreverent toward the world's political and cultural heroes, and informative. Again, for example, it reports that Abba Eban, the former Israeli U.N. Ambassador, has downgraded the U.N. Seems it has lost its resonance and power and "it is obvious that the United Nations is not a central arena."

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The Canal. The Panamanians have voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Panama Canal treaties. Now the Panamanians join Americans in looking to the U.S. Senate to say how the treaties

fare there. S.I. Hayakawa, Republican senator from California (who leans toward signing the treaties), has reminded us that even if the treaties are ratified, problems will remain. There will continue to be risks. The senator's point, which he promises to develop, is well taken, and all supporters of the treaties should keep it in mind.

I do not wish to rehearse here the background or history of the Canal. This was well done by Martha Bennett Stiles in the October, 1976, issue of *Worldview*. I wish to stress rather the extraordinary degree of support the treaties have drawn from the religious communities of this country. One sign of this support is the study, "Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties" issued by Impact. (Single copies free. Address: 110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.) Impact is a legislative information and action network sponsored by national Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant agencies. It cannot speak for the full religious communities, but in this instance the degree of unanimity it found among many religious agencies is indicative of the strong institutional support that exists.

For example, as this issue of *Worldview* goes to press the governing board of the National Council of Churches is considering a proposal that would strongly support the canal treaties. Given the record of the NCC on this issue, the proposal is likely to meet ready, even enthusiastic, approbation. The United States Catholic Conference also has a strong track record on U.S.-Panama relations, having issued a series of statements that analyzed in political and moral terms the issues at stake. Entirely consonant with that record, on October 12 John Cardinal Krol testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Conference in these terms:

...It was our view in 1975 and 1976, and it is our view today, that a new treaty which acknowledges in principle and in fact Panamanian sovereignty over its own territory is a requirement of justice and peace between our two nations.

After developing this theme Cardinal Krol related the treaties to the image Americans have of themselves:

...We are a nation born of the desire to be free from foreign domination; the concepts of liberty and self-determination are woven through the fabric of our history. It is these values which are synonymous with our political philosophy. When we affirm the values of liberty and self-determination for ourselves and for others we speak from the most significant strain of our heritage.

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.

QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Very Public Prayer

On Camera medium prayer looks good. Very strong prayer doesn't. It looks strange. Also, don't clench your fists when you are singing. If you are marking time while you sing, do it with your hand open.

—Leader of the Unification Church instructing Moon disciples on how to behave in public.
New York Times, September 19

Toward a More Cooperative World

F.B.I. ALLEGES CUBA AIDED WEATHERMEN—Secret Data on War Protest Years Cite a North Vietnam Role

REPORT CITES MOBSTERS' AID—A long-suppressed report credits Charles (Lucky) Luciano and other mobsters with having aided the Navy in World War II
—Adjoining stories on front page of the *New York Times*, October 9

Recidivism Is Sign of Social Health

Soviet writers, expatiating on the amount of crime in the West, make much of the number of second offenders. [It is estimated] that 70 per cent of those convicted in the U.S. in 1966 were recidivists. This does not seem to me discreditable; on the contrary, a low proportion of recidivists suggests that crime is not confined to a particular social group but is widespread throughout the population....The proportion of second or subsequent offenders among those convicted in the USSR ranges from 25 to 33 per cent.

—Valery Chaldize in *Criminal Russia* (Random House)

Rock 'n Role

For example, a pattern that persists at Meadowcroft from 9,000 years ago to 12,000 years ago is for the stone tools near the back of the shelter to be predominantly of locally available types of rock. Nearer the front, or the exposed perimeter, of the shelter the stone tools are mostly made from rock types that could only have been imported from prehistoric quarries hundreds of miles away, including some in New York State and eastern Pennsylvania.

Dr. Gunn theorizes that this may reflect the classical division of labor along sexual lines. Men, being the hunters, tended to roam farther in pursuit of game than did the women who, being gatherers of plant food and restricted by children, confined their travels to the home region. Men would, therefore, have greater access to exotic rocks.

—"Pennsylvania Site Yields Clues to the Life of Prehistoric Man," *New York Times*, July 28