

Correspondence

[from p. 4]

stead contend that it is better for the nation not to demand its "cut" of charitable contributions—that the common good is advanced more by the (minor) incentive provided by deductibility than it would be by any (small) revenue obtained by revoking it. In this matter (unlike exemption itself), I would urge that churches accommodate themselves to whatever public policy is chosen for all "public charities"—universities, hospitals, museums, symphony orchestras, etc. If contributions to all are deductible, churches should be treated no differently.

Covenant Theology

To the Editors: Eugene B. Borowitz's description in the March, 1973, *Worldview* ("Covenant Theology—Another Look") of Leo Baeck's thinking is not accurate. While Rabbi Baeck did mention the mystery of God, nevertheless his whole approach in describing Judaism is existentialist. Rabbi Baeck took a strong position against what Rabbi Borowitz describes as "irrational self-indulgence," which the latter considers as a possible consequent to Baeck's teachings. Baeck did this mainly in a book wherein he distinguished between romantic and classical religion, Judaism being in his opinion a classical religion. Baeck built his system and his theology upon and around the God-commanded "Thou shalt." Baeck emphasized that this had its mystical side because the commandment has to be carried out with *Kavvanah*, i.e., with the proper intention, with the proper attitude; in this the deed is unified with devotion, the commandment with the worship of God. This, Baeck asserted, was the gift and possession of Judaism. He pointed out that it was not surprising that the Sephardic mystic, Joseph Caro, promulgated the codification of Jewish law and practices known as the *Shulchan Aruch*.

Rabbi Borowitz is correct that Mordecai M. Kaplan's Reconstructionism seems to destroy the sense of *mitzvah*, this combination of deed and worship mentioned above, which is an essential element in Judaism. Rabbi Kaplan has

recently made an attempt to remedy this by introducing holiness as a fourth dimension in human consciousness (besides truth, goodness, creativity) and offering it as an aid to those who would seek a way of life that withstands license and aggression.

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U.S. Diplomacy and the Free World

To the Editors: . . . As one would expect from a man of Lord Avon's stature and vast experience, the article which was printed in your magazine was important, constructive and enlightening (Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, "United States Diplomacy and the Free World," January).

Based upon my European background, the years spent in the USA and Canada and several extensive trips throughout the USSR, Japan and the People's Republic of China, I have come to feel as Lord Avon evidently does, that too many of us, wearied by wars both hot and cold, are inclined to view with too much eagerness, hope and enthusiasm every friendly gesture, every sign of potential cooperation emanating from the USSR or China or other Communist countries.

Undoubtedly these friendly gestures should always be received by the free world with appreciation and good will, but our eagerness should always be tempered by the thought that, broadly speaking, the long-term objectives of the Communist countries have remained still basically unchanged.

I support wholeheartedly the *détente* in our relations with the USSR, China and North Vietnam, but share Oliver Cromwell's views when he enjoined his fighting men to place their confidence in the Lord but keep their powder dry.

Too many of us in the free world are unfamiliar with the basic tenets of communism. We tend to believe that their approach to problems and their respect for treaties is similar to ours. In this we are mistaken. President Roosevelt thought that he understood Stalin, and General Marshall believed that he understood Mao Tse-tung, but history

has shown both these eminent leaders were wrong.

Lord Avon shows wisdom when he opposes any weakening of NATO or of the defensive forces of the free world, and I venture to suggest that the USA will get along much better with both the USSR and China if, regardless of the sacrifices involved, they keep their air, naval and nuclear forces, not in a position of equality, but of unchallengeable superiority. We will all live in a more peaceful world if they do.

Lord Avon is unquestionably right when he stresses the merit of "open covenants secretly arrived at." We have all seen so many examples of how the glare of publicity has had a damaging effect on the best-laid plans.

Perhaps the most important point in Lord Avon's article is the proposal that a small committee of, say, twelve eminent leaders should be set up as a link in the machinery between the free nations across the world for diplomatic and political purposes. Their objective would be to examine the trend of events throughout the world and bring home to their respective governments the views and recommendations of the members of that committee.

Too many countries are insufficiently acquainted with the rapidly changing political and economic problems in countries far removed from each other. Too many of us, for instance, have failed to fully recognize the growing importance of the Japanese colossus in Asia or the spectacular growth of Brazil in South America, the fundamental changes in Australia's orientation, or to recognize the fundamental importance of the growing problems among the Common Market countries and the United States of America.

The limited membership of this top-level committee should be composed of leaders of the most powerful nations in the free world under the leadership of the United States, and including, of course, Japan.

Such an informal exchange of views of worldwide problems by this small but top-level committee might prove to be of inestimable value in bridging the gap of misunderstanding which frequently divides us.

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