
Report of CRIA's President, 1981

It is a good idea to review occasionally what CRIA is all about, where it has been, where it is, and where it is likely to go. The organization (then called The Church Peace Union) was founded in 1914 by Andrew Carnegie to promote the cause of world peace with justice. His decision to gather together Christian and Jewish clergy and laymen was allegedly prompted by his disillusionment with the role of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace founded a few years earlier. To that organization he had given a grant of \$10 million, but he was convinced that it had already sold out to the American Government; if world peace was to be established, he had best turn to the principal American churches to see if they could organize the world in a way that would accomplish his goal. Mr. Carnegie had intended to give an additional \$8 million to The Church Peace Union, but an advisor persuaded him (perhaps the story is apocryphal) that the clergy could not be trusted with that kind of money. In any case, the mechanism to bring about world peace was a mighty conference that was scheduled to be held in Germany in August, 1914, but which was swept away by the guns of war.

The secretary-general of The Church Peace Union, Mr. Henry Atkinson, was undaunted by this experience. In December, 1924, at a Church Peace Union meeting it was decided to gather a committee of about a thousand people for an international conference "to harness to the cause of international goodwill and peace the spiritual force of all religious faiths." Sponsors included Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Evans Hughes, and Walter Lippmann. Our own Mr. Atkinson was commissioned to make an international survey, which he conducted from 1924 to 1939. Then began preparation for "The World Conference for International Peace Through Religion" in Washington, D.C., that was to unlock the door to a fuller and better life than any the world had ever known. But World War II intervened and the conference did not take place. At the war's end this role of The Church Peace Union was taken up in part by the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

In 1961, The Church Peace Union changed its name to the Council on Religion and International Affairs—CRIA. With the change of name CRIA began to consider other kinds of programs. One development of the '60s, for example, was a series of regional seminars on ethics and foreign policy. Many of the current participants in CRIA activities became acquainted with the organization through those seminars, which were well attended and highly valued. There was also an active publications program that produced a series of booklets central to the ethics and foreign policy theme. A program for foreign students was attempted, then abandoned.

In the '70s a revitalized version of *Worldview* magazine was launched and, at the same time, a new program, the CRIA Corporate Consultation Program (now the Carnegie Leadership Program), that enlisted the international business community. There was an attempt at a program to educate the clergy in the mysteries of foreign policy, but ultimately it proved abortive.

At the moment CRIA sponsors four programs: CRIA Conversations, publications, Education/Ethics and Foreign Policy,

and the Carnegie Leadership Program. When evaluating these programs in terms of the goal of "world peace with justice," it is well to define how one relates them to that goal.

It takes a transcendent leap to expect that we can simply *find* "world peace with justice." Certainly the ideal of world peace would be achieved at the conclusion of a long series of lesser works, lesser ends. It would represent the culmination of a long struggle in the political, economic, and social field, the alleviation of what are perceived as the great world problems today: unfair allocation of the world's resources; the poverty that has assailed some 800 million people; the peril of nuclear weapons; and the failure to come together through reason to a more commonly accepted moral order. In these terms CRIA's efforts through an educational process are but small steps to a great goal. And it is by no means certain that any efforts by CRIA, by other private organizations—or by powerful nations—can accomplish that task. One contemplates, for instance, the Eastern symbolism represented by the Yin and the Yang. In the Chinese cosmography the delicately divided circle, exactly equal in its halves, represents the dark and light forces of the world, the female and the male, among various permutations. From these locked-in conflicts comes the creative force in society. Here the Chinese added the notion of the five basic elements of the world—wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. To make all this operational a king was required. The scholar's role was to discover, using various portents, what kind of job the king was doing. If the forces of evil began to predominate, it was a sign that the king had lost his mandate of heaven and a change was required. Whatever the merits of this, it is a fact that the two halves of the circle remain the same size—that is, the amount of light and dark, or even good and evil, are a constant. This notion can be rather discouraging and we seek recourse in the Book of Hebrews: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

At the Senate confirmation hearings for his appointment as secretary of state, General Haig raised some of the broad issues with which CRIA deals. "If we make just the maintenance of peace alone—as vitally important as that is—the *raison d'être* or the core of our policy deliberations," he said, "I am afraid we're going to bring about circumstances that are going to have the practical consequences of bringing about the destruction of the very objective we've established: peace."

He too is for "peace with justice," though his affirmation that the national interest may sometimes be asserted at the expense of the world community is surely regretted by many. General Haig declared that the U.S. could continue to react to adverse events or "we can seek, actively, to shape events and, in the process, attempt to forge a consensus among like-minded peoples." The very stuff of CRIA's work in ethics and foreign policy.

For the foreseeable future there will remain a substantial gap between CRIA's aspirations and performance. But if we can see signs of improvement from time to time, we will have assurance that what we are doing has empirical value as well as "the evidence of things not seen."

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