

# A VIEW OF THE WORLD

Abraham Martin Murray

**AN EXPLOSION CONTAINED.** During the Watergate hearings Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut was always there with his sweated clichés of outrage, puffing to stay in the lead of the Moral Indignation Sweepstakes. Last May the little steam engine of self-esteem was wheeled out again to fulminate against Zbigniew Brzezinski before a large Washington gathering of AIPAC, the domestic lobby for Israel. Reaching for the ultimate moral condemnation, Weicker chose to play the Auschwitz card. Fixing the cameras with ominous stare, he declared: "We know from history that time and time again, when national leaders ran into difficulties, they found it convenient to blame their problems on the Jews. And we know what were the results....If there is a meaningful distinction between those historical proclivities and the signals which Brzezinski is sending today, I don't know what it is."

It soon became apparent that Mr. Weicker had overpandered even that most partisan audience. Senator "Pat" Moynihan, next on the program, dissented with an ad-lib testimonial to Brzezinski's integrity, and the White House noted Weicker's slander with disdainful reference to "false and inflammatory statements that are unworthy of comment." Within a few days prominent Jewish leaders dissociated themselves from Weicker's intemperance, although some admitted privately that the Weicker speech had been a "testing" of a possible line of attack against the administration's Middle East policies. The Auschwitz card was put back in the deck, and just as well. Its casual play only trivializes the awesomeness of historical tragedy, and reveals the moral vacuity of those who would use it as a ploy in political games.

This year has been a time of trial for those who care deeply about Israel and are grieved by the intransigence of Israel's political leadership. They will not be brought into line by charges that they are anti-Semitic or are self-hating Jews. Efforts at moral intimidation such as Lowell Weicker's demean those who make them, thoroughly confuse the issues at hand, and desecrate the solemn memories that they invoke. As of this writing, the little steam engine of indignation has been relatively subdued for several months. But, to use Mr. Weicker's favored phrase, "we know from history" that it is likely puffing about somewhere in search of new outrages at which to explode.

**REVOLUTIONARY DISCOVERIES.** Critics of Maoism, and of revolution in general, get bogged down in their preoccupation with human costs, the

loss of lives and liberty, and things like that. What they overlook is that there is a price to pay for exploring the possibilities of historical change. Mao and his comrades have been in the vanguard of reordering reality along lines that were declared impossible by the reactionary forces of the status quo. For example, for a long time humankind despaired of debunking the pretensions of Western academics who claimed to know what was happening in China. But the present leaders of China, in fidelity to the thought of Chairman Mao, have now publicly declared that almost all the data on which Western Sinologists based their judgments were fabricated. Overnight the revolutionary genius of China has turned assumed expertise on its head and loosed a fresh wind of candor through the ivy corridors of Western intellectual depression. It is an achievement that had defied the best—that is to say, the most skeptical—minds in the West for decades.

Now comes further evidence of revolutionary genius that will be cheered by progressive peoples all over the people-loving world. With the blessings of the party leadership, a meeting of writers and editors in Canton has deliberated and declared that "love and marriage are a part of social life and of the relations between people." From now on the people should be permitted to sing traditional love songs and lovers should not be severely punished for discreet signs of affection in public. According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, copies of *Love Story* and *Catcher in the Rye* are now legally circulating in China. It is also reported that Chinese theatre is now permitted to suggest, albeit gingerly, that "physical attraction exists." So, while the costs have been enormous, no fair-minded person can deny that three decades of Chinese revolutionary struggle have been a glorious adventure from which we in the West have much to learn.

**STILL NO BOMBING HALT.** Ten years ago and more it seemed American presidents had a positive obsession about bombing in Indochina. Domestic political turmoil was fine tuned by real or promised bombing halts. What was actually happening was veiled by mendacities such as "anticipatory retaliation" and, later, Nixon's infamous "incursion" into Cambodia. Now comes word that Cambodia is being bombed and strafed by the Vietnamese using "captured" U.S. planes. Captured? We all know who left those planes behind, together with millions of tons of bombs. Could it be that this is the ultimate phase of what Nixon had in mind as the "Vietnamization" of the war?

**BABEL REVERSED, PEACE ASSURED.** Two months ago the 111 "nonaligned" nations met in Belgrade. The big news was that the conference of the nonaligned is losing its anti-Western and anti-U.S. fervor. With a few exceptions, the members are more nervous about the global ambitions of the Soviet Union. That is no doubt important, but largely overlooked was a linguistic development that may be a portent of even more significant change. Despite their differences, the members regularly and unanimously condemn imperialism, neocolonialism, hegemonism, and racism as international evils.

This time the Cambodians threatened to confuse things by proposing that "expansionism" be added to the litany. This was of course aimed at the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese delegate, however, promptly endorsed the addition, since "expansion" in the Vietnamese lexicon is aimed at the Chinese threat. Had China been present, which it was not, it would no doubt have backed the proposal also, since "expansionism" is used by the Chinese to describe what the Soviet Union is doing. The possibilities are marvelous to contemplate. In this reversal of Babel's confusion, one resolution could be passed unanimously and each nation, having secured its point, could go home to disarm. It would be enough to restore one's confidence in socialist solidarity.

**SETTLEMENT THREAT IN RHODESIA CONTINUES.** The danger remains that a popularly supported, multiracial, democratic government might still be established in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) before the end of the year. The British-American plan that demands full participation of the Patriotic Front, a professedly Marxist guerrilla group, may be upset by the ascendancy of the Conservative party in Great Britain. (The Patriotic Front, by the way, has sometimes said it must be guaranteed a dominant role and sometimes an exclusive role in a one-party socialist state. Predictably, such demands are resisted by reactionary elements, both black and white, in Rhodesia.) Another setback for Anglo-American diplomacy occurred this summer, when one of the three leaders of the transitional government, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, visited the U.S. and the House and Senate passed resolutions looking toward the lifting of economic sanctions against Salisbury. In a long news-editorial the *Times* "Week in Review" denounced Muzorewa as an "innocent" who is in over his head, as an ambitious man who, "having tasted politics," was loath to forsake the game," and as an incompetent who has "bungled" his opportunities. Editorials of the *Times* have persistently warned against a premature peace in Zimbabwe. The "larger danger" in what is happening there, says the *Times*, has little to do with securing a reasonably just settlement in the country itself. The real danger is that such a settlement would likely make the Patriotic Front and its Soviet-Cuban backers very angry, and in the subsequent dispute the U.S. might be put on the same side as South

Africa. "At the bottom of that slope," reads the bottom line of the editorial, "is alliance with the racist regime in Pretoria, which would be a tragedy of enormous magnitude—for Africa and for the West."

To the uninitiated in the subtleties of foreign affairs, a freely elected, multiracial, democratic government in Zimbabwe might seem like a very good thing. The *Times* and this administration, however, understand that that is a short-term distraction. Our concern for justice and the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe must not be permitted to get in the way of inevitable Marxist expansion, nor should such good intentions lead us to associate the U.S. with regimes that have horrible records on human rights.

**IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNIST.** In France the Communists have about 20 per cent of the electorate and are slipping, but they do much better among intellectuals. Jonathan Kandell of the *Times* set out to discover the party's attraction for the latter and interviewed Raymond Jean, a professor of French literature in Aix-en-Provence. Professor Jean owns his own home and two cars, prefers "bourgeois vacations" to party-sponsored group travel, deplors the democratic centralism of party decisionmaking, teaches regularly in the U.S., and "can't help admiring the fact that American democracy is so much stronger than that practiced in socialist countries." He believes that communism must move with the times because "we are no longer in the era of Bolshevism and Leninism, of war and violent revolution."

Pressed on whether class struggle and nationalization of the economy are still relevant, he responds: "Well, I think that a Communist still has to accept the idea of a class struggle, that adhesion to the working class is necessary above all." Why, then, is he a Communist? "Among those of us who joined the party, it remains a vehicle for permanent contact with social classes that we would not otherwise meet....And since they are often the subject of my writing, I feel I get a better reception in the factories because I am a Communist." One might think that, with Communists like Raymond Jean, who needs George Meany? But then Kandell notes the touching sense of danger among party members who express such "unorthodox" views. "[Jean] likens expulsion from the party to excommunication. And always, he conveys the impression that he does not want to be defrocked." Says Jean: "European Communists cannot accept any longer a party discipline like the church or the military." He quickly adds: "But please, don't make it sound like I'm singling out Marchais or the other party leaders." One cannot be too careful. After all, the Communists might come back.

*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.*