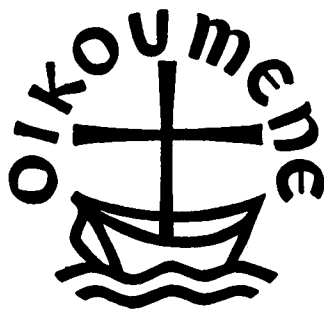


Special Report

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

by Dr. Homer A. Jack



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INTRODUCTION

The World Council of Churches (hereafter WCC) sponsored the World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva, Switzerland, for two weeks in mid-July, 1966. This was undoubtedly one of the greatest Protestant (and Orthodox) gatherings in the twentieth century devoted to religious social action. More than 400 representatives from more than 70 countries participated.

Among the observers to the Conference were eight Roman Catholics--and one Unitarian Universalist. I was privileged to attend as an observer from the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom (IARF). The following report is but a fragment of my observations and conclusions from this rich experience in living and working with some of the most vital religious leaders in the world today. I am deeply indebted to the WCC and the IARF for making this opportunity possible.

The report that follows is not meant to be comprehensive. This observer did not read many of the essays in the four preparatory volumes let alone all of the many speeches and papers published during the Conference. Indeed, not many participants or observers were able even to read every word of the four section reports. The report that follows is the selective reactions of one observer, selecting those aspects of the Conference to which he was related or in which he had high interest. In addition to the preparatory volumes, the conference report will be published in the autumn of 1966 directly by the WCC and may be obtained at cost from its U.S. office at 475 Riverside Drive, New York City. The many supplementary speeches and papers given at the Conference no doubt will also be published. In addition, Bishop J. Brooke Mosley is writing a small book about the Conference which will be issued sometime in the autumn of 1966. No doubt other materials will be prepared, both for the national conferences on church and society, such as that tentatively planned for Detroit for October, 1967, and for the Fourth Assembly of the WCC which is likely to reflect many of the concerns discussed in Geneva.

Religious liberals, especially American and Canadian Unitarian Universalists, are generally not conversant with the WCC and the ecumenical movement. This lack of knowledge partly stems from the creedal basis of church membership in the WCC which makes it impossible for the Unitarian Universalist Association to join--even if it wanted to do so. However, there were Unitarian Universalist observers at the Evanston Assembly of the WCC and some member denominations of the IARF sent full participants to the Geneva Conference, e.g., Bishop Miroslav Novak of the Czechoslovak Church. In the Appendix to this report there is a special introduction to the ecumenical movement for those North American Unitarian Universalists who want to know more about this vital effort.

Homer A. Jack

Geneva, Switzerland
July 31, 1966

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GENEVA!

"An impatient world challenges a complacent church." Such was a placard carried by one of 300 Protestant and Orthodox churchmen as they gathered in front of the old League's Palais des Nations on the final day of the World Conference on Church and Society. Not since Oxford in 1937 did Protestant churchmen from all parts of the world gather to study the implications of their faith to domestic and international life.

Since 1937 there occurred the second world war, the development of nuclear weapons, and the threat of nuclear war. Since 1937 Communism dominated more than half mankind and new human and family patterns emerged even in the Western, democratic world. Since 1937 the WCC had been established (in Amsterdam in 1948) and by 1961 the erst-while reactionary Russian Orthodox Church became a participating member denomination. Also since 1937 the leadership of the Christian churches generally in the non-Western world was transferred to indigenous ministers and laymen as most of the continents of Asia and Africa became politically independent.

Given these radical changes, the WCC planned for several years that its conference on church and society would reflect these changes, and especially no longer be dominated by white Westerners. Efforts were successfully made for large representation from the churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Of the participants, 12% came from Africa, 16% from Asia, 12% from Latin America, and 7% from the Middle East.

Efforts were also made to bring informed laymen to the Conference in order to share their expertise with clergy and other church officials. The result was one of the most representative international conferences, church or secular, to be held in recent times. (Some Roman Catholic observers said that it was more representative of the developing world and, of course, of laity than Vatican Council II). Also enough days were devoted to the Conference--two weeks--so delegates could spend much time together working through some of the complex topics assigned.

A rich cross-section of churchmen participated in the Conference. If such clergy traditionally on the world's firing line, such as Michael Scott or Cannon John Collins, were absent, those present included Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, head of a freedom movement for Mozambique; Rev. Arthur Thomas, retiring head of the Delta Ministry in Mississippi; Prof. Z. K. Matthews, soon to be appointed ambassador to the U.N. from newly independent Bechuanaland; U.S. Congresswomen Edith Green; Dr. Rafael Cepeda of the Presbyterian Church of Cuba; Dr. Robert W. Spike, formerly head of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.; Rev. Gabriel M. Setiloane of the All Conference of Churches; Dr. Benjamin Payton, present director of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches; Rev. Kanichi Nishimura, member of the Japanese parliament; and Dr. Beyers Naude, director of the Christian Institute of South Africa. In addition, denominational officials, especially those with responsibility for social action programs, were in abundance. The group was sufficiently socially relevant that the world headlines were more than table conversation. Escalating war in Vietnam, race riots in America, and the World Court decision on Southwest Africa shook participants deeply.

Metropolitans, bishops, laymen, youth, observers, staff, visitors, guests, and parish clergy gathered in the chapel of the new Ecumenical Center of the WCC--just a mile from the Palais des Nations--to inaugurate the Conference on July 12th. Plenary sessions were held in the ample WCC auditorium and translated simultaneously into English, French, Spanish, German, and Russian. Section and subsection meetings were held nearby, especially in the Conference hotel, the Intercontinental. Participants chose one of four sections: 1-economic development, 2-the state in a revolutionary age, 3-international relations, and 4-man and community in changing societies. Each section, containing perhaps 100 persons, met seven times for two hours each. In

addition, each section was divided into several sub-sections and these each met six times, also for two hours each. The sub-sections helped draft reports for transmission ultimately to the plenary. Often the sub-sections appointed drafting committees and in this way dozens of participants had a hand in creating the final Conference report. In general, the material was divided into the report which the plenary voted to "receive for inclusion in the general conference report" and into conclusions adopted by the Conference and "transmitted to the WCC and its member churches for their study, consideration, and appropriate action."

Three Conference Working Groups were also convened on the following themes: 1-theology and social ethics, 2-the contemporary theological and scientific revolution, and 3-the church's action in society. These groups did not meet regularly (as the sections did) and their reports, also received by the plenary, are probably less representative and less satisfactory than the section reports. They deserve, however, close study.

Preparation for the Conference included the publication of four large volumes of essays on the church and society. (These are available from the Association Press in the U.S.) In addition, several dozen speakers delivered papers before the early plenary sessions. These included speeches by Barbara Ward, WCC secretary W. A. Visser 't Hooft, WCC secretary-elect Eugene Carson Blake, U.N. executive Raul Previsch, and Dr. Margaret Mead.

Each morning the sections had 45-minute periods for Bible study and worship. The entire Conference met in Geneva's Protestant Cathedral St. Pierre to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., preach. Race riots in Chicago prevented his coming to Europe, but he made a kinescope of his sermon and it was placed widely on European television and his words were amplified in the cathedral. Many other events occurred during the two weeks the Conference was in session, the most important being the many encounters among the most relevant, activist churchmen on all continents. So attractive was this environment that many young churchmen paid their own way to attend as stewards. Others turned up among the 150 journalists and others were co-opted on the Conference staff.

Geneva was the nearest thing to a Protestant Council. It attempted to cover in two weeks what, in part, the Vatican Council II did in four sessions over four years.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Those attending the Conference were divided into participants (delegates), observers, guests, visitors, press, and staff. This was a world conference in every sense. Seventy-nine countries were represented from all continents. The most obvious absence were Christians from China. East Germans, who often have difficulty attending conferences in the West, were present in some numbers. At least one white South African was able to come directly from South Africa, although Bishop Zulu who was slated to become one of the Conference presidents, was prevented by the South African Government from attending.

A great effort was made to hold down the participants to 400, with severe limitations to Westerners (and Americans) so that the Asian-African-Latin American world would be well represented. Despite great pressures for attendance from the West, this goal was approximated. In the end some 360 participants attended: 62 from Asia, 52 from Africa, and 43 from Latin America for a total of 157 out of the 360. (These are un-official figures based on the unrevised Conference document listing participants, observers, and guests.) An analysis of participants by continent follows:

Australia/New Zealand	7	Eastern Europe	43
Australia	5	Bulgaria	3
New Zealand	2	Czechoslovakia	9
Asia	62	East Germany	6
Burma	1	Hungary	4
Ceylon	1	Poland	1
Cyprus	1	Rumania	5
India	12	Soviet Union	15
Indonesia	7	Western Europe	82
Iran	1	Austria	1
Japan	9	Belgium	1
Jordan	2	Denmark	2
Hong Kong	1	Finland	2
Korea	6	France	7
Lebanon	6	Greece	5
Malaysia	1	Italy	2
New Guinea	1	Netherlands	9
Pakistan	1	Norway	2
Philippines	5	Spain	1
Syria	2	Sweden	4
Taiwan	3	Switzerland	10
Thailand	1	U.K.	20
Turkey	1	West Germany	16
Africa	52	North America	71
Algeria	1	Canada	8
Basutoland	1	United States	63
Bechuanaland	1	Latin America	43
Cameroon	4	Argentina	7
Chad	1	Bolivia	1
Congo (B)	1	Brazil	12
Congo	3	Chile	2
Ethiopia	2	Columbia	2
Ghana	2	Cuba	2
Ivory Coast	1	Dominican Republic	2
Kenya	2	El Salvador	1
Liberia	1	Guatamala	2
Madagascar	1	Haiti	1
Malawi	1	Mexico	2
Nigeria	5	Peru	1
Rhodesia	2	Trinidad	1
Sierre Leone	2	Uruguay	5
Senegal	2	Venezuela	1
South Africa	6	"West Indies"	1
Tanzania	3		
Togo	1		
Uganda	1		
U.A.R.	6		
Zambia	3		

An attempt was obviously made to assure adequate representation from the Socialist countries. Forty-three participants came from six Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. Also two delegates came from Cuba.

A second category of persons accredited to the Conference was observers. They could attend all sessions of the plenary, sections, and sub-sections, and could speak with the permission of the presiding officers. They could not, of course, vote. Some 30 observers from 17 organizations attended. Eight observers, two guests, and two consultants came from the Roman Catholic Church. Representatives from other religious groups not members of the WCC also attended: two from the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, two from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and one from the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom. Other observers came from international secular organizations (e.g., the U.N. Institute for Training and Research) and from international religious organizations (e.g., YMCA and YWCA). Other observers included the Christian Peace Conference and the World Jewish Congress.

Fifteen guests were listed. These included some of the distinguished speakers such as Barbara Ward and church leaders such as Dr. Franklin C. Fry, chairman of the Central Committee of the WCC; Dr. Samuel Cavert, former executive of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.; and Pastor Martin Niemoller, a president of the WCC.

A number of churchmen attended the Conference in the capacity of staff or press. Co-opted staff included Dr. Harvey Cox and the Rev. Arthur Walmsley. Accredited press included some full-time religious reporters such as Wayne Cowan, managing editor of Christianity and Crisis, and Harold Fey, former editor of The Christian Century. Also some churchmen took press assignments to be present (e.g., Dr. Paul Deats of Boston University, writing for the Christian Science Monitor).

THE PARTICIPANTS FROM THE U.S.

The largest delegation came from the U.S. These 63 participants may have been called the American delegation, but they seldom acted as a group and met only twice. They came from 17 general denominational groupings as follows:

United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	10
Lutheran Churches (several synods and groupings)	8
Methodist Church	8
Episcopal Church	8
United Church of Christ	7
American Baptist Church	5
Greek Orthodox Church	3
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	2
Church of the Brethren	2
Society of Friends	2
Disciples of Christ	2
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	1
African Methodist Episcopal Church	1
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	1
United Brethren	1
WCC (Commission of the Churches on Int. Affairs)	1

Of the American participants, 34 were ministers and 28 were laymen. Of the ministers, 22 were denominational officials (including bishops), six were members of theological school faculties (including one president), three were in other forms of higher education, two were parish ministers, and one was an executive of a church-related

organization. Of the laymen, nine were university professors, six were scientists, four were businessmen, four were students, three were politicians, and two were unclassified. In the American delegation were only four women.

The American delegation could also be classified as conservatives (especially some of the laymen), liberals, and a group of "New Left" churchmen, including the students.

Members of the American delegation appeared in prominent leadership positions in the Conference. Prof. Arthur Larson was one of the eight presidents of the Conference. Bishop J. Brooke Mosley was the vice-chairman of the Conference. Two Americans-- Prof. John C. Bennett and Dr. Margaret Mead--were chairmen of sections. Prof. Richard Shaull was a member at large of the Conference Steering Committee, while Dr. Eugene Carson Blake and Dr. O. Frederick Nolde were ex-officio members.

There was little formal contact amongst members of the American delegation except to make plans to follow up the Conference in the U.S. and to take special action against the war in Vietnam beyond that made by the Conference itself. It was announced by Dr. Jon. L. Regier and Dr. Oscar Lee of the National Council of Churches that an American Conference on Church and Society would be held in Detroit in October, 1967. Other ways of projecting the Geneva Conference to the U.S. were also discussed.

On Vietnam, many members of the American delegation as individuals took several initiatives. A group of Americans, headed by Mrs. Edith Green, a member of Congress from Oregon, visited U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg who was staying at the Conference hotel. A group of Americans also addressed a letter to Bishop Rueben Mueller, president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Signed by three bishops and five other American delegates, the letter included these sentences: "Our study of the issues of church and society with Christians from all parts of the world has sharpened our own concerns and makes us keenly aware of their growing anxiety and concern over our Government's involvement in Vietnam. It is our conviction that the National Council of Churches should take immediate and decisive steps to mobilize the resources of the Council and its constituent denominations to bring the necessity for reassessment before the President of the U.S., the Secretaries of State and Defense, the appropriate congressional committess, and the American public."

The Americans at the Conference were also concerned about reports then current that President Johnson threatened reprisals for any actions by North Vietnam against American prisoners. Seventy-five American participants, observers, and staff attending the Conference individually signed the following cable to President Johnson: "Meeting with 400 leaders from Asian, African, European, and Latin American countries at the World Council of Churches' Conference on Church and Society at Geneva, Switzerland, we the undersigned Americans are more keenly aware than ever before of church and world criticism and anguish over U.S. involvement and escalation of conflict in Vietnam. The current episode involving American prisoners should not be made the occasion for any acts of reprisal. We are also calling upon the government and the people of North Vietnam to urge that captured personnel be treated according to standards set up by the International Red Cross. We deplore any suggestion that we lay waste the cities of North Vietnam. Acts of vengeance are abhorrent to Christian conscience and inimical to national and world interest." Dr. Jon. L. Regier on behalf of the group sent an additional cable to the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam urging his government "to initiate or respond to opportunities for negotiation and that captured personnel held by any country be treated according to standards set by the International Red Cross." He added that "in face of widespread reports we specifically urge that these standards be applied to the captured American flyers."

In a final initiative by Americans on the Vietnamese war, Dr. Charles V. Willie, a lay delegate, was asked to make a presentation on the floor of the plenary. He said: "We appeal to our Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world to send delegations to the U.S. to talk and visit with our people, to help us understand better the problems of the world and our position in world affairs. . . We need your help in telling the story so that our people may hear and understand. Too seldom do the developed nations call upon the developing nations for help. It is not often that the West turns to the East for dialogue and understanding." He then moved that the Conference plenary include among its recommendations one which "encourages an exchange between nations of delegations of people for the purpose of conversation and dialogue on matters of war and peace as an expression of love and our interdependent relationships."

THE DELEGATION FROM THE U.S.S.R.

Fifteen participants came from the Soviet Union--12 Orthodox, two Baptists, and one Lutheran. In addition, eight other priests of the Russian Orthodox Church were participants but resided outside the U.S.S.R. The Soviet delegation consisted of the following persons.

1. Metropolitan Nicodim of Leningrad. He is reportedly number three in the Russian Orthodox hierarchy and is the liaison person with the WCC.
2. Archbishop Alexis of Tallin and Estonia. He is reportedly number four or five in the hierarchy. He was one of the presidents of the Geneva Conference.
3. Bishop Pitirim of Volokolansk. He is in charge of the Russian Orthodox publishing house.
4. Bishop Juvenaliy of Zarsk.
5. Archbishop Philarete of Kiev and the Ukraine.
6. Bishop Vladimir of Yvenigorod. He has been representative of the Russian Orthodox Church at the WCC.
7. Archpriest Vitalz Borovoy. He is professor in the Academy of Theology in Leningrad. He is about to become a member of the staff of the WCC.
8. Archpriest Michael Moudiougine. Professor in the Academy of Theology in Leningrad.
9. Archpriest Livery Voronov. Professor in the Academy of Theology in Leningrad.
10. Prof. Nicolas Zabolotsky. Professor in the Academy of Theology in Leningrad.
11. Alexis Bouevsky. Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate.
12. German Troitsky. Member of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The non-Orthodox participants from the Soviet Union included:

1. Rev. Arthur Mitskevitch of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists.
2. Rev. Alexi Stoyan of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists.
3. Rev. Kaide Ratsup of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Russian Orthodox participants living outside the Soviet Union included the following:

1. Metropolitan Anthony of Souroj. He is Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate in London and Paris.
2. Bishop Irinee of West Germany (Munich).
3. Archbishop Justin of Rumania.
4. Metropolitan Nikodim of Bulgaria.

There were, in addition, other participants from Rumania and Bulgaria.

Archpriest Voronow submitted a working paper to the Conference on the "Fundamentals of Social Ethics Under Conditions of Soviet Reality--Orthodox View." This 12-page mimeographed document is of great interest. The historical introduction discussed "the Russian man" before the Soviet revolution and referred to the "false and anti-human doctrines." The Socialist society created "new Socialist ethics--the creative synthesis of centuries of cultural achievements of mankind." Prof. Voronow indicated that "it is perhaps difficult for a person living in the West to express impartial judgments about Socialist ethics and about the possibility of harmonious combining them with the foundations of the Christian faith and morality." Since Socialism is "an absolutely new phenomenon in human society," all "traditional criteria, habitual judgments, analogies, and even antitheses" are "almost completely useless for its assessment." Thus he describes "the Soviet man" and his ethics. Prof. Voronow admitted "certain shortcomings" of Soviet society. There are "vestiges of the pre-Socialist ethics." But Socialist society "wages a tireless struggle against these phenomena through education, explanations, mobilization of public opinion, and in extreme cases, through punishment." There has, however, emerged the new Soviet man--"a free and responsible individual, whose interests and aspirations are harmoniously linked with the interests and aspirations of society."

Archpriest Voronow indicated that in 1961 the Soviet Union proclaimed a 11-point "moral code of the builders of Communism." Assessing these principles in the light of Orthodox moral doctrine, the church regards them "as deserving total approval and support." Every believer is "morally bound" to include these principles "into his own moral code of a Christian as its integral organic part." The secularization of Soviet society should not be regarded as the "dying off" of religion, but as "providential action directed, on the one hand, at the internal purifying of 'historical' Christianity and, on the other hand, at the awakening. . . to hear the words of the Lord on the future of human society." Prof. Voronow concluded by asserting that "only a live, practical Christianity utterly devoted to the ministry of peace, living in deep unity with the people, capable of 'laying down its life for its friends,' irrespective of their attitude to religion, can be powerful, life-giving force, which gives to the faithful disciples of Christ the possibility to fulfill their lofty responsibility within a humane and responsible Socialist society." He added that "only by giving an example of an irreproachable personal conduct the Christians can help the people who surround them to put into practice the ethical standards of that society in an increasingly responsible manner."

Thus the Russian Orthodox Church has come to terms with Soviet society, appreciating its moral and material achievements but, not yet institutionally able to criticize more than individual shortcomings.

Archpriest Borovoy in a Conference address discussed "The Challenge and Relevance of Theology to the Social Revolutions of Our Time." He felt that the Orthodox had something to say since they have lived "for almost half a century in conditions of the social revolution which lies at the root of almost all the social revolutions of our time." Thus their competence is "clear and indisputable." Borovoy called revolution "a radical break." Renewal is a "fundamentally Christian concept." Yet it is "strange" that "as soon as we start to talk about social renewal, Christians begin to hedge, shunning responsibility and struggle, sometimes openly defending social sin." Revealed religion in Israel, Borovoy insisted, "was social and revolutionary first; it became individualist and static later." Thus "Christianity is by its very nature revolutionary and the new life required by Christian social ethics is more radical, more profoundly revolutionary, more novel than any other social system or doctrine, which has grown up outside Christianity."

Archpriest Borovoy recalled how the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union, on the part of its hierarchy, went through "all the stages of rejection, opposition, and even direct action against the revolution and the changes it brought to the life of the church." It was "a bitter and open struggle." Yet the overwhelming majority of the masses of believers in the end became "a constructive element in the building of a new society--and thus an example to the clergy and hierarchy who had not welcomed the revolution." Thus all Christians should "boldly, honorably, and actively join in the building of the new life, based on social justice. They should bring a Christian social fervor" to the social revolutions of our time and thus avert the de-Christianization of the contemporary world." He concluded by asserting that "the very existence of our Church with its millions of believers who are active builders of Socialism sets secular society the task of rethinking the role and significance of Christianity in the future."

Metropolitan Nicodim also spoke in the plenary, in a session devoted to Roman Catholicism. He presented a paper on "Dialogue with the Roman Catholics on Contemporary Social Thought." While praising the recent peace witness of the popes, he criticized the implication of a pope that a dialogue with representatives of atheistic Communism is extremely difficult if not impossible. He felt it "difficult to agree with the thought." He urged greater dialogue for world peace. A "distinctive feature" of the dialogue, he insisted, lies in "deliberate renunciation of judgment of ideologies which do not accept the Christian doctrines or which involve the idea of active struggle against religion." To avoid a sterile ideological dialogue, he urged that it be turned "into a true dialogue of peace, with mutual ministry." Metropolitan Nicodim also discussed the problem of private versus public ownership. He concluded by hoping that the Conference would be but the beginning "of the great dialogue of peace, in which the efforts of Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox will merge together for the weal of mankind. . . to the benefit of the church and society."

Metropolitan Nicodim was also invited to participate in one of the daily press conferences. He discussed the aims of the Conference and specifically mentioned the problems of Vietnam, Rhodesia, and Angola. Of Vietnam he said: "There rises before me the image of the valiant struggling and suffering people of Vietnam and the heart of man cannot but be filled with a sacred indignation before the cruel and unlawful actions of the U.S. in Vietnam." Later in this statement, Nicodim said that Christians in the Soviet Union "have not only accepted the Socialist revolution. . . but have and are active builders of a classless, Socialist society, which is free from exploitation, racial or other inequality, and every member of which possesses equal rights as well as the opportunity for individual development and an active participation in the life of the whole society."

The role of the church leaders from the Soviet Union in the Conference must be measured by two historical facts. The Russian Orthodox Church traditionally was not concerned with social issues, except to endorse the status quo. Also the Russian Orthodox Church did not join the WCC until 1961. Given this perspective, the role of the Soviet church leaders at the Conference was almost spectacular. (The Baptists and Lutherans from the Soviet Union gave less leadership).

The Russian Orthodox representatives showed themselves to be keenly interested in problems of church and society. Some were quite knowledgeable if not yet clerical specialists on selected social problems (as a few churchmen from the West). While seldom if ever did the Soviet churchmen present differ from current Soviet policy on social and international issues, they did not try to measure every phrase in the Conference report by current Soviet policy. Occasionally they did. When a phrase crept into a report on "control over armaments," they successfully had it deleted

and "inspection over disarmament" remained. When a proposal for the increased role of the U.N. General Assembly was made, they again urged the current Soviet position, which is to enhance the primacy of the Security Council. On the other hand, Metropolitan Nicodim did not insist on the fine points of the then current Soviet policy on Vietnam. If he did, he would never have allowed mention of peaceful settlement "through the U.N." in the paragraphs on Vietnam, but might have agreed to the restricted mention of the good offices of the U.N. Secretary-General.

Far from being obstreperous or "radical," the delegation from the Soviet Union was if anything conservative. They did tend to sit together, perhaps for translation purposes, and they did act like a unified delegation more than most nationals attending the Conference. They may have split votes on some issues, but this was not noted by observers.

The Soviet Government is certainly no longer afraid to have representatives of this church circulate in Western society. But isn't the Orthodox church in the Soviet Union today as uncritical of its society as the Orthodox church in Russia was at the time of the Czar? If the Soviet churchmen respond that there is less to criticize today, they may be generally correct. Yet why are the Soviet writers, and not the Soviet churchmen, protesting about the current restrictions on some Soviet intellectuals and about continued Soviet anti-Semitism?

ON WAR AND DISARMAMENT

The Oxford Conference was held in 1937 in the shadow of World War II. The specter of nuclear war certainly hovered over the Geneva Conference. The Conference plenary heard a ringing challenge to the churches to take a new position on war from Prof. Helmut Gollwitzer of West Berlin. He recalled that nuclear physicist Carl F. von Weizsäcker asked Martin Buber in 1956 why all protests against nuclear weapons had no effect. The Jewish philosopher replied: They are only addressed to other people and do not involve any personal commitment. The church, Gollwitzer insisted, must commit itself. Atomic, biological, and chemical weapons "compel us to re-examine the attitude of the Christian to the use of lethal force." There have been two historical Christian answers, those of the pacifist and those which assume the responsibility for the use of lethal force. Nuclear weapons, Gollwitzer said, "create a new situation only for those who support the second answer." Today, Gollwitzer asserted, "the church has only one choice--either it must act as if nothing essential had changed and as if the new war technique were merely an extension of the old one." He continued: "Either the church must regard all wars as similar in kind, and all forms of weapons as similar, in which case it would be morally possible to use these new weapons--or the church must clearly say: These weapons of destruction must not be used under any circumstances; whoever has recourse to atomic warfare will have God against him." He also declared that "we Christians refuse to participate in such warfare, for we can only do what can be done in the name of Jesus Christ." He asked: "When will the Christian church discover the point where it can unanimously and unconditionally say 'no' unless it does so now?" He continued: "This definite 'no' is the first task of the church in obedience to God's word in relation to the question of war today--the church must shout 'no' in the ears of the politicians and military leaders."

There were other speeches on war in the plenary and in section III. Some had a different emphasis, especially those by Dr. Max Kohnstamm of the Netherlands. He emphasized "structures" instead of religious prophecy.

The discussion of war centered mainly in sub-section I of Section III--"the relations of the two nuclear powers." After some discussion in the sub-section, Prof. Gollwitzer was asked by the chairman to make a first draft of some preliminary theological affirmations about war. The evolution of Gollwitzer's draft into that approved by the Conference plenary is of interest. The two versions are given below:

Gollwitzer Draft

6. The development of military technology, especially of A-B-C arms makes a decisive turning point in the history of mankind, in the history of states which has always been a history of wars as well. The frightful extermination, with which not only the combatants but also the whole civil population of an enemy state is threatened--the enormous burden of the cost of armament--the impossibility of self-defense of minor states--the danger of annihilation of all human culture by a war between the great nuclear powers--all this changes today radically the situation and the relations of the states. That also forces us to examine the previous thinking in our churches about the task of the state and about the attitude of the Christians to state and war.

Final Plenary Statement

6. The development of military technology, however, especially of atomic, biological, and chemical arms and the means of their delivery, marks a decisive turning point in the history of mankind, of states and their wars. The frightful possibilities of exterminating not only combatants but civilian populations as well, the impossibility of self-defense by smaller nations, the danger of annihilation of human cultures, the continuing danger for future generations from radiation--all this radically changes the situation of the states and their relation to one another.

7. In Amsterdam in 1948 the ecumenical community declared: War is against God's will. Since then all churches in the world continue to express more and more strongly this basic conviction. We now say to all governments and peoples: The nuclear war is against God's will. No end can ever justify such a war before God and before mankind, for it destroys physically and morally all that one wants to defend or to achieve.

8. But it is not sufficient to recognize and to proclaim this. Today it is the first duty of the governments and the politicians to prevent a nuclear war which threatens today all nations. All Christians must contribute to this task, and also all churches with their preaching and their moral instructions. This task requires an enormous amount of political and moral effort. Arising from this task follows also a new Christian thinking about state and war, about the relations of the states, about the development of international law and of those international structures which the previous anarchy in the international life is being overcome. The rise of the new military technology is to be for us an appeal of God to finish the previous history of the international jungle. The future of mankind depends on that.

7. This new and terrible situation forces Christians to re-examine previous thinking in the Churches concerning war and the function of the state in relation to it. In Amsterdam in 1948, the First Assembly of the WCC declared "War is contrary to the will of God," at the same time it acknowledged three attitudes towards the participation by Christians in the evil of war. Today the situation has changed. Christians still differ as to whether military means can be legitimately used to achieve objectives which are necessary to justice. But nuclear war goes beyond all bounds. Mutual nuclear suicide can never establish justice because it destroys all that one wants to defend or to achieve. We now say to all governments and peoples that nuclear war is against God's will and the greatest of evils.

8. Therefore we affirm that it is the first duty of governments and their officials to prevent nuclear war. Inasmuch as war between organized states results from the present disorganized and unjust political and economic conditions of international society, it is the duty of all men and governments to strive together to strengthen the existing structures and to create new instruments of a responsible international community. The task requires unprecedented political and moral effort. Of Christians, it demands the contribution of the preaching, teaching, and action of the Church, and the efforts of individuals. It requires new thought concerning Christian attitudes to the state and war, the relations among states, the demands of economic and social justice in and between states, the development of international ethos, law, and structures by which the international anarchy can be supplanted by justice and order. The rise of the new military technology creates a situation in which God's judgment challenges men to end the old history of the international jungle. The future of mankind depends on that.

Thus the Conference took a decisive step beyond Amsterdam. Beyond war's being "contrary to the will of God," the Conference asserted that "nuclear war is against God's will and the greatest of evils." The statement emphasized that "mutual nuclear suicide can never establish justice" and thus a nuclear war can never be a just war. The statement did not, however, go as far as many had wished. Indeed, The New York Times was able to report that the Conference "condemned nuclear war but not the use of tactical nuclear weapons." This was not quite true, but the Conference did not condemn nuclear deterrence other than referring to its ultimate instability.

The section of the Report on disarmament is weak. Mr. Kohnstamm exerted a veto on the disarmament paragraphs by insisting on inserting a phrase, "some of our group." Thus some believe in disarmament measures as the next step between the nuclear giants while "others of us believe" that disarmament "will remain inaccessible until some modest steps have been taken on the road to common institutions." This dichotomy remained in the text, even though Mr. Kohnstamm had few articulate supporters. Thus an inadequate and partial approach is given in the statement to collateral disarmament measures, with only a phrase devoted to the important goal of general and complete disarmament. There were few disarmament experts among Conference participants. Neither representatives from the CCIA nor Soviet churchmen advocated stronger disarmament statements, even ones that corresponded to the present common denominator of official American and Soviet disarmament positions. These joint positions are more advanced than anything appearing in the Conference report.

ON WAR IN VIETNAM

The war in Vietnam cast its shadow on the Conference, but mostly on sub-section one of Section III--the relations between the two nuclear giants. A drafting committee was convened to compose a statement on Vietnam. Appointed were Bishop Tibor Bartha of Hungary, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde of the CCIA, and this observer. The committee was in existence for 24 hours. Bishop Bartha and myself arrived at a compromise statement and this was reframed at the request of Dr. Nolde. The latter, however, found the whole statement unacceptable and did not try to modify it. The committee submitted its report to the sub-section and it was replaced by another drafting committee, this consisting of Metropolitan Nocodim, Dr. John C. Bennett (chairman of Section III), Albert Laham (chairman of sub-section 1), and A. K. Thampy, an observer. Dr. Nolde met with this committee. In the meantime, the drafting committee had inserted its own paragraph on Vietnam as follows: "In the light of the above considerations we considered repeatedly the tragic and immediate situation in Vietnam. We associated ourselves fully with the recent actions of the WCC and CCIA. We ask the Conference solemnly to confirm this action to halt the disastrous escalation of the war. We further urge the WCC and CCIA to work unceasingly for a restoration of a just peace to that suffering country." This minimal statement was unacceptable to the sub-section and the report of the second drafting committee was received and substituted. The very slight strengthening of this report from the committee to the sub-section through the section through the plenary is shown below:

Committee Report

In the light of the above considerations, we have repeatedly emphasized the tragic situation in Vietnam. We welcome the action of the WCC and its CCIA aiming at restoring peace in Vietnam and addressing itself to the stopping of the bombing of the North by South Vietnam and the U.S., and of the military infiltration of the South by North Vietnam.

Final Plenary Wording

In the light of the above considerations, we have repeatedly emphasized the tragic situation in Vietnam. We would suggest that the churches have a special obligation to be questioning continually the wisdom and rightness of the present Vietnam policies of the governmental leadership of the belligerents. We welcome the action of the WCC and its CCIA "aiming at restoring peace in Vietnam and addressing itself to the stopping of the bombing of the North by the U. S. and South Vietnam and of the military infiltration of the South by North Vietnam."

However, the massive and growing American military presence in Vietnam and the long continued bombing of villages in the South and of targets a few miles from cities in the North cannot be justified.

They involve the danger of escalation of the war into a world conflict and for this reason do not bring South Vietnam closer to political stability or solve the problems which have produced a revolutionary situation in that country.

In view of the dangers created by this situation the Conference should urge that all hostilities and military activities be stopped and that the conditions be created for the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem through the U.N., or the participants to the Geneva Conference, or other international agencies.

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. . . While continuing efforts to restore peace and bring reconciliation, we should strive to limit the involvement of non-combatants in the acts of war. We urge that captured combatants be exchanged as promptly as possible and treated under accepted humane and international norms.

Repeated efforts were made in the sub-section, section, and plenary to modify this statement, but to no effect. It was indicated that the phrase, "military infiltration of the South by North Vietnam," was insisted on by some Westerners if the latter phrase was to be included indicating that American military presence "cannot be justified." Efforts to change the word, "justified," to "condemned" also failed.

The lack of a stronger statement on the war in Vietnam caused additional initiatives in two directions. Prof. Gollwitzer was asked by some participants to draft a more theological statement on Vietnam--a Christian proclamation instead of a political formula. He did so and it was briefly circulated in English and then withdrawn. Apparently the Conference Steering Committee decided not to allow him to present this statement to the plenary. Instead, Ross Terrill, an Australian who recently visited China and Southeast Asia, circulated a stronger political statement on the war in Vietnam for individual signatures during the closing hours of the Conference.

A second initiative was from many of the American delegates (see section on the participants from the U.S. above). Also early in the Conference, a WCC delegation including Dr. Nolde, Dr. Blake, and Dr. Bennett discussed Vietnam with U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg.

ON REVOLUTION

The church through much of its history has been concerned with revolution, but usually on the side of the status quo. At the Geneva Conference, some participants no doubt expected some of the churchmen from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to bless revolution if not advocate it. They did so occasionally, but in a conservative way. Unexpected by most participants was the revolutionary fervor shown not even by most participants from Asia or Africa, but from Latin America. The whole discussion on revolution in the Conference constituted one of its most important contributions to current Christian thinking.

Prof. Richard Shaull of Princeton Theological Seminary and long a resident of South America gave a speech to the plenary on "The Revolutionary Challenge to Church and Theology." He began by indicating that modern technology offers "unlimited possibilities for preserving the established order." Thus those who want to bring about a significant transformation of society are "up against a total system of power." If revolution is necessary for the humanization of modern society, the traditional type of social revolution may be today practically impossible, for if it did succeed its consequences in social and economic disorganization would be disastrous. What then? Shaull called for "a new strategy of revolution: sudden pressures applied effectively at the right place at the right time may have a surprisingly wide and deep impact and small changes can set forces in motion which will produce much greater changes in the future." He pointed to the utility of a kind of guerrilla warfare--"the limited struggle of small groups in permanent revolution." He would not insist that "Christians should have no participation in the use of violence." Indeed, "there may, in fact, be some situations in which only the threat or use of violence can set the process of change in motion." The church should "provide the context in which people are set free for and encouraged to accept this revolutionary commitment, and are helped to work out a theological perspective and an ethic for revolution."

Shaull agreed with Prof. H. D. Wendland that the Christian "should work positively and critically for revolution without an ideology of total revolution and without utopian dreams of a perfect society." Yet he felt that what the new revolutionary needs "are those resources of understanding and community that can sustain and orient such a (revolutionary) effort." This includes the possibility that "the future is really open, the hope that weakness can be victorious over established power, and that meaning and fulfillment are possible in a life lived in an intense revolutionary struggle." Many of the new generation have only "the memory of a meaningful Christian faith." Younger theologians feel that "all the old images and concepts have lost their power; they can no longer serve as bearers of the Christian message of radical iconoclasm and transcendence, or contribute creatively to the formation of a new image of man or a new style of life."

This challenge by Shaull created quite a stir among participants to the Conference. He was immediately answered by some Westerners. Roger Shinn said that there is confusion about "what is authentic revolution as compared to pseudo-revolution or counter-revolution." He called for "a revolutionary theology and a theology of revolution, not an ideology of revolution." He said that the "ideology of revolution prefers sometimes revolutionary fervor to persons, and has this dangerous tendency to deify history." Yet he recognized revolution as one Christian vocation: "There are those who disrupt the social process, who act not out of a careful calculation of ends but out of an irrepressible cry of the heart."

It remained for the non-Westerners to take up Shaull's theme. Bola Ige, a lawyer from Nigeria, spoke of "The Political Dynamics of New Awakened Peoples." He indicated that political freedom and economic emancipation are intertwined--no nation can really have the one without the other." It is in this sense, he continued, that "one can

begin to understand some of the "so-called foolish" actions of Dr. Sukarno, Dr. Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Ben Bella, Fidel Castro, and President Nasser. He said that the developing countries have "no visible alternative to genuine socialism." They "shall not hesitate to offend any who may stand in our way, whatever their ideological posture." He also declared that "there can be no peace where the Soviet Union and the U.S. arrogate to themselves the monopoly of directing the future of the world and other nations." The audience applauded when he added: "There can be no peace as long as there is any colony in the world, and as long as neo-colonialism remains more vicious than its parent, colonialism." Mr. Ige admitted that "India has lost its lustre," but China is "nationalist, militant, economically free, and at the same time unyielding in its commitment for the freedom and full emancipation of the nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America." Christians must understand these forces at work. They can work "for a new order for the whole of mankind, uninhibited by prejudices of power and cultural superiority." Otherwise, if care is not taken, "there will be polarization between Europe and America and Asia, Africa, and Latin America."

This was impolite talk if Geneva were just another polite church conference. It shook many Western delegates. Mr. Ige additionally called for revolution: "The revolution our people desire is one that will completely knock out all existing suffocating constitutions, systems, and powers that keep them going." This revolution "cannot wait for the slow process of data and research." And it is "global in its dimensions." Its timing "will be fixed according to the degree of the rottenness of the present dispensation."

What additional words on revolution could the Latin Americans say? Plenty! Genzale Castillo-Cardenas of Columbia spoke to the plenary on "Christians and the Struggle for a New Social Order in Latin America." Cardenas talked of Father Camilo Torres of Columbia who was killed last February. In deciding to devote himself exclusively to the revolutionary cause, Father Torres wrote: "I have left the privileges and duties of the clergy, but I have not left the priesthood. I believe I will devote myself to the revolution out of love for my neighbor. I will not say the Mass, but I will realize this love to my neighbor in the temporal, economic, and social realms." He discussed the tensions among Latin American Christians between those who are convinced of the need and justification of active resistance to the established 'order' even to the point of subversion." The established order in many countries "is an affront to God because it is precisely an affront to man." In some cases he felt that "revolution is not only permitted, but is obligatory for those Christians who see it as the only effective way of fulfilling love to one's neighbor." Cardenas tried to make common cause with the freedom fighters in the U.S.: "In Latin America those of us might feel infinitely separated mentally and psychologically from the U.S. for very justifiable reasons, who are discovering how near we are to the valiant fighters for civil rights, giving their lives and possessions for the cause of justice in complete identification with the ideals of the revolutionary movements of Latin America. This has led us to ask ourselves whether we really are as distant as we thought and to discover that human link that goes beyond ideologies, myths, and the unjust structures that separate us."

Several sections of the Conference tried to deal with the problem of revolution and put some concepts of the problem into the Conference report. Most successful was a sub-section in Section III. Its final paragraph was endorsed by the plenary: "Wherever small elites rule at the expense of the welfare of the majority of those whom they govern, political change toward the end of a more just order, hopefully as quickly as possible, ought to be actively promoted and supported by Christians. . . . In cases where such changes are needed, the use of revolutionary methods--by which is meant violent overthrow of an existing political order--by Christians cannot be excluded a priori. For in such cases, it may very well be that the use of violent methods is the only recourse of those who wish to avoid prolongation of the vast

covert violence which the existing order involves. But Christians should think of the day after the revolution, when it will be necessary that justice be established by clear minds and in good conscience. There is no virtue in violence itself, but only in what will come after it. In some instances significant changes have been made by non-violent means. Christians must develop greater skill and wisdom in using non-violence."

DOWN OR UP THE HILL

Some of the student participants of the Conference, no doubt with experience in secular social action demonstrations, conceived the idea of a march to the nearby Palais des Nations as a final climax to the Conference. They circulated mimeographed petitions to this end and received 75 or more signatures from participants. The WCC "establishment" reportedly questioned this proposal and for three reasons: 1-it was not on the original Conference program, 2-there are strange police regulations for any kind of demonstration in neutral Switzerland, and 3-the CCIA has a relation to the U.N. which the WCC was loathe to by-pass. The Conference Steering Committee nevertheless received the petition and asked one of its members, Dr. Harvey Cox, to try to work out something with the students. In the course of these negotiations, WCC personnel succeeded in turning the march around--from the square in front of the Palais uphill to the Ecumenical Center. This was illogical, but the young people accepted this compromise in order to save the march.

The full proposal, including the purpose of the march and its details, was submitted to a plenary session for approval. The march would not be a protest, but "support the vision of a just and peaceful world embodied in the very ideal of a Palais des Nations, an ideal still very far from fulfillment." The march would have three emphases: 1-our penitence as Conference members for what we have failed to do in building a just world order, 2-our dedication as conference members to the task of fashioning a just world order, and 3-our challenge to the WCC and thus to all its constituent bodies that, since previous church efforts have fallen far short, imaginative and unprecedented new measures are needed immediately." The proposal also indicated that "there are millions of people in the world today for whom the words we have assembled in our reports will probably have little meaning." These people, the report continued, "do understand the language of public marches and street processions, the parabolic language of following words with bodily commitment." The report concluded: "If we wish to have our churches take seriously the challenge of speaking to the poor, the illiterate, the disinherited, and the disinterested, the best way we can do so is to set an example of such speaking ourselves."

In the plenary debate, the proposal was severely criticized. One participant said that the march was a trend "toward sensationalism." A German participant said that there were many social scientists present and any march would be a symbol of protest, implying that social scientists don't want to get involved in protest. Then there were more friendly criticisms. An Australian asserted that "we will be marching in the wrong direction--we should go from the church to the world, the U.N." A participant from Nigeria said that it would be better not to have a march at all than to march to the Ecumenical Center from the U.N. Margaret Mead in the midst of this debate said: "I am deeply distressed and hurt. This Conference is talking and talking about commitment and here is available a new form developed in this century. Television is used all over the world for men to share disaster and courage. You have already given more interviews than prayers. Now when the young people devise a method for the use of television, you sneer and you laugh."

An amendment was offered to reverse the direction of the march and, once at the United Nations, for Conference leaders to present some of the Conference documents to appropriate officials. This amendment carried. Then WCC secretary Visser 't Hooft took the podium. He said that the vote was meaningless. Who will receive the Conference reports? The U.N. is the wrong address for the protests. Bole Ige from Nigeria answered that the demonstration would not be against the U.N., but a show of collective concern to the world. A vote was then taken on the amended motion--to march down to the U.N. It was lost by 87 to 98. The participants from the Soviet Union voted solidly against the amended motion.

At this point the plenary meeting adjourned for the evening. After nightly prayers, the stunned young people--and many older participants, staff, observers, and press--stayed spontaneously in the auditorium and held an informal gathering for more than an hour. In the end more than 200 persons were present. A young Chicago student, Gerald McWorther, chaired the meeting. Harvey Cox told the reason for the compromise. Margaret Mead explained that most participants could not apparently understand that a demonstration is not different from a press conference. Rev. Adeolu Adegbola of Nigeria said that he would like to turn the march into a protest and picket the homes or offices of Dr. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. Nolde (head of the CCIA). They are the sources of their frustrated hopes. He recalled that the report of Section IV called for much more competence and leadership in social issues by the WCC and the CCIA. Dr. Paul Frelick of the John Knox Conference Center outside Geneva regretted that Dr. Visser 't Hooft was not more gracious and did not offer to contact U.N. authorities. This would be the way a great man could end a great career. Stephen Rose, editor of Renewal magazine, urged that the demonstration be both to the churches and to the world. He suggested that the group first march around the Ecumenical Center and then go downhill to the U.N. Finally it was decided to hold a voluntary march the next afternoon (the last day of the Conference), with a short meeting at the Ecumenical Center and then go downhill to the U.N. It was agreed to ask Dr. Visser 't Hooft at least to help clear the march with difficult police authorities.

During the plenary on the final morning, Miss Charlotte Bunch--an American student participant--received permission to announce the voluntary march. She said that, through the help of WCC officials, the police had given permission for the march. She called the march a physical expression of the participants' commitment to act after talking for two weeks. She invited all those who desired to join the march. A leader of the Soviet delegation arose and said that, in the name of the whole Russian delegation, he wanted to announce that they voted by mistake against the amended resolution the previous evening because of difficulty in keeping up with the translation of the debate. They now wanted to be counted as favoring the march!

A press conference on the march was held just before it began. Young participants to the Conference from Argentina, Indonesia, and the Cameroon answered journalists' questions, under the chairmanship of Mr. McWorther. It was revealed that about 25 student participants in the Conference met regularly and made the first plans for the march. Also McWorther said that a small committee met all night planning details of the march. The police had checked the placards--there could be none attacking specific countries. He also announced that it was agreed not to ask the head of the Geneva Office of the U.N. to receive Conference documents. This could be done another time through normal WCC channels.

The march began at 2:15 p.m. on the final day of the Conference in front of the Ecumenical Center. About 25 signs in several languages were distributed to marchers. Their slogans: "The Arms Race Has No Winner," "An Impatient World Challenges a Complacent Church," "World Peace or the World in Pieces," "One Race--the Human Race," "World Economic Structures Inadequate," and "Mediation not Escalation." Participants, observers, guests, press, and staff then walked 100 yards for a short meeting still

on WCC grounds. After a silent prayer, the Rev. Adeolu Adegbola addressed the group. He said that a study of problems of church and society was not enough. There must be vigorous social action and he challenged the WCC to lead the way. He asked that the CCIA be more sensitive to its opportunity. A separate WCC department should be established to work on world economic development.

Then the 300 persons marched down the Route de Ferney, past the Hotel Intercontinental, to the square in front of the United Nations. Here Dr. Harvey Cox sounded the keynote: "We gather in this place because the Palais des Nations symbolizes efforts from nationalism to a more just and peaceful international community. We of the Conference have not lost hope for peace. As Christians we march because we have not struggled hard enough for peace. The march has two purposes--penitence and dedication. . ." Then the following message was given by students consecutively in French, English, German, Indonesian, Spanish, and Japanese:

"We believe that since Hiroshima the possibility of war has become the potentiality of global suicide and the destruction of all life. We therefore commit ourselves to working towards a future without war. We believe that the present conflict in Vietnam is a contemporary tragedy of hideous proportions. We plead for the immediate cessation of the fighting. We believe that human and physical suffering from ignorance, poverty, and disease can be eliminated by man's present resources and knowledge. Economic, political, and social justice are a universal responsibility and can only be achieved through international cooperation. We call for a more equitable sharing of wealth and the application of human knowledge and resources both within all nations and from the richer nations to the poorer ones. We believe that racial, ethnic, and cultural oppression and discrimination threaten the struggle for universal human values. We call for an end to all forms of such oppression and discrimination threaten only in more blatant forms such as apartheid, but also in more subtle manifestations such as paternalism. We stand here and commit ourselves, our souls, and our bodies."

About two-thirds of members of the Conference attended the demonstration. Many prominent Conference personalities were there, including Bishop John Hines of the Episcopal Church and many of the Soviet churchmen. It was said that for the demonstration the Russians took their gowns off and the Africans put them on! The Russians took off their clerical robes--for the first time during the Conference--and a few of the West Africans, also for the first time, put on their robes. It was reported that some of the more conservative lay delegates from the U.S. participated.

The demonstration was shown extensively on Swiss television and pictures were printed in the Swiss newspapers and no doubt around the world.

CONCLUSIONS OF AN OBSERVER

The greatest single accomplishment of the Conference was the confrontation it made possible between members of the "older" and of the "new" churches, between churchmen from the Western or developed world and from the Asian-African-Latin American or developing world. While the Protestant missionary movement generally adjusted quickly to the political freedom of Asia and Africa after 1945, Protestant churchmen in the West still don't begin to comprehend the distance between them and their co-religionists in the developing world. The Geneva Conference made the beginnings of this confrontation possible, even though it may take years for the message to sink into the hearts, minds, and actions of Western churchmen. Geneva constituted not only a generalized confrontation, but took specific form in discussion of revolution, of economic development, and even of race. Also the structures of the WCC will never be the same because of this confrontation. Dr. Blake may be the last white (and Western) general secretary of the WCC.

A second accomplishment of the Conference was the production of a new position of the church on war. The Conference went beyond the Amsterdam statement and asserted that "nuclear war is against God's will and the greatest of evils." The Conference added also that "it is the first duty of governments and their officials to prevent nuclear war." This is not the ringing "no" to war that Prof. Gollwitzer initially suggested, and the one which some neo-pacifists hoped that the churches might adopt, but it is an advance in WCC thinking.

A third accomplishment was the successful and almost complete integration of churchmen from the Soviet Union into the Conference. Churchmen from Eastern Europe have been generally comfortable within the WCC for some time. But for the Russian Orthodox Church to play an important role in this Conference was a welcome innovation. This portends an eventual dialogue within the WCC on Marxism, one which is overdue but has barely started in WCC circles.

A fourth accomplishment was the demonstration, however informal, held at the conclusion of the Conference. This agreement to allow a voluntary demonstration to be associated with the WCC will have widespread repercussions. It did much to keep the church radicals, including youth, from being alienated from the WCC.

A fifth accomplishment will undoubtedly be changes within the WCC to implement some of the suggestions made at the Conference. The WCC is sure to reorganize and expand its program for study, education, and action in the field of church and society (including international relations), especially after its new secretary takes office and before or after the Upsala Assembly.

The final accomplishment will be to continue and increase the close ties with the Roman Catholic observers and hopefully with other religious groups outside the WCC. Many areas of consultation and cooperation have been discovered and surely these will be further explored.

While the overwhelming impression of an observer to the Conference was therefore affirmative, there crept in some inevitable disappointments. It may be instructive to list several.

The greatest disappointment was to witness the inability of the Conference to make a more prophetic statement against the war in Vietnam. Extreme pressure was put on leaders of the Conference by the WCC "establishment" to produce a unanimous and thus a "balanced" statement. When one was written to the satisfaction of both the CCIA and the Soviet delegation, it appeared to some as a low common denominator and scarcely useful or prophetic. A call for consensus was made in order not to upset the compromise. But why should the Conference have felt called upon to make a "balanced" statement if its participants felt more blame for the war in Vietnam, and thus more initiatives for its termination, should be assumed by one nation (the U.S.) than the others? As it was, the Conference failed to ask for a formula on Vietnam as critical of U.S. policy as that at the same time suggested publicly by U.N. Secretary-General U Thant. Surely the Conference at least could have echoed his call for peace without alienating powerful factors within the structure of the WCC and its member churches.

A second disappointment, not unrelated to the first, was to witness occasionally a shallow overlay of Christianity upon deep nationalistic feelings on the part of many participants. When the motion was made to criticize the political killing of thousands of Indonesians, the Indonesian delegates urged a more discreet handling of the problem and, in the end, nothing appeared in the Conference report. When a sentence explicitly condemning anti-Semitism appeared in the final report, a participant from Lebanon was successful in having it stricken, also on narrow nationalistic grounds. When a section on the British handling of Rhodesia was debated in the plenary, some

British delegates managed to soften the criticisms of their country. In a few instances, let it be noted, national interest did not triumph. Thus when the seating of China in the U.N. was debated and the "representation of Taiwan" was changed to the "question of Taiwan" (thus dispensing with a two-China policy), the Taiwanese participants opposed, but the better concept was retained.

The strong nationalism of participants in the Conference was understandable and it may still take decades for the church to overarch the nationalisms of its members. Also in countries where national churches constitute a minority and their connection with a prophetic WCC might put them in additional jeopardy, there was an understandable deference to the wishes of nationals from those churches. Of all the participants present, most of the Americans probably showed themselves most willing to be criticized. They also probably received most criticism at the Conference, some justified, some not. The Protestant churches in the U.S. are in a strong position vis-a-vis the state and thus American Protestants pay few penalties and need little courage in being associated with the most prophetic utterances of the WCC.

A third disappointment was that the Conference tried to do too much too superficially. Its frame of reference was too wide, both for the time available and for the range of experts consulted. When will Protestants arrange to take large portions of their time from their duties as the Catholic bishops did during the four sessions of Vatican Council II?

A fourth disappointment was the domination of the Conference by the West. Genuine efforts on the part of the WCC staff were made to prevent this from happening. Yet the American delegation was the largest--three times the size of any other. Americans and other Westerners dominated much of the Conference drafting. This may have been inevitable.

A final disappointment was that few women participants were involved in the Conference, either from the West or the developing countries. Also the Conference apparently did not attempt to seek observers from non-Judeo-Christian religious groups. The latter must be brought into the dialogue as well as Roman Catholics if organized religion as a whole is to make its maximum impact on society.

In the final worship service, Conference chairman M. M. Thomas in the words of praise and confession said: "O Lord. . . don't let us restrict you to a narrow ghetto labelled, 'religion,' but lead us to worship you in the fullness of life as the Lord of politics, economics, and the arts." The Geneva Conference was no narrow ghetto labelled, "religion."

POSTSCRIPT FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERALS

The Conference should reinforce the necessity of religious liberals--Unitarian Universalists in North America and other member groups of the IARF--to work as closely with the WCC and its departments as possible.

There is no question at this time of our membership in the WCC. Its present basis of membership precludes application by the Unitarian Universalist Association, although certain churches which are presently members of the WCC are members also of the IARF. There is some talk of broadening the membership basis of the WCC, but this is a matter exclusively for the WCC and its constituent churches and, in any case, may be a long process.

As a result of this Conference, the IARF and the UUA should arrange an official conference with Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary-elect of the WCC, to explore areas of cooperation as non-members. Some publications and studies of the WCC are highly useful to religious liberals. Certainly it is a privilege for the IARF and the UUA to continue to send observers to WCC conferences and consultations to which they are invited. The IARF and the UUA should especially be prepared to accept any invitation to send observers to the Fourth Assembly of the WCC in Upsala in 1968.

In reciprocal fashion, the IARF and UUA should invite officers and personnel of the WCC to its conferences and other events. The universal and dynamic character of the WCC--despite its basis of membership--is such that it can be ignored by some religious liberals only at their peril.

One small yet important UUA project which might grow directly out of the Geneva Conference is the sending of a small UUA mission to Cuba early in 1967. Conversations were held with one of the clergymen present from Cuba. He felt that it would be useful for Cuban-American relations for the UUA to send a mission of five clergymen and laymen to Cuba for a ten-day period and to report back to the American churches and their members. Such church missions might help change American policy toward Cuba. If such a mission is arranged on an ecumenical basis, and Unitarian Universalists are invited, this might be initially preferable to one sponsored solely by the UUA.

APPENDIX

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The WCC is a fellowship of more than 200 churches or denominations in more than 80 countries. This includes much of Christianity except the Roman Catholics and the fundamentalists. The WCC was founded in Amsterdam in 1948, although the impetus for its establishment goes back to Edinburgh in 1910.

Since the basis of membership in the WCC is churches which "confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures," Unitarian Universalists have not sought membership in the WCC. Several church groups which are members of the IARF are also members of the WCC, e.g., the Czechoslovak Church.

Some of the terms surrounding the WCC include the following:

Amsterdam - The site of the founding Assembly of the WCC in 1948.

Blake, Eugene Carson - The second general secretary of the WCC who takes office in 1967.

CCIA - Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the international arm of the WCC, with particular attention to U.N. affairs.

Central Committee - Policy of the WCC between assemblies is made by this 100-member committee.

DICARWS - Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee, and World Service of the WCC.

Ecumenical - The various efforts to bring the divided Christian Church together. This has a Protestant dimension, a Catholic dimension, and one that overarches both.

Evanston - The site of the Second Assembly of the WCC in 1954.

Faith and Order - A movement founded in 1910 and now a part of the Division of Studies of the WCC. This effort studies the theological and other issues which keep the churches apart and which unite them.

IMC - International Missionary Council which was merged into the WCC in 1961. It assists missionary work throughout the world.

Life and Work - A movement which held its first conference in 1925 in Stockholm and seeks to stimulate church action in society.

New Delhi - The site of the Third Assembly of the WCC in 1961.

Oikoumene - Greek word used in the New Testament to mean whole inhabited universe. This word is superimposed on the symbol of the WCC--a ship, an old Christian image of the church as a ship afloat on the sea of the world, in the center of which is the mast in the form of a cross.

Oxford - The site of an important conference on the church and society in 1937.

Renewal - The radical transformation of the church to become a more effective institution.

Söderblom, Nathan - A Swedish bishop who chaired the Stockholm Conference in 1925 on Life and Work and is considered one of the architects of the ecumenical movement.

Upsala - The site of the Fourth Assembly of the WCC to be held in June, 1968.

Visser 't Hooft, W. A. - The first general secretary of the WCC who retires at the end of 1966.

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