

worldview

A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

LOOKING BACK—AND FORWARD

It is salutary, on occasion, to review the ground one has covered before advancing toward goals that lie ahead. Because it is now celebrating the fiftieth year of its existence the Council on Religion and International Affairs, under whose auspices *worldview* is published, is undertaking just such a review, taking stock of its purposes, program, and commitments.

The Council (or The Church Peace Union, as it was then called) was formed fifty years ago under the guidance of such distinguished leaders as Methodist John R. Mott; the Right Reverend William Lawrence, then Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts; James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore; Emil Hirsch, Rabbi of Sinai Congregation in Chicago; and equally distinguished laymen such as Marcus M. Marks, James J. Walsh, Shailer Mathews, William Howard Taft and the man who provided the initial funds for the organization, Andrew Carnegie.

The charter of this organization asserted that there was a need to work for greater international order and world-wide peace, and, further, that this demanding work could benefit from the principles, traditions and insights of the major religions. The Council on Religion and International Affairs remains committed to this charter. But the times have changed and so too have the programs which most adequately cope with the crises of our times.

The present program of the Council is designed to bring highly informed and sensitive opinion to bear on the broad area of ethics and foreign affairs. While the Council rejects the naive view that ethics provides a convenient framework into which all foreign policy decisions can be neatly squeezed, it also rejects the view that ethics simply dissolves under the very real pressures of foreign policy requirements. It recognizes, rather, that a tension between ethics and foreign policy in any world we can now foresee is inevitable; it asserts that the intense stress that ethics frequently places on our own foreign policy is a tribute to what is best in our Western traditions. It is a

work of the intelligence, as well as proper political action, to see that this tension is neither needlessly heightened nor foolishly relaxed, a work of the intelligence to see that both ethical imperatives and political demands are given their just due.

All aspects of the Council's program are directed toward this necessary, frequently frustrating work—the seminars on "religion and international affairs" which it sponsors across the country; the seminars designed especially for foreign students; the special consultations which it conducts in Washington with policy shapers, political scientists and theologians; and the various publications produced under its auspices.

William Clancy, the first editor of *worldview*, once wrote that this journal "is edited from the viewpoint of the West's perennial tradition, which is deeply, essentially rooted in the values of the Judeo-Christian, classical humanist view of man and society. This journal will not 'preach,' but it will insist—sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly—that this tradition is relevant to, even normative for, the survival of any world worth saving. Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others who hold that man is both in history and beyond history, and that this duality of the human vocation has practical consequences for political affairs, will write for the magazine."

worldview has continued to develop within this tradition, avoiding simplisms and easy answers and working always for more complete understanding of the relevant issues. There is a well-known story that, on her deathbed, Gertrude Stein was asked, "What is the answer?" To which she responded "No, no, no, not 'What is the answer?' but 'What is the question?'" While not despairing of all answers, contributors to *worldview* frequently recall us to the fact that we may be asking the wrong questions, whether about modern warfare, South America, de Gaulle, Cuba or a host of similar "problems." It is to formulate

and sharpen the right questions in the broad area of ethics and foreign policy that *worldview* exists.

The discussions which develop around these questions are not, however, isolated events without consequences; they do more than simply inform or stimulate interest in issues of foreign policy among isolated individuals within our society, however valuable that service may be. For *worldview* is part of the well-integrated program of the Council on Religion and International Affairs, a program which involves those who are leaders at various levels and in various ways within our society, a program which provides a bridge for lively communication between those

who govern and those who are governed, a program that brings to bear on crucial and urgent questions the attention of those who shape and those who responsibly criticize our foreign policy decisions.

Although the program has some short-range consequences it can probably best be described as a serious, continuing long-range dialogue on religion and international affairs. Because it is heartened by the participation and warm response this program has encountered the Council, in its fiftieth year, looks forward to extending its present program with the determination our present political situation demands and with the measured optimism it allows.

in the magazines

William G. Carleton, writing in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1963-64), advances the thesis that since the Fifties we have been living in a "post-crisis world." The first half century, he contends, "was one of repeated high-crises and sweeping change—total world wars, basic revolutions, devastating inflation and deflation, the momentous atomic breakthrough." But many of the transformations threatened by these events either failed to take place or were contained in a smaller area than had been anticipated.

Among those factors which have affected significantly the stability of the current half century, Carleton numbers "the miscarriage of Marxism in Western Europe after World War I and again after World War II." And thus, "failing to win Western Europe, Marxism was left with insufficient prestige and too few Western political and cultural carriers to win the colonial areas."

While a host "of explosive possibilities in the world" do remain, the author is optimistic that there are still "the probabilities, which point strongly to increasing international stabilization." Indeed, Carleton speculates, in the latter part of this century, statesmen may lament the fact that there appears on the horizon only "the inhibiting immobility of a frozen status quo."

Ramon Venegas Carrasco, a Chilean, has contributed his understanding of "The Problems of Economic and Social Development in Latin America" to the September issue of *World Justice*, a quarterly published under the auspices of Belgium's Louvain University.

Carrasco finds the problems of Latin America rooted in the "total destitution, embracing all sides

of a man's life—material, moral and cultural—and disintegrating his finest qualities: will-power, feeling, determination, hope" which characterizes the entire area.

This condition is thus not the same as poverty, the writer continues, and salvation from it is contingent upon the ability of "each and every one of the sufferers to make himself the master of his fate. Every human being must be responsible for his own life, both supernatural and terrestrial. . . . both as an individual and as a member of society."

Before the Latin American can effect his own cure, it will be necessary to accept some outside assistance to initiate the process. But, Carrasco cautions, "any paternalistic form of charity or prolonged granting of aid, liable to be regarded as a permanent prop, results in a more criminal form of injustice than the present situation, for it would amount to relinquishing the one and only hope a man has of saving himself by freely accepting responsibility for himself."

By the same token, it is maintained, no dictatorship, whatever its political hue, "or communism, or systems based on private ownership permitting only an insignificant minority to retain all the wealth and economic power while keeping the great mass of the population in slavery," can ever be the correct and enduring answer to the problems confronting Latin America.

Social Action, monthly publication of the Council for Christian Social Action, has devoted its January issue to the topic, "The Peace Corps and Christian Service." In addition to articles by returned Peace Corpsmen, some of the contributions explore the relationship of the project to principles of Judeo-Christian faith and tradition.

PAMPHILUS