

# MOTIVE

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# motive

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**COVER 3:** *Woodcut* ROBERT HODGELL

**COVER 4:** **THE FORWARD IS BACKWARDS** *fable*,  
ROGER ORTMAYER

**FRONT COVER:** **BEN MAHMOUD'S** untitled ink and watercolor drawing is from a recent series centering on man—his action, his condition, his image. Mahmoud writes: "Nothing specific can be said about the people who populate my work. They are not specific people, but by not being 'Adam' or 'John' they do not cease to be human. This indicates to me that the condition of being human does not reside in a name, but in actions. The action of these people constitutes, in my mind, the struggle to be. A struggle which I see as free from hope, but not hopeless—a struggle that I call heroic and the Greeks called human." Mahmoud is an assistant professor of art at Northern Illinois University.



PHOTOGRAPH: STURKEY

## PORGY AGONISTES

Slouching from Birdland to be reborn,  
with *Nina's Love You*, *Porgy*  
flowing in a two-voiced neon chord,  
I was accosted  
by the shade of *Sporting Life*,  
slick as sin and high as happy dust.  
He taunted, "Lookin' for a girl, son?"  
and vanished down a subway.

Then I was struck blind  
by the apocalypse of *Porgy*,

whipping his goat along a desolate White Way,  
uprooting skyscrapers like abscessed molars,  
levelling, with the arm that crushed hot Crown,  
the whole sophisticated, pimping facade.  
"Where is you, Bess? Where is you?"

That is the parable  
of black romanticism,  
the moral armageddon  
of a goat cart and a strong right arm.

—GERALD LOCKLIN



R. O. HODGELL

Since Mr. Newfield wrote his article (*motive*, March 1966), SSOC has held another conference during which new ground work for future directions of the Movement was laid. When the conference adjourned in early February, SSOC had hired ten more staff people, and had committed itself to four new community organizing projects. Two staff workers are assigned to an experimental urban project in Nashville and another in the Vine City area of Atlanta. Another will develop student labor organizations in North Carolina.

A special project for the spring will be a southwide folk-tour during April. Other new emphases include an increase in research and a literature distribution center. Newly concentrated campus work is slated in Florida, Alabama, Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Virginia.

The southwide spring conference has been scheduled for the weekend of April 8-10 in Atlanta. Workshops will be held on Southern Politics, South Africa, Students and Labor, Civil Rights and the Student, Third Party vs. Coalition Politics, Urban Organizing, and Rural Organizing. This conference will be run by students to a much greater degree than ever before; the emphasis will be on involvement rather than discussion about the Movement. Thus as SSOC begins to involve a second generation of students, it hopes to welcome them with a new seriousness and maturity.

SUE THRASHER  
ssoc  
nashville, tenn.

How many more times do you intend to thumb your nose at us who have been trying to "stay with you" on *motive*?

Without a doubt the cover on the January 1966 issue is the most flagrant of your many attempts to make fools of us!

Will you please tell me where in *motive* I can find a positive answer to the confusion of Uncle Sam, of noted cartoonist Robert Osborn, and perhaps yourself, since you and your staff approve of such a negative approach?

I still need a faith to hang on to! Where do I find it in your magazine?

WALTER M. BAGGS  
western maryland college  
westminster, maryland

Congratulations on the October issue of *motive*. It may seem a bit late for such a comment, but it is in the nature of most good things to improve with age and *motive*, as is its habit, has once more produced a collection of articles which mellow nicely.

In the course of the past four months no analysis or commentary regarding the revolution on U.S. campuses has appeared which can match the breadth, fairness and perceptiveness of *motive's* treatment of the controversy. I have found myself referring to it repeatedly in discussions of both the Berkeley crisis and Cornell affairs. It will provide a basis for discussion during Cornell's Wesley Foundation spring retreat.

With the October issue, *motive* has done the student movement and U.S. campuses in general an invaluable service in defining the true nature of our "revolution," and in summarizing steps already taken as well as obstacles still to be surmounted.

KAREN E. SCHMIDT  
cornell university  
ithaca, new york

I do not think that a cover of the American flag with the caption "God Bless America" (with the idea that whatever we do is all right because we are America) would be a good cover for *motive*. Neither do I think that "the fumbling, bumbling, peace-war, UNCLEAR Uncle Sam" is a good cover. The articles in the January issue seem to have a little "guessing" going on also. Maybe the professionals who are working in the field of foreign policy have the same problem of being human—even if they are professional.

Certainly a Christian must be concerned about justice in foreign policy. But can this concern be shown by presenting America as a belligerent old woman with her nose in everyone's business? Does the cover indicate that we are out of place and should withdraw? Or that we are not acting responsibly? Or is it trying to say that we are not sincere? That we stick our nose in everyone's business but do not really care. . . .?

What's with the symbol of peace in the background? Does this mean that America is simply "dilly-dallying" around and does not want peace? Does it mean that we should stop the war, even if it takes nuclear bombs? Does it mean our policy in Latin America is a casual thing?

I do not understand *motive's* motive. American foreign policy is not always clear. But is this what the government gets for trying? Or are you saying the government is not trying?

Why the comic about the American government? Why so dogmatic in this area and not in others—say civil rights? If there ever was a "fumbling, bumbling, unclear movement" this is one. The basic aim of the civil rights movement is as fine a movement as the church could be involved in. It also has its unclear element—mainly because it has human beings involved in the struggle. Maybe the reason we are silent about the stumbling in the civil rights movement is that we realize the Negro is struggling to get out of a position for which we are responsible. In our state of guilt and repentance(?), we let him go his merry way. It is just as wrong not to guide toward a responsible freedom as it is to keep one in slavery. There is not much justice in trading one type of slavery for another.

Too many people are working too hard for a magazine of The Methodist Church to portray them as a belligerent old woman not really sincere about their task. As a Methodist, I resent this.

Maybe my reaction is one from a part of the country where I am tired of everybody knocking the federal government. I'm tired of the Klan running things. I'm tired of our governor trying to act as though Alabama is not really a part of the Union. I would like to think The Methodist Church is a little more responsible than some influences in our society. I think this silly cartoon on the front of the January *motive* is unjustifiable.

CLYDE S. PRECISE  
minister of education  
first methodist church  
tuscaloosa, ala.

In the dramatic rehearsal of its 25 years of existence *motive* (February 1966) has scored again! As its alpha and its omega, respectively, stands an article, "The Nature and Existence of God," by the eminent H. Richard Niebuhr, and "God is Dead:

Eminent Deity Succumbs During Surgery—Succession in Doubt As All Creation Groans," by Anthony Towne (who soon may be eminent if he manages to keep his tongue in his cheek after this style). Undoubtedly, such a juxtaposition was no accident, and presumably the polarity represents an editorial judgment as to where one must be—somewhere between the poles—if one would be "where the action is" today. Another of the polarities is set forth in those phrases, "renewal" and/or "revolution." One could argue then that Niebuhr's article is leaning toward the pole of creative renewal, while those serious proponents of the "God is Dead!" movement are surely fomenting revolution.

Wondering, as I do, whether finally there is really that much difference between renewal and revolution—radical change being the desired result of both—except in matters of tactical or strategical concern, I suggest that at least an effort must be made toward rapprochement between the rebels and the redevelopers.

Roger Ortmyer, in reference to Peg Rigg, asserts that "culture-theology" was (is?) the guiding concern of *motive* (p. 58, Feb. '66). If one may use this as a working hypothesis, then a significant thing would be to ask after the cultural significance of both the renewers' and the revolutionists' work. Since, however, my own sympathies today are more with the latter than with the former, I am addressing myself only to them.

Gabriel Vahanian often, even if mistakenly, is cast with Altizer, Hamilton and Van Buren in the "death of God" camp. Between his work and the latter three, however, there are significant differences. One of the most important is that, at least so far as Altizer and Hamilton are concerned, one wonders where they can go from here. But Vahanian has issued a call for a "cultural revolution." And thereby he has left a large, unfinished task for both himself and any others who might respond to his challenge. In fact, Vahanian's second book, *Wait Without Idols* (Braziller, 1964) is predicated upon the challenge of his first, *The Death of God* (Braziller, 1961) and illustrates but one effort to get on with the task of bringing off a "cultural revolution." In his analyses of various literary works, Vahanian has attempted to show that within the literature of the modern world there is a range of faith stances which men may take and that no one, in fact, does live without a *faith in something*. Now in and of itself, this is hardly radical—Christians have used it as an apologetic approach for a long time. What is radical—and exceedingly difficult—is to demonstrate and persuade men who are bound within a cultural context that prescribes their meaning structures that Christian faith *has* a culture, but that it is not properly to be identified *with* any culture. Vahanian is insisting, then, that until the masses of men admit that they are in fact living by some faith, or another, the individuals who confess faith in God will be understood as nothing more than throwbacks to a bygone time by the men acculturated in imaginary freedom from faith.

Theology can most persuasively be done, then, not by writing volumes of systematic theology, but by adroitly analyzing the myriad cultural expressions. Philosophy, political action, art, music, literature, economics, sociology, scientific theory and practice, professional data from many areas are but a few such expressions which must be probed and presented as presupposing one or another cultural concomitant. Alongside such analyses, a presentation of the Christian faith, lived in and expressed in, but not determined by, the culture, must be offered. And only by getting the cards of *all* the players in our pluralistic world out on the table will it be possible for Christian faith to get a hearing as a viable alternative to the cultural bondage within which men live.

If, in the end, this proposal of Vahanian's appears rather more conservative than it seems at first glance, there is even some consolation for those who view renewal as more promising than revolution. The end of either route being the desired radical change in the contemporary climate of opinion, if I am correct in my analysis, it is obvious that at least one instance—Vahanian's work—represents basically a strategical difference rather than a fundamentally different desired end result.

To leave the matter on that irenic note, however, would hardly satisfy the renewers or the revolutionists. What remains is to offer a few comments on the merits of the representative approaches. The contrast is well drawn by citing Biblical vs.

culture theology. The renewers generally tend to stand closer to the former, while revolutionists stand nearer the latter. In more traditional terms, these can be contrasted as dogmatic vs. apologetic theologians. Even a cursory familiarity with the history of Christian thought indicates, however, that representatives of these disciplines probably suspect that they are doing the job of the other better than the specialist—the dogmatic theologian thinks he is doing the real apologetic task and vice versa. Again these turn out to be strategical differences with compelling reasons offered by representatives of each to justify their own approaches. The acceptance of one approach or another may then not be as necessary an either/or choice as the respective proponents imagine. If a pragmatic stance is adopted rather than a doctrinaire one, the best of both and the concomitant risk of the failure of both can be appropriated. It is just this possibility that presumably has guided *motive's* editorial policy for 25 years and which continues to make it a unique voice.

—JAMES B. WIGGINS  
department of religion  
syracuse university

Over the past years I have followed God's whereabouts with great interest (frankly I was quite surprised to find him in Georgia), and because of my profession, I had noted God's recent illness with grave concern. Needless to say, I was terribly shocked to read of his passing (*motive*, February 1966). The *New York Times* (March 6, 1966) however, carried only a summary of the 'Obituary for God' and I felt rather short changed. It was as if I were reading the abridged version of the Gettysburg Address. My concern has stimulated me to write this letter to ask if you could send two copies of the 'Obituary' as it appeared in *motive*.

FREDERICK MANDELL, M.D.  
bronx, new york

A couple of months ago, on the urging of another who also is working with students in The Methodist Church, I ordered a subscription to *motive*. For several months I have read the articles myself and have observed the response that it made on some of the students in the Medical Center here. It is my frank opinion that *motive* is over-rated and inappropriate in its overall outlook.

Please discontinue sending me any more issues. Cancel my order.

For your interest and feedback, I have reflected upon the atmosphere of *motive* on and off for several years. Oh, don't get me wrong. I am a young man and not too removed from my six-year-ago seminary training. There is too much of the same approach in your magazine, while the art work reflects the same pattern. I would like to see a multiplicity of views. The poetry is in the same vein. Surely we can assume that the college years meet many doubts in young people, but should not a periodical devote some space to the affirmation of reverence, devotion to God by those who have gone through a great upheaval in their spiritual values?

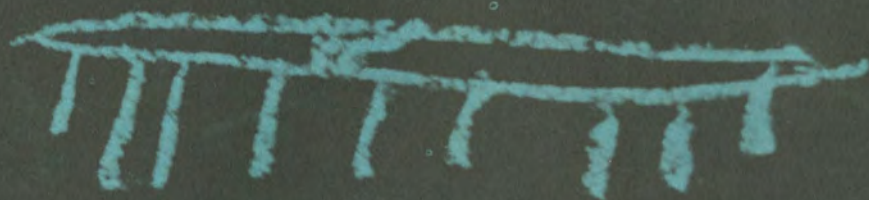
Surely a doubter might seek out expressions of other doubters, but that does not mean that he would be unmoved by expressions of solid faith. My biggest criticism of *motive*, however, is in its lack of variety in every department. It simply is monotonous in its viewpoint. I would be curious about when your staff recently got together and really questioned your overall theology and impact on the readers. To me, your magazine is geared to the minority "intellectual" groups that are not wholly representative of the large bulk of college students.

Let me say, however, that there are occasional articles that are very fine. Yet, the overall mosaic pattern of the book speaks too much of despair—a life lived apart from God in the shades of Ernest Hemmingway (*sic*) and the general modern despair theology. Sometimes you have a special issue devoted to a theme such as communication and the like, this being very fine.

My comments are not superficial or quickly made. I am seriously concerned about the unfortunate monotony of your magazine and feel that it needs reassessment.

THOMAS N. SMILEY  
gethsemane methodist church  
philadelphia, penn.





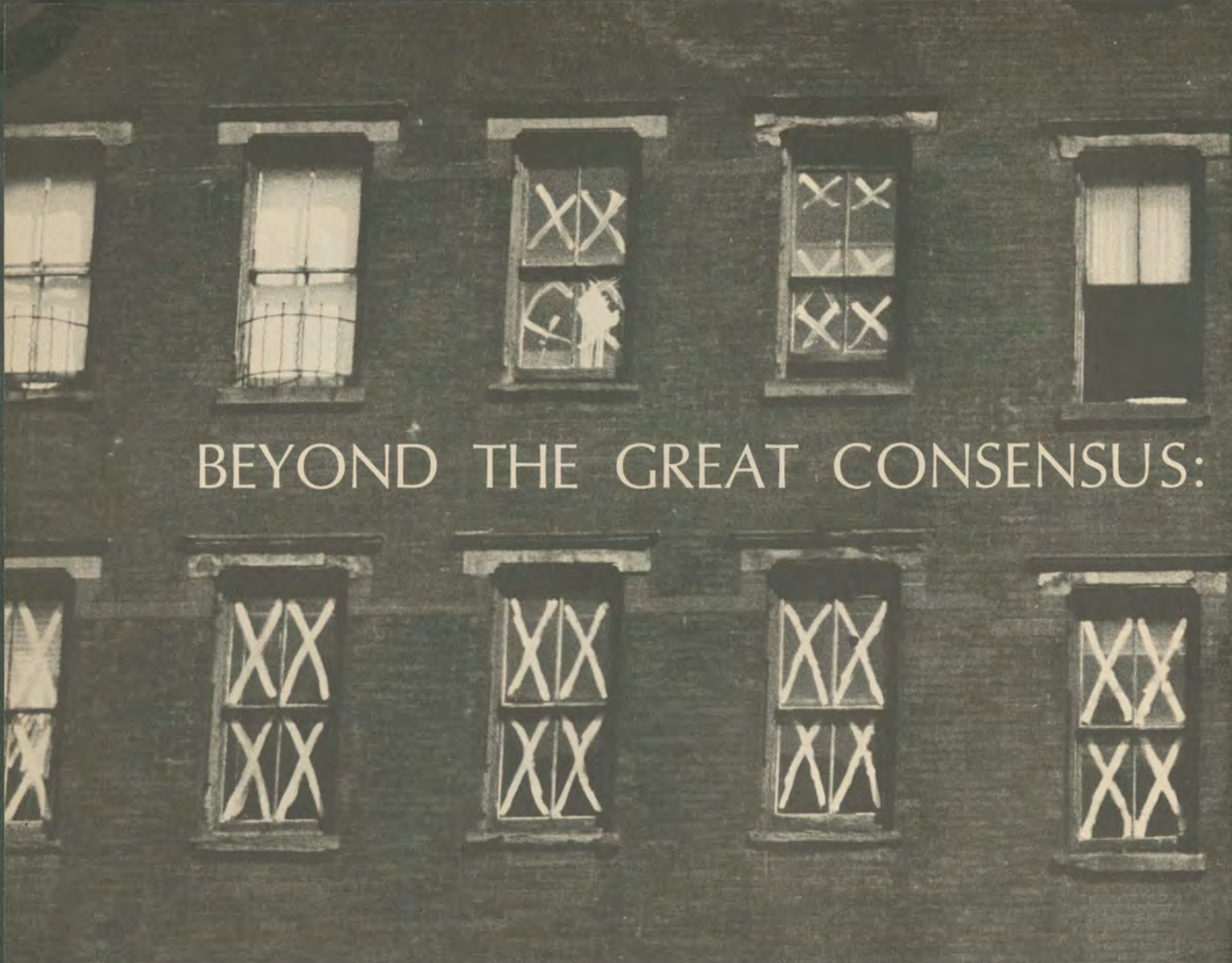
A FRIDAY SEED

Tunnels  
gongs and wings  
escape  
centered in plateaus  
falling  
into easter bulbs  
under the roots  
of usual answers

vernacular  
in patina  
buried crisscross  
a friday  
seed  
packaged for conveniences  
of labels

—GEMMA D'AURIA

PHOTOGRAPH: WALLOWITCH



## BEYOND THE GREAT CONSENSUS:

By MIKE THELWELL

American politics, it seems, is marked by contradictory, even schizoid tendencies. On the domestic scene, it appears (if one looks only at the headlines) that there is a great and turbulent awakening of the national conscience, that earnest and sweeping efforts are being made to find *lebensraum* within the perimeter of affluence and security so that the neglected and oppressed domestic poor might be included. And, from the tone (not necessarily the content) of the headlines, it is possible to hope that soon the urban poor, the migrant laborer, the sharecropper, Mexican-Americans, Indians, Puerto Ricans, Negroes, and all the rest of the society's downtrodden will rise to a place in the mainstream of the Great Society.

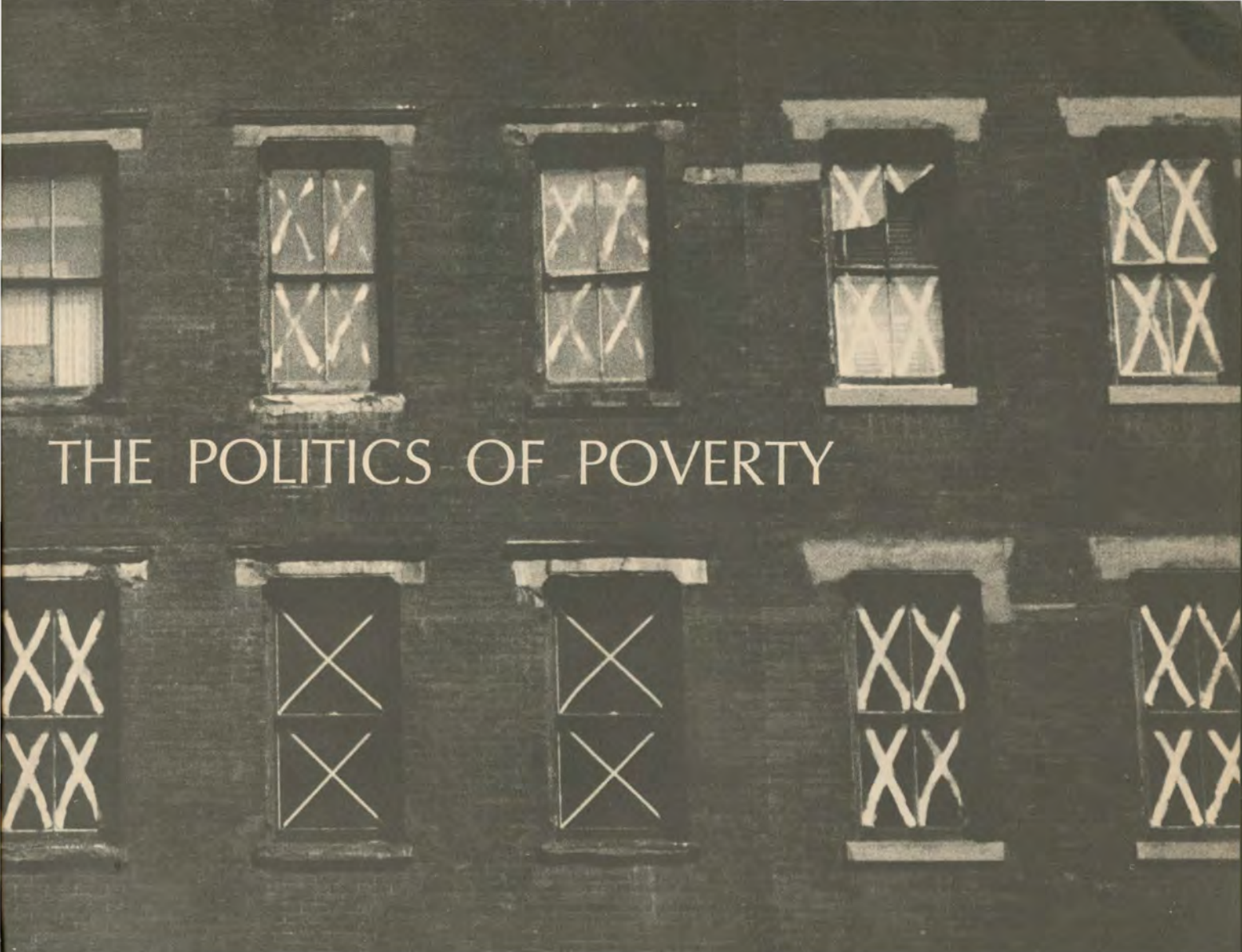
However, the foreign news comes on, and one quickly discovers that this new social conscience does not extend to the poor of the world. One understands that we have inherited from somewhere a *moral* commitment, a responsibility to "contain communism," to maintain order and stability in the naturally explosive emerging countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa where hungry and deprived populations shortsightedly tend to ignore important considerations—democratic forms and procedures, property rights—in favor

of more immediate considerations like food and land.

But, with the fullest and most sympathetic understanding of this formulation it is still difficult to understand why in country after country, the dust and smoke clears to reveal the armed representatives of American power on one side, and the hopes, aspirations and limp bodies of that country's poor on the other. This apparently irreconcilable gap between word and deed, and between the domestic and foreign policy of the government, simply cannot be explained by a kind of bumbling ineptitude in foreign affairs which results in the commission of the grossest immoralities for the purest of reasons. And if one will no longer accept the "good-guys-but-confused" line, the question remains: just why it is that the United States is becoming the most hated and feared power in the eyes of progressive forces in Asia, Latin America and Africa?

Certain incidents of recent history speak very clearly. In 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency took credit for engineering the overthrow of President Mossadegh of Iran. We were suspicious of his Cold War neutrality and opposed to his intention to nationalize the oil resources of his country. In his place a Nazi collaborator, General Zahedi, was installed. One of the General's first acts was to renegotiate that country's oil agreements in such a manner as to sell the rights to





## THE POLITICS OF POVERTY

PHOTOGRAPH: WALLOWITCH

forty per cent of Iran's oil to three American corporations. (The CIA official in charge of that particular coup was Kermit Roosevelt who in 1960 became a vice president of the Gulf Oil Corporation, one of the beneficiaries of the new agreements.)

A similar chain of events took place in Guatemala in 1954, when a popularly elected President Arbenz, announced an agrarian reform program which entailed the nationalization of certain lands owned by the United Fruit Company. Another CIA-inspired coup removed Arbenz from office thus aborting the land-reform program. Not long thereafter, General Walter Bedell Smith, director of the CIA during the Guatemalan adventure, joined the Board of Directors of United Fruit. This pattern is pervasive: American corporate interests against the wretched of the world, and in situations where the neutrality and judgment of too many of our representatives is rendered suspect by personal financial interests.

Who, for example, besides 20,000 marines, represented the American government and people in the Dominican Republic during the recent crisis there? Mr. Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of the American States, who, quite apart from his duties of state, happens to be a board member and major stock owner in the National Sugar Re-

fining Company, a company which refines sugar, a great deal of which comes from the Dominican Republic. Another of our previous representatives to this unhappy island was Ambassador Joseph Farland who happened also to be a member of the board of a corporation which owns 275,000 acres of sugar cane and is the largest employer (at wages approximating one dollar a day) in the Dominican Republic.

And what was the nature of the crisis that it required American marines to quell? The people of the Dominican Republic were in the streets rioting for the return of a President who had been legally, constitutionally and democratically elected, and who had been deposed by a reactionary military junta.

We could continue at great and tedious length—to South Korea, Viet Nam, all of Latin America and what the political scientists are now calling the Third World—and try to see what the real effects of American dollars, duplicity and guns in fact have been in political, social, economic and military terms in these countries. But I merely wish to underline the contradiction which seems inherent in a situation where the poor of the world are increasingly alienated by a foreign policy that could easily have been drafted by Ian Fleming and Jay Gould, with Cotton Mather advising, while the domestic poor (those that see the headlines) are as-

sured that the end of their affliction is rapidly approaching on the wings of a domestic program of President Johnson's great consensus.

This is an incredible kind of contradiction, not because it necessarily is inconsistent that the same power philosophy which is capable of conducting a *blitzkrieg* against the civilian population of Viet Nam can at the same time subject itself to the strenuous in eternal reshuffling of the society that it will require to bring privation and injustice to an end. The inconsistency is of a more practical nature. In hard political and economic terms, the poor of the world stand in relation to American political and economic interests in terms that closely approximate the relationship between the domestic poor and the great consensus. This is to say, allowing for some geographic variation affecting the *form* of the situation, that the essential conditions surrounding the life of an Asian peasant, a Latin American peon, a Mississippi farm laborer, or a California migrant worker are, beneath the regional coloration, the same. They are the victims of very similar combination of forces, and are united by the fact that ultimately they are unable to affect, much less control, the resources of the land on which they live. Unable to affect the basic power relationships around them, they have no power to determine their own lives.

If one defines a colonial territory as an area where the physical resources, social relationships, the laws, and politics are controlled by outside forces, then the Mississippi Delta, Harlem, Watts, and any other urban slum fits precisely into that definition. Moreover, it is futile to promise the people in Harlem tenements and California and Florida orchards, that in some mystical way the War on Poverty is going to relieve them from their condition of privation without in any way disturbing the intricate combination of forces that operates to create their condition. This is to involve oneself in precisely the same futility that the State Department does, when it explains to the world's poor that we wish to assist them towards democracy, freedom and prosperity, but *gradually*, so as not to disrupt the stability and order of existing social and political relationships.

In the first instance the entire philosophy behind the poverty program seems geared to the containment of the poor, rather than the elimination of poverty. It is programmed to deal with incidental effects of poverty rather than its causes—very limited first aid where major surgery is indicated. Like foreign aid, the program comes into the community with strings attached, to be used in the implementation of programs developed elsewhere, at the discretion of administrators appointed by outside forces, and who are rarely resident in the community. The community cannot help but know this, and they further understand that since they have no control over the programs at their source they can feel little security or confidence in them. Funds can be cut off, programs abandoned, and in this, as in most else in their lives, they are the objects of forces they cannot control.

In many areas local politicians fight desperately to ensure that the poverty programs do not become the bases of community-oriented movements through which the poor could express their discontent in meaningful political action. In many cities, instead of providing the momentum for the release of new energies in the community, the poverty programs serve to shore

up incumbent political machines representing another source of patronage, and influence.

(When an Operation Headstart Program in Mississippi proved too effective in the Negro community where the struggle for political expression had been going on even before the program, a full-scale attack on the program was launched by the State's congressional delegation; and Washington has been sitting quietly on the funds to continue the program.)

In January, the *Washington Post* reported that the Administration quietly had reversed the policy calling for the involvement of the community in the administration of the War on Poverty. This was done, said the *Post*, because local Democratic politicians were complaining that this policy, if followed, would threaten local political organizations. The program was threatening to alter the political *status quo* in various communities. If the persistent, institutionalized poverty that attends certain groups in the society is to be eliminated, basic philosophies and relationships will have to be changed. And as long as the form, concept and intention of the poverty program are pitched towards preserving these relationships, the entire program is little more than a cynical manipulation of the most deprived and powerless people in the society.

If there is to be any hope of a vitalizing of American politics that will enable the society to break away from the stagnation of interests, ideas and traditions, it will have to come from a new base of organized political action. The consensus of the center has demonstrated its bankruptcy of will and vision. If one looks beneath rhetoric one discovers that Mr. Johnson's "Great Consensus" really represents the elevation of ward politics, in the most distasteful sense of that term, to a national level. Mr. Johnson simply has applied the style and techniques he understands best to national and international problems, and this style is bluntly stated: the technique of the fix, the political deal. His politics of consensus is the antithesis of democracy; it represents the manipulatory fixing, the management of political decisions by powerful institutions and interest groups within the center. This represents a kind of closed politics of tokenism, requiring that conflicts of ideas and interests be quietly, or at least privately, compromised in such a way as to leave the internal balance of power and control unchanged. By the very hybrid nature of this "consensus," Henry Ford, Jr., and Walter Reuther, Roy Wilkins and Senator Eastland all play their various roles, it would seem, to promote the fiction that the nation's politics is not injured with a real clash of class interests.

Nor does the presence of the Labor bureaucracy in the consensus mean that the really deprived groups in the society are represented. This is not so because the unions have very little to do with the truly deprived. Having, in John Fisher's phrase, "petrified into lumps of reaction and special privilege," they hover in the outhouses along the corridors of power and function like some kind of protective cartel, intent on preserving the jobs of their dwindling membership. (In Eastern Kentucky when the large mines began to close, the United Mine Workers simply discontinued the pension plan for the displaced miners, shut down the union-operated hospitals, and abandoned the workers.) Rather than attempt the organization of the chronically unemployed or unorganized, the unions practice a balance-sheet unionism which has more to do with pirating shops from each other, than with try-

ing to extend the possibility of organization to the excluded.

The question of opening up this closed coalition of decision-management at the center is the real one facing the society, if we are to change the system of priorities which finds it more important to put men in space rather than schools in Harlem. But even if the task of organizing the dispossessed into viable organizations of political action was simple, an entirely different set of problems would present themselves at the point where these organizations run head on into the consensus at the center.

The experience of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party, perhaps one of the most politically exposed of the grass-roots organizations, can illustrate some of these problems.

The Negro people of Mississippi are and have been for the last 90 years the victims of shocking poverty, economic exploitation, legal oppression, and the denial of the basic civil and political rights enjoyed by citizens of civilized societies. But the popular misconception is that these conditions derive from peculiar and unique aberrations in the social organization of that state. Mississippi is seen as a closed society apart from the American mainstream which needs to be brought back into the union. The real shame is that Mississippi has never left the union, though it tried to once; yet since 1890 there has been no legal government in that state. This is to say that although Mississippi's political structures have been in clear violation of the Constitution since 1890, the state has enjoyed full political membership and privileges.

During the 1870's under the "reconstruction constitution" Mississippi found itself with a Negro voting majority, a situation which precipitated a kind of racist hysteria among the white politicians. After a substantial number of Negro office-holders were returned in the elections of 1873, the Democratic Party began a program of terror and fraud to intimidate Negro voters or disregard their votes. No secret was made of the intent of this campaign. Democratic newspapers in the state openly called for "a white man's government, by white men, for the benefit of white men," and declared that "Mississippi is a white man's country, and by the eternal God we will rule it." By 1890, the Democratic Party had gained, by means of terror and fraud, sufficient control of the state to be able to call a convention for the purpose of rewriting the Constitution for the purpose of disfranchising the Negroes. The records of the convention explicitly stated this purpose, and so the whole undertaking, as well as the series of election statutes which followed, were blatantly contemptuous of the Constitution. The national responsibility, if not to the Negroes of Mississippi, then certainly to the Constitution, seems very clear, yet the Democratic Party of Mississippi, as the expression of white supremacy, has enjoyed 75 years of unbroken control of the state, and was rewarded by disproportionate national power and influence in Washington.

Similarly, the economic reorganization of the state centered around the introduction of sharecropping and a system of plantation labor only nominally different from outright slavery. Today, labor conditions on these plantations violate every federal wage and child labor law, yet this plantation system is subsidized and supported by the Federal Government through its cotton subsidies. Federal requirements in education also were violated, and there are counties in the state where high

schools for Negroes were built in 1954, after the Supreme Court decision.

The entire governmental machinery was used in related areas—law enforcement, social welfare programs, as well as voting and education—not to merely exclude, but to actively suppress the Negro population. For example, Richard Morphew, public relations director of the Mississippi Citizens Councils, admitted to the Council's having received a total of \$90,000 from state funds for propagation of white supremacy. The State Legislature appropriated \$50,000 to be used in Washington in lobbying against the 1964 Civil Rights Bill.

From this it is clear that conditions affecting Mississippi's Negroes—poverty, lack of education, no legal rights, the oppression of the police—are not accidental, or the results of private prejudices on the part of individual citizens, but result from systematic and deliberate policies of hostility towards the Negro population on the part of the State government.

In response to these conditions, Mississippi's Negroes organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964. The organization of the party was a culmination of two years of struggle to win the ballot, *i.e.*, the right to participate in politics inside the State. Denied this right by the State, the MFDP sought political expression on the national level. In sending an integrated delegation to the National Convention of the Democratic Party, they were exploring the only alternative left to them for orderly and democratic political expression. The regular white democratic party of Mississippi sent its own delegation to the convention, thus presenting the National Party with a basic decision. The National Democratic Party, in this situation, effectively could repudiate the discriminatory politics of the regulars by recognizing the MFDP delegation, or it could continue its policies of coexistence with the policies of Mississippi towards her Negro citizens. The alternative of recognizing the right of Mississippi's Negroes to political representation, without completely rejecting the traditional Democrats, could have been accomplished by a compromise giving representation in the convention to both groups in proportion to the racial composition of the State. The outcome, which was not a real decision of the convention in an open vote but a behind-the-scenes contrivance of the leadership, recognized the regulars and offered the MFDP two seats "at large," a public relations gesture that made no pretense of meeting the demands of Mississippi's Negroes for *some* representation on *some* level, *somewhere* in the Democracy.

It became clear that the ties that bind together those in the inside of the circle of power are stronger than the differences represented by various labels—northern liberal as against southern conservative—for the chief architect of the MFDP's defeat was not a southern politician, but Hubert Humphrey, the northern liberal, aided by his base of support in the labor movement.

This "establishment" solidarity on crucial issues was even more pronounced in the MFDP's next effort to challenge the Mississippi political structure in the national arena. When the general elections of 1964 took place, less than seven per cent of Mississippi's voting age Negro population was eligible to vote. The MFDP challenged the validity of these elections and petitioned the Congress to void the elections of the five Congressmen from the state, and to call for free and open elections in which all Mississippians would be free to par-

ticipate. The MFDP's position was that no elections which excluded nearly half of the state's population for reason of race could be constitutional. The issue was brought to the House of Representatives, which is under the constitution, the only body empowered to judge the credentials and qualifications of its members.

Although this was an issue bearing directly on the authority and integrity of the Congress itself, and on the basic political freedoms of 45,000 American citizens, it soon became obvious that the Congress would be guided by entirely different considerations in making its decisions. The Johnson Administration and the leadership of the House of Representatives extended full support and protection to the Mississippians. The principles were ignored and the issue settled on the simple basis of political pressure, and no vote was even taken on the issue of the legality of the Mississippi elections.

Again, it was not the natural and expected Southern opposition that finally undermined these challenges, but the fact that once the administration's position became clear it was not possible for the MFDP to get united support from the "liberal consensus." The AFL-CIO and the NAACP steadily opposed any discussion of the challenges within the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, until it was too late for effective support. (Officials of the AFL-CIO admitted privately that their opposition was based on their need of the President's support on legislation in which they were interested, but I have no idea why the NAACP chose to ally themselves with the Mississippi Democrats.)

Inside the Congress, the numerically powerful liberal voting bloc known as the Democratic Study Group failed to take any public position on this issue, although their executive committee met on the issue and were reported to be nine to three in favor of supporting the challenges. When the House voted in September 1965 to dismiss the challenges, the issue of the illegality of the challenged elections was clear beyond dispute since the House had access to the evidence of two Federal Agencies. The Department of Justice was on record affirming that the voting laws of the state were unconstitutional, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights had just published its findings which concluded that 94 per cent of Mississippi's Negroes had been disfranchised by terror, violence, economic intimidation, and deliberate policy of the state, at the time of the elections. All of which is a further indication that the needs and political and legal rights of Negroes in Mississippi, or of any poor and powerless group, always will be negotiable and subject to the self-interests of the powerful, even when reinforced by the constitution and civilized morality.

The necessity, then, is to organize effective political movements in the ghettos and Mississippis of the nation that can, independent of the existing consensus, represent honestly the needs of the poor. As long as those needs are represented by a "liberal conscience," untouched by real political pressure, then this representation will continue to be at the pace and priority of attitudes which see more urgency in building harbors in Saigon than in rebuilding the slums at home.

The form and program of the new politics will vary between North and South, but they must share a community-oriented independence and a commitment to grass roots democracy if they are to be improvements over what has gone before. In Mississippi, for example, the obvious key to social change of a sweeping nature is the full organization of the Negro community and

the fullest implementation of the voting rights bill. With outright Negro majorities in 29 of 84 counties, and with 23 more having between 35 and 49 per cent of the electorate, there is the potential for sweeping changes in the complexion of the State legislature if this potential voting strength can be realized. Municipal elections are also vulnerable to the strength of the potential Negro vote. But the election of politicians, regardless of race, is no indication that meaningful changes in the content and philosophy of the body politic must follow.

Too often we have seen instances where a community has gained the ballot, and even elected men to office, only to find that their representatives have made their peace with the same political structure from which the community had to struggle to get the right to vote.

The politics of the ghetto have been marked by this kind of tokenism on the part of the white power structure. It is the time honored practice of assimilating certain "Negro leaders" into the bottom of the political structure. These men then serve as adjuncts of the very same system under which the community suffers. These "leaders" become vote deliverers more responsive to the old line leadership of the white power structure than to the community they allegedly represent. This technique enables the establishment to substitute patronage for power and to ensure that whatever political organization takes place in the Negro community is dependent and subordinate to the old machine.

As early as last spring the Democratic National Committee began making overtures in that direction when they called a secret meeting of carefully selected Negro leaders from Southern states which would be affected by the pending voting legislation. The Negro leaders were addressed by high-ranking figures in the Administration and in the Democratic Party, and finally by the President himself. The message was simple: "Go home and organize your people into the local Democratic Party." Significantly, the largest single delegation was from Mississippi, which has the largest proportion of potential Negro voters, and at that time was the only state with a statewide nucleus of independent organization within the Negro community.

If the vote is to be an instrument of real change in Mississippi, the independence of the MFDP must be maintained. The organization of the Negro community must be deepened and strengthened so that whatever leadership emerges will recognize its responsibility to that base in the community, and not be susceptible to the overtures from the power structure. It is only the existence of a vocal and unified community-based, radically democratic organization that will produce and sustain the political leadership necessary for real change.

The MFDP is trying to develop in practice concepts of grass-roots democracy which enable the community to express itself collectively. As a result, a leadership is emerging which recognizes that its ultimate strength is nothing more than an expression of the unified and collective strength of the community. If this development can be continued until the right to vote is a reality in the Negro community, real and immediate human needs will begin to find expression in Mississippi politics. At that point, hopefully, race will not be the overwhelming issue that it currently is, and alliances between poor whites and Negroes will be possible.

CORRESPONDENCE OF VISION: 1  
first in a series of poet/painter collaborations

# DOXOLOGY

(for Clyde Beatty, 1903-1965)

*poem* by Anthony Towne  
*graphics* by Elizabeth Korn



I

Our Father, first and foremost, is the fault we find  
With failure, just as an alliteration falters,  
Or fixes our attention on futility.

The invocation, then, addresses Him who alters  
Affection, having perfect love where we are fond  
Of amorous disorder. Length of shadow filters  
The image, once resplendent: Father, forget us  
Not altogether, lest the linger of our carcass  
Become offensive, and the gravediggers get us.

The world we gladly part with, even this fair world  
You gave us, gift of grace to see beneath the city  
A circus, world within a world, a lion cage  
For covenant, and high above the cage no pity  
On death-defying loveliness. Grotesque, the world,  
And we embrace the runted dwarf, a rouged and petty  
Aristocrat of cruciform and cartwheel grief.  
The children laugh at hippopotamuses bleeding  
From agony more precious than the dwarf is brief.

No death defies this ruined city while we break  
In pieces an incarnate wafer made of moments  
And memories our language cannot grasp nor save  
From other cities long ago. Consult the omens  
Erupting from sick gardens now gone cinder-cake  
And pigeon-littered wilderness. Disorder opens  
The entrails of a dove, disclosing insect priests  
Arranged in holy patterns, such as crucifixion:  
The dove is dead, a sacrifice, as are the priests.

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KORN-



## II

The Cross is gone, and with it Christ, the Lamb of God,  
Who took away our sins, our precious sins, the spasms  
Of flesh and failure we delighted in, delight  
In death, the only sure and sudden end. What chasms  
Await us now except the amplitude of God?  
The world is drawing to a close, creating prisms  
Of terror, such as dying men experience,  
Astonished that the end is so complete, an utter  
Exhaustion, the last twitch of lost experience.

The clown exults, old man with whiskey-breath and pain  
Between his legs, the cruelty of laughter wrenching  
Burlesques of sadness from his frailty. Trapeze  
Of who is hurtling overhead, and what is crunching  
Into a where of sawdust when a why of pain  
Is suddenly withheld? The elephants are inching  
A burden of fatigue around the rim of time,  
And this is what the world is all about, a folly  
Of failure, culminating in a tortured rhyme.

Beyond the empty tomb the rhyme is upside down,  
The way the saints in stone are weightless, waiting always  
And therefore now, an antidote to time, the weight  
Of fallen world and future life. The city's belfrys  
Are silent, covered as they are with soot and din  
Of traffic moving nowhere. Behold, then, and all praise  
The end of time, returning and ascending, flock  
Of sins set free, and judgment, finally arriving,  
Is fixed forever to the empty, faceless clock.



### III

The Holy Spirit, what is that, except the words  
We try to speak coherently? A dove descending  
Becomes a tongue of flame, becomes a multitude  
Of tongues, and from the many tongues the praise ascending  
Is prayer. Let us pray: Our Father, the words  
We speak are merely human, are a condescending  
Upwards out of anguish, beseeching some relief  
From grace, which we cannot endure, and from salvation,  
For which we thank you, nonetheless, and offer our belief.

Amen. It is our innocence we long for, chance  
To be the tallest man, the fattest lady, flying  
Through air or tumbling into dust. The elephants  
Are wonder we can touch, feed peanuts to, defying  
The tigers to attack us, while camels dance  
And horses prance, and we forget that we are dying.  
The circus is a world we understand, where beasts  
Are underfoot and angels overhead, and children,  
All ages, celebrate—the whole creation boasts.

Forgive us, Father, first and foremost, for our sins  
And more of all our failures, such as poorly praying  
Or seldom saying what we mean. Your gift of grace  
Is more than we can handle, sometimes, thus delaying  
Our gratitude. When what we say makes little sense  
It is because the many tongues we speak in—saying,  
“Our Father, who art in heaven . . .”—are tongues of flame,  
And we are frightened, frightened that the words we utter  
Are holy words. Deliver us from all our shame.

—ANTHONY TOWNE



### THE THIRD DAY

They resurrected  
You a convenient  
Hour after sun  
Rise in the college  
Stadium led by three  
Ministers of major  
Wasp persuasions with  
Assistance from a high  
School chorus and a  
Lent electric organ in  
The standard message  
He is risen carried to  
The shut ins on a rock  
And roll establishment  
Sponsored by city wide  
Civic clubs combined  
Catholics and several  
Jews and all

This yet I am  
Still in the same arena  
Stalked by old lion  
Hunger.

—TED-LARRY PEBWORTH

### COLLOQUY ON LOVE

Speaking of daffodils (on the subject of vice  
Flowers, like verse, are a seduction device)  
I said that yellow was a color too blatant  
For love to go by;  
Love dislikes the cry,  
Prefers the innuendo, the sigh.

She agreed, said love needn't be precise;  
Not that daffodils are niggling, but they are concise,  
They say what they have to say without dragging in  
Hell or Paradise.  
They are unsymbolic. They don't lie.  
When they die they die.

—SIDNEY SULKIN

# FOUR MEANINGS OF



DRAWING: THOMPSON

A new school of theology has emerged in the past year, often called—largely at the insistence of its critics—“The Death of God Theology.” It is a small movement of young theologians who have independently been appealing to Christians to make theological sense out of what our culture as a whole decided (functionally if not cognitively) some time ago, namely, that the Judeo-Christian God, who used to be confessed as the Alpha and Omega of all history, is experienced today as a non-entity; a powerless, fading memory; a blank, gone reality; a meaningless term.

Yet these young radicals had barely hinted at some of the themes which might constitute a theology without God before both the religious establishment and the man on the street issued amazingly premature protests, shrugging it off as a form of irresponsible extremism.

The main tenor of the protests from the professional theologians is that the new theology is “arrogant,” *i.e.*, claiming what cannot be claimed by man, that *God* is dead. The new theology is brushed aside as little more than an adolescent publicity stunt of a few bored theologians. At most it is seen as a new form of “idolatry” which sets man up as a golden calf. But is it any less arrogant or idolatrous to say that God is alive? Perhaps only agnostics can be humble men of faith. Surely there are better lines of criticism!

The main tenor of the protest from the man in the street is that the new theology is “atheistic,” an un-American flurry of a few extremists. Anyone familiar with the sociology of religion in America knows that most Americans say they believe in God even if they are not practicing or knowledgeable adherents of any religious tradition. Belief in God is still a part of being American, thus the so-called “atheism” of the new theologians is associated with foreign (alas! even communist) influences. Even a culture which operates cognitively without reference to God does not want theologians to say God is not available, even to the religions that are not practiced! Is it too much to ask for an understanding of the difference between a-theism (not-theism) and atheism (anti-theism)? The former is a confession of faith without God, a possible function of theology; the latter is an opposition to faith and God, a manifestation of some allegiance other than theology.

The “Death of God Theology” builds on the cultural criticism which theologians have utilized for the past

# 'THE DEATH OF GOD'

forty years to attack the religious presuppositions of man and to illustrate the poverty of all attempts to prove the existence of God. Revealed theology, in particular, consistently has maintained a negative theme regarding man's various attempts at becoming god-like. The "Death of God Theology" moves from these negative criticisms of the knowledge of God in human experience to an analogous criticism of the belief in God through theological confessions.

Perhaps a brief review of the problem of God in recent theology will help unravel what is old and what is new in the "Death of God Theology." The following has been repeated *ad nauseam*; nevertheless, the account needs repeating, over and over again, in order to keep us aware of at least three major themes in contemporary theology: the demythologization issue, the meaning of the secular, and the death of God.

In his book *Honest To God*, Bishop John A. T. Robinson brought the problem of God into popular discourse when he said that it is no longer tenable for man to conceive of God "up there" as an old man in the sky who acts in a mythical three-story universe; nor is it meaningful to speak of God as a being "out there," the king pin of a rational, metaphysical system. According to Robinson, these anthropological and metaphysical pictures of God have lost their mental supports in our secular age which operates without a mythical or a metaphysical God-hypothesis. Both theism and supernaturalism are intellectually untenable. All this he uttered a little too swiftly, forgetting that there are other formulations of both theism and metaphysics, but nevertheless, his distillation of the issue has made the problem of God a discussable and open issue among the laity. And it is from the laity that serious interest is now arising concerning the meaning of "the death of God."

Robinson summarized what theologians have been saying for many years. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of the men who influenced Robinson, offers this historical summary of the problem of God in his *Letters and Papers From Prison*:

The movement beginning about the thirteenth century towards the autonomy of man (under which head I place the discovery of the laws by which the world lives and manages in science, social and political affairs, art, ethics, and religion) in our time reached a certain completion. Man has learned to cope with questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis. In questions concerning science, art, and even ethics,

this has become an understood thing which one scarcely dares to tilt at any more. But for the last hundred years or so it has been increasingly true of religious questions also; it is becoming evident that everything gets along without "God" and just as well as before. As in the scientific field, so in human affairs generally, what we call "God" is being more and more edged out of life, losing more and more ground. (pp. 194-195)

In a few hundred years, man's context of understanding has moved from theonomous categories to autonomous categories, *i.e.*, from thinking which utilized God-hypotheses to explain things, to thinking which explained things in terms of man's own experience. In former times, theology was a necessary science because it was believed to have the tools to discern both God's laws (in nature and society) and man's subservience to those laws. But with the Renaissance (ironically supported by many reformation themes) man began to reject the shackles of a theocentric master plan in favor of a new trust in man's own autonomous reason and experience. Little by little God was edged out of the world. The scientific method interpreted the natural world quite apart from any necessary reference to God and became a model of modern methodology. Political unity was possible apart from religious establishment of theological justification and commerce and industry seemed to function on economic ground rules without a theological overview.

One by one, the subjects of intellectual inquiry exchanged the purview of the Church and the methods of theology for the purview of human experience and the methods of analytical experimentation. Man's institutions and thinking moved from theonomous to autonomous reasoning, from transcendent to immanent categories of thinking. Thus today, in most areas of human experience, most of us do not appeal to God in order to understand what is going on. "God" is the proper object of faith and faith is what theology now examines.

This radical reduction in the role of theology accounts for three meanings of the death of God: psychological, sociological and ontological.

The *psychological* meaning of the death of God is that man has lost his inner awareness of God. Human self-understanding now proceeds without a God-hypothesis. There seems to be no part within us that needs God, draws us to him, or responds to him. In this sense, to say "God is dead" is to say that religious experience is dead. The *psychological* meaning of the death of God is that

many men have lost the capacity to know "God" through human experience. It is a psychological or existential comment upon us, not a description of the nonexistence of God.

The *sociological* meaning of the death of God is that the central consciousness-shaping institutions of our society no longer utilize or foster a God-consciousness. The political, economic and educational institutions which used to convey and confirm the presence of God no longer do so. In other words, to say "God is dead" sociologically is to say that Christendom is dead. The Christian West is no more, for the institutions which shape man's mentality no longer rest upon theological premises. We are living in a post-Christian era. The sociological meaning of "God is dead" is a comment on our social situation, not a comment on God as such. However, it should be increasingly clear that whatever God may be in himself, if man cannot know him psychologically or sociologically, God cannot "mean" very much. It is a short step to saying, with Sartre: whether God exists or not, he is of no use to us.

The *ontological* meaning of the death of God is that there are no symbols today which convey an ultimate meaning for our spatio-temporal existence. We do not know how to refer to or how to express a unifying reality or "Being" who "acts in history to judge and forgive." The former tools of philosophy of religion—that God is a predicate, or that God-language is metaphorical or analogical—have been outmoded like spinning wheels and geocentric cosmologies, for they rest on some ontic base within our experience, expressible in our language. This ontic base is precisely that which we seem to have lost. As Paul van Buren says in *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*:

We do not know "what" God is, and we cannot understand how the word "God" is being used. It seems to function as a name, yet theologians tell us that we cannot use it as we do other names, to refer to something quite specific. If it is meant to refer to any "Existential encounter," a point of view, or the speaker's self-understanding, surely a more appropriate expression could be found. The problem is not solved, moreover, by substituting other words for the word God. . . .

Today, we cannot even understand the Nietzschean cry that "God is dead!" For if it were so, how could we know? No, the problem is that the word "God" is dead. (pp. 84 and 103)

To say that God is dead ontologically is to say that we have no words or symbols which *mean* God. This may only be a comment on our language and symbols, rather than upon God. However, if we cannot speak of him, then even if we "believe" in him, he is consciously a problem to us, not a reality.

It is important to realize that this theological critique of the human situation is not new with "The Death of God Theology." One glimpses similar formulations in the Psalms, and in the writings of Pascal, Kant, Kierkegaard, and Dostoyevsky, to mention but a few. Barth, Brunner and Tillich all took this development very seriously, interpreting "God is dead" to mean "the idolatries of man are dead." The death of God as the death of idolatries, with its psychological, sociological and ontological thrusts, has been a useful polemic for theologians in the past forty years, as a comment upon man and man's cul-

ture but not as a theological comment upon faith itself.

The new twist in "The Death of God Theology" is that even theology must reformulate itself without a God-premise. Neo-reformation theologians have stopped short of this final step by employing a doctrine of revelation, a *sui generis* source of divine activity. God is made known by disclosing himself *in faith alone*, they have said, as the Wholly Other who reveals his humanity in Jesus Christ to those who have faith, or as the ground of being who is believed when man experiences the limits of his finitude. The Church remains as that peculiar historical community with "eyes of faith" to see God active in secular history, even in secular man's unbelief. Man is not expected to know God as he knows other objects, but rather to respond to God as he is hidden in the secular. Neo-reformation theology has viewed God as being incomprehensible to our objectifying consciousness, yet present in ordinary history: as he reveals himself (I am what I am) and as we "believe" through the frame of reference (theology) and the forms of liturgical-servant life (the Church).

Furthermore, many theologians have continued, man's life apart from faith in God is filled with restless anxiety and despair. Even the death of God literature up until now has helped underscore this point. Nietzsche wrote a haunting story of a madman who ran into a village square shouting, "God is dead!" It took a madman to make such a claim! A character in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* says, "If God is dead, then everything is permitted." Existential themes have reinforced this analysis, and such a portrayal of the condition of man without God has made a doctrine of revelation more plausible. A Camus character asks: "Can one become a saint without God?" And Andre Malraux wrote, "The nineteenth century faced the question 'Is God dead?'; the twentieth century now faces the question, 'Is Man dead?'" The two questions seemed to go together and the doctrine of revelation was an answer to such an analysis.

However, the new "Death of God" theologians do not feel that man is forever restless and despairing apart from God, and they contend that a doctrine of revelation adds neither faith nor knowledge to our given, secular patterns of existence. There are Biblical tools which are useful, but not the doctrine of God. And when God's death is entertained seriously *in theology itself*, a radically historical concept of man and his salvation emerges. Thus, the new theology is based on a *new doctrine of man* and on a *new doctrine of salvation*. Man is viewed with new optimism, as a good part of the profane order, with no need for the sacred in either faith or knowledge. Salvation is viewed as a style or pattern of historical activity: *in, by and for* the secular.

Is not contemporary man finding a new kind of unity in life, not in the knowledge of God or in faith in God (a doctrine of revelation), but in the common secularity of life and thought as conveyed in the ordinary language and concerns of the newspapers, movies, TV, art, love, and politics of our time? Is it possible that making any appeals to God—through a doctrine of revelation as well as through psychological, sociological and ontological



claims to divine knowledge—in an age so completely secularized only divides our lives, our minds and our world? Is it possible that trying only to fathom the meaning of the world as we experience it without any appeals to God—through knowledge or faith—more closely parallels what God in the Bible kept requiring of his people: to be responsible in and for the world? If, culturally speaking, we have edged God out of our understanding of the world, has not the emergence of a new basis for human wholeness in the secular process itself edged out the meaningfulness of our recourse to God through a doctrine of revelation? Is it possible for us to be faithful in our handling of the creative process before us without using God as a working hypothesis in either our knowledge or our faith?

The new proposal is close to Camus' statement in *The Rebel*: "When the throne of God is overturned, the rebel realizes that it is now his responsibility to create the justice, order and unity that he sought in vain with his own condition, and in this way, to justify the fall of God." (p. 25) But whereas for Camus this meant abandoning Christianity for an agnostic humanism, some of the new theologians are suggesting that not only is it possible to make theological sense out of the world without referring to God: it is the new essence of Christianity. These men do not believe theology should employ a doctrine of revelation in order "to keep alive the rumor of God."

They suggest that the death of God has a *fourth* meaning, a *theological* meaning. Who are these men? Certainly Bonhoeffer and Robinson hint at the new development. So does Harvey Cox in the last chapter of *The Secular City*. But the three most vocal members of this new, radical theology are Thomas J. J. Altizer of Emory, William Hamilton of Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and Paul van Buren of Temple University. While it must be said that there is no simple agreement among these men, three themes are at least persistent.

First, the death of God as a theological concern means that God is a problem for us, not a reality. Both our knowledge of God and our confession of him as Lord are problematical. For forty years now we have juggled God from self-revealed to transcendent to hidden to absent to eclipsed. It is a short step from these maneuvers which keep our cognition of God in abeyance to saying that even "in faith" God is gone from us. For these men, it is of no theological use to call upon God or to believe in him. Again this is a predication of our theological experience, not a statement about God as such; but there is a theological function in speaking this way. It shifts our attention from God to man, from revelation to world. It takes a metaphor as strong as the death image to convey a sense of finality, meaning that theology needs to begin with some premise other than a faith-statement about God. These men contend that theology can only begin negatively about God, but that such a negation will prove to be creative in the fresh ways it allows us to interpret the world, as *Christians*. The psychological, sociological and ontological experience of the death of God has led some Christians to experience the death of God theologically. This does not mean we should stop being Chris-

tians, or stop being concerned with the future possibility of God. It means we need to see if Christianity without a God-confession has other positive meanings for our lives.

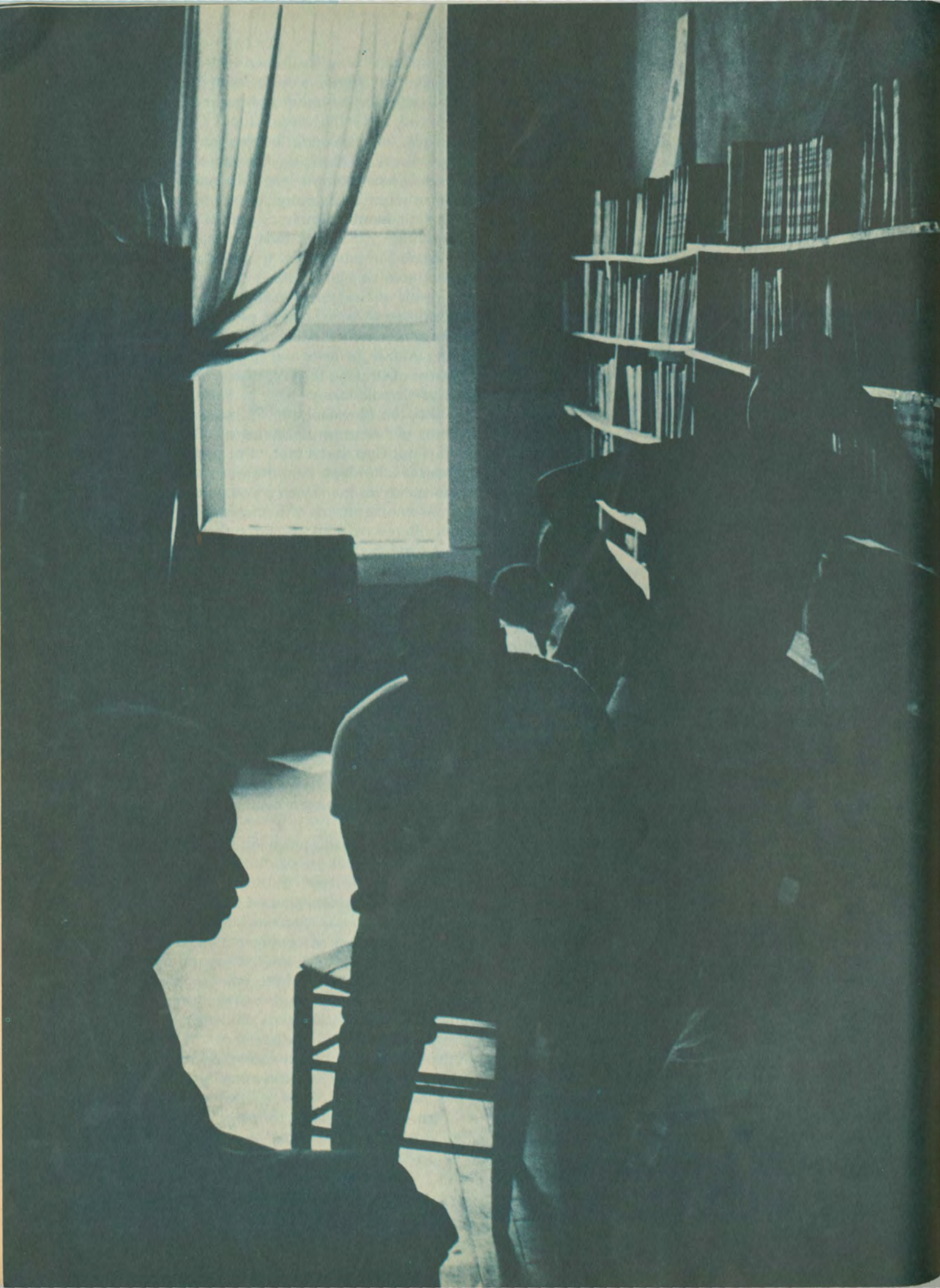
Second, since the verdict about God is that he is not available, the theological burden must be borne by some other aspect of theology. For van Buren and Hamilton, the usual focal point is Jesus, the man for others. If God is for us a central problem, Jesus is the central interpreter of the human situation. Jesus' way of responding to others around him provides us today with a perspective on how to respond in faithfulness to those around us. He is the model of what human life is to be. So, if one speaks of the death of God, he speaks of the life of Jesus. Altizer has a different focus, that of eschatological mysticism. By willing the death of God, not as a metaphor but as an event, Altizer believes we open ourselves to the deep mystery of profane history, which is moving toward the end of all polarities.

Third, the Christian faith for our time is fundamentally a form of humanism, not theism. That is, the focus of faith is not God, but a faithful or responsible handling of human relationships. And the way in which the Christian understands his humanism is not by idolizing or idealizing man as in other forms of humanism, but by following the clues offered by Biblical man, by Jesus and by the saints of the Church.

Christianity is the discernment of an inner, humanizing dialectic or style in the historical process, the awakening of some men to the recovery of manhood available to all men. It is seeking deliverance from bondage as Moses sought it; seeking to forgive one's brothers as Joseph forgave his; seeking to be judged by others as Israel was judged time and time again; seeking to be humanized with Jesus in the feeding of the hungry. In short, it is learning from Biblical man's handling of history without resorting to his rationale. It is loving God's world without appealing to God as a special source of love. The claim is that Christianity today is one form of humanism, based upon a particular history with particular emphases, and valid as such.

Where does all this leave the Church? It is too early to tell. Can we proclaim God's death, or only our death to God? Can we have Jesus apart from the Father on whom he said he depended? Can we be humanists apart from the trust in transcendent judgment and forgiveness? Is this a new form of apologetics or a reformulation of dogmatics? Or is it only the last gasp of theological disillusionment? It is too early to tell. Perhaps it will lead to a revival of an understanding of God in terms of natural rather than revealed theology. Perhaps it will foster a new form of Biblical criticism based on the resurrected tools of the history and phenomenology of religion.

There is a danger that too many Americans will equate "The Death of God Theology" (which might more properly be called "Radical Theology," since the death of God is only the beginning of its more positive claims) with simple atheism or with a new form of idolatry. Most of the initial criticism has been along these lines. What is being claimed is much more: a *reformulation of the essence of Christianity*.



# Why the Controversy About Mr. Moynihan's Paper?

By ARTHUR E. WALMSLEY

Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them; for he annulled the law with its rules and regulations, so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace. This was his purpose, to reconcile the two in a single body to God through the Cross, on which he killed the enmity.

—Ephesians 2:14-16 N.E.B.

It's got to get better. It can't get worse—it's got to get better, and they'll open up. They have to open up because they will find themselves going down all over the world, not only here. It's not just us picketing that forced them to do this; all over the world people are talking about American imperialism, and it's forcing them to do all these things. Because whether I walk the line or not, whoever walks the line that has a black face is walking for me. . . . And there isn't anything for the Man to do but begin giving us an equal chance if he wants to save himself, because he's going down and we're the only ones that are holding him up.

—Man, age about 45<sup>1</sup>

Sooner or later, it was bound to end.

The massive feelings of guilt which drove White America to the picket lines and the halls of Congress on behalf of legislation to guarantee equal rights before the law reached a crescendo in the Selma-Montgomery march. The President himself intoned the movement's theme of "We shall overcome" before the stunned faces of Dixiecrat senators in a joint session of Congress. A voting rights bill was passed. And then the heart—and the pocketbook—seemed to go out of the movement altogether. White America went back to sleep.

1965 became a year of mounting fragmentation, discouragement and conflict over goals within the civil rights movement. After Selma, nothing quite "jelled." No monumental confrontation on the order of the Mississippi summer of 1964 came to pass. Voter registration efforts dragged, with a mere handful of federal registrars. White resistance turned to economic sanctions more often than violent nightriding. Only a few, such as seminarian Jon Daniels, were openly treated to lynch law. The Viet Nam war became a civil rights cause for some, anathema for others. Northern projects sputtered and failed, as in the effort to unseat the symbol of de facto school segregation, Superintendent Willis of Chicago. SCLC's long announced move to the northern ghettos failed to materialize. Watts exploded, and six months later, Watts remains a scorched emblem of civic inaction.

Charles Silberman, whose *Crisis in Black and White* has become the textbook for white advocates of militant community organization, ventured the conclusion in the November issue of *Fortune* that "the cause of civil rights, fresh from its great victories, is facing its greatest threat in a bitter new mood—the elements of nihilism and hopelessness that is suddenly making headway in the Negro community."

Silberman is undoubtedly right in detecting a bitterness

of mood. It grows out of a deep and weary sense that White America has completely misunderstood, or deliberately failed to accept, the depth and extent of the economic, social, and political problems facing the society. As the militants in the movement asserted all along, laws to guarantee rights which belong to the Constitution itself are hardly capable of being regarded as "great victories." Moreover, they contribute little to the relief of the economic and social isolation of the vast majority of Negro citizens. As long as the struggle focussed on issues of liberty, it could enlist the sentiment, the financial support, and for a time the physical presence of large segments of the white middle class. Once demands came to center on the fundamental issues of equality—free access to opportunity in employment, housing, schooling—white support began to dissolve. President Johnson, in his June 4 address at Howard University, called for the next steps in the struggle for racial justice to guarantee "not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact." It is probably close to the truth to say that many whites regarded this speech as a national commencement address: civil rights laws had established equality, the issue was now up to Negroes to prove themselves.

One event of 1965 which perhaps sums up this confusion, and may in large measure have contributed to it, was the release of the so-called Moynihan report, or to give its full title, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." Published in March, "for official use only," it was prepared in the Office of Policy Planning and Research of the Labor Department by Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Paul Barton. Mr. Moynihan, who was Undersecretary of Labor at the time the report was prepared, soon thereafter resigned to run for President of the City Council of New York. He is currently at Wesleyan University, and will shortly move to Cambridge to direct the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Harvard and MIT.

Moynihan maintains that the report was intended to be read by a relatively few persons inside the federal government. It was written by men who were "paid to complain" about unemployment. "When you talk about family to a middle class person in the Bureau of the Budget, they hear you in different ways than they hear you when you talk about the employment rate. It's just a damn sight more real."<sup>2</sup>

Real or not, the publication of the report created a furor. Like many Washington secrets, it soon leaked to the press. The fact that it had "discovered" a new focus

for the civil rights struggle made it highly controversial, certainly newsworthy. Consternation reigned when it was announced that the report would serve as a principle planning document for the major White House Conference, "To Fulfill These Rights," which the President announced he was calling in the fall.

### The Issue Is Jobs

Overnight, the leadership of the nation changed understandings and commitments. Satisfied with the "great victories" of legislative and political rights—rights long overdue and grudgingly recognized—the nation's political leadership needed a framework in which the problems could be thrust back on the Negro community itself. The guilt offering had been paid. The painful task of social and economic reorganization which is necessary to break the destructive cycle of mass unemployment, inferior education, slum housing and corrosive social and personal pathology which is a mark of the culture of poverty—this could be avoided if somehow the responsibility for solving these problems was to be fixed in the Negro community itself. Faced with an exploding population and technological changes which will revolutionize the production of goods and services, American culture is still wed to an ethic which sees a man's worth in his labor, and regards with suspicion those who are unemployed.

The discovery of Negro family problems by Mr. Moynihan captured the immediate attention of many who were uncomfortable with the revolutionary implications of the poverty cycle. Since the family was to be a point of entry into the discussion of all the other issues, the breathless reader could now skip from issues of justice before the law to matters of moral and social regeneration in the bedroom. While Moynihan's *intent* may well have been to explore the problems of education and employment through a consideration of the family, the *impact* of the report was to fix responsibility for the current plight of Negro citizens in the twisted family structure he found. If Mr. Moynihan's purposes were as limited as he now says they were, the report should have been far more tentative, far less sweeping in proposing a grand strategy. A serious reading of the report can only lead, however, to a view that it was designed to reorient the federal government and therefore the nation's approach to the next stage of creating an open society.

What then is (the) problem? We feel the answer is clear enough. Three centuries of injustice have brought deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American. At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. . . . The object should be to strengthen the Negro family so as to enable it to raise and support its members as do other families. After that, how this group of Americans chooses to run its affairs, take advantage of its opportunities, or fail to do so, is none of the nation's business.<sup>3</sup>

The condescension in this statement, benevolent perhaps but real nonetheless, is what angers the Negro civil rights movement. As Robert Spike aptly put it, "The Negro community, *being human*, does not like being the object of social engineering much better than it did being the object of social harassment." The plea from the ghetto is for justice, not for charity.

The irony is that Mr. Moynihan understands this very

well. As a brilliant social scientist who rose from the ranks of poverty and a broken family on New York's west side, he understands the centrality of economic issues in the solution of America's most critical domestic problem. In an article on "Employment, Income, and the Negro Family" published in the Fall, 1965, issue of *Daedalus*, he writes:<sup>4</sup>

From the very outset, the principal measure of progress toward equality will be that of employment. It is the primary source of individual or group identity. In America what you do is what you are: to do nothing is to be nothing; to do little is to be little. The equations are implacable and blunt, and ruthlessly public. For the Negro American it is already, and will continue to be, the master problem. It is the measure of white *bona fides*. It is the measure of Negro competence, and also of the competence of American society. Most importantly, the linkage between problems of employment and the range of social pathology that afflicts the Negro community is unmistakable. *Employment not only controls the present for the Negro American; but in a most profound way, it is creating the future as well.* (italics added)

Why then deflect the discussion from the central issue? No very satisfactory answer has ever been put forward.

### Confusion and Re-Grouping

During the summer and early fall, enough protests were lodged at the White House and in the public press that when a "Planning Meeting" for the White House Conference was finally held on November 16-18, the report was by-passed entirely. It now seems problematical whether the conference itself will ever be held. Civil rights have faded from the national attention. The fact that scant attention to the issues was paid in the President's 1966 State of the Union address illustrates a kind of social downgrading which has been going on. In part this may have been occasioned by the petulant reaction to the Moynihan report and by the growing militancy of many civil rights leaders. More basically, it is a symptom of the unwillingness of the nation to deal with root issues.

The documentation of this last point has been made with monotonous regularity. The fact that a race composing only 11 per cent of the nation's population accounts for 70 per cent of the displaced persons in housing renewal programs; the fact that in Chicago \$100 less per student per year is spent on education in predominantly Negro schools; the fact that in 1963 the median income of nonwhite males was only \$2,507 against \$4,816 for whites: such data as these have been held up before the American people in a veritable flood of information. Yet White America is unbelieving and unwilling to act.

The distinguished committee commissioned by Governor Brown of California to investigate the Watts riot adds but one more chapter to the frustrating plenitude of documents which say the same thing. The fundamental causes of Watts, as of the seven riots in the summer of 1964, were largely the same:<sup>5</sup>

Not enough jobs to go around, and within this scarcity not enough by a wide margin of a character which the untrained Negro could fill.

Not enough schooling designed to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged Negro child, whose environment from infancy onward places him under a serious handicap.

A resentment, even hatred, of the police, as the symbol of authority.

Chairman John McCone, former head of the Central In-

motive

telligence Agency, concludes: "The road to the improvement of the condition of the disadvantaged Negro which lies through education and employment is hard and long, but there is no shorter route. . . . Of what shall it avail our nation if we can place a man on the moon but cannot cure the sickness in our cities?"<sup>6</sup>

It is the deepening frustration that America has the technical capacity to solve the problems of the ghetto, along with a growing awareness that it will be used for luxuries such as moon shots and follies such as the Viet Nam war, which lies behind Watts and beneath the rejection of the Moynihan report. John Oliver Killens says it well in his recent *Black Man's Burden*: "Oh yes, we black folk find it difficult to understand the nation's hesitation about sending troops to Mississippi to guarantee free elections when we read of American boys dying thousands of miles from home to ensure freedom for the Vietnamese. The subtlety escapes us."<sup>7</sup> Anger by itself does not provide direction. The movement today seems divided into three clusters of approaches, each in its own way radical in rejecting the hardening apathy of the white power establishment. These responses might be summarized as the metropolitan renewal, the guns-or-butter, and the count us out altogether replies.

### Metropolitan Renewal

Counted in the first group might be included all those who place the locus of the problem in the process of urbanization. In New York City, a group called together as the New York Pre-White House Conference Committee has put together an ambitious proposal of \$41 billion per year for jobs, education, and health, which presumably will be pressed at the White House Conference if it ever occurs, and as a strategy for economic development essential to create equal opportunity. The basic assumption behind this "Metropolitan Development for Equal Opportunity" proposal is that the civil, political and business leadership of the nation can be persuaded that it is in the interests of national growth and well-being to embark on a major federally initiated program of this size and scope. Dr. Benjamin Payton, the new director of the NCC's Commission on Religion and Race, is perhaps the principal architect of this bold approach.

It would appear that SCLC's decision to focus activity in urban areas fits into the same pattern. Belief that the metropolitan area is central to the next stage of civil rights action has led SCLC to risk a venture in Chicago. The odds are great. Tactics which worked in the less complex setting of the Deep South have heretofore borne little fruit in urban areas. Dr. King's much publicized move into a cold water flat on the West Side of Chicago may reflect a confident hope that mass demonstration can be used to confront the complex issues of jobs, education, and housing. If it succeeds, it will be by the genius of King's personality; there never yet has been a major mass-based movement of consequence in any of the nation's largest cities.

There are many today concerned about America's cities. As *The New York Times* has noted, ". . . the cities have numerous problems—mass transit, inadequate schools and hospitals, and polluted air—that would exist if Negroes had never left the rural South. But the Negroes are the dynamic, unstable element in the cities. If their special needs are not met, there can be no peace and no orderly progress for the entire society." The effort by

organized persuasion or organized protest to confront the metropolitan setting as a racial problem is one direction absorbing the movement's energy.

### Guns or Butter

The cost of urban improvement cannot be measured any longer apart from the cost of war in Viet Nam. It plainly is obvious that even the limited levels of the War on Poverty may be hard to maintain in the face of steadily mounting costs of the war. Further, growing national preoccupation with the war has already deflected attention from the domestic issues. The scalpels of those ready to cut back programs to aid the poor are sharply honed.

Without question, the young militants of the movement have already linked Viet Nam with the domestic racial struggle. In the minds of some, the buildup of the war has proceeded so fast and so far as to make the war the central issue of civil rights at this time.

How to assess the reaction of the man on the street is somewhat harder. A young Negro GI may have summed it up: "Man, if my country says I've got to fight, I will. But don't give me any of that freedom crap." Sullen resignation rather than protest over personal involvement. Mounting anger in the ghetto, however, as the nation on the whole gets wealthier on a booming economy.

The refusal to design meaningful programs to cope with unemployment is producing another reaction in the ghetto. In face of the obvious failure of the War on Poverty to make any dent on hard core unemployment, the hardest hit group of all, those in the 18-25-year-old bracket, are increasingly prepared to plan bigger and better Watts incidents. At least riots gain the attention of the Man. According to (another) confidential report circulating in Washington, some twenty-one major cities are on the verge of incidents like Watts. "The more optimistic feel that we have a year in which to improve the climate; others believe the situation to be such that any incident can spark an explosion."

It was guilt over beatings, bombings, fire houses in places like Birmingham which sparked the involvement of White America in the struggle in the South. White America can muster little but apathy when faced with a continuing and pervasive poverty in our midst. If a long and bitter series of Watts-type explosions is the order for years to come, they will undoubtedly increase the suffering of the people who carry them out, as well as the separation of Negro from white communities. Six months later, that is the total impact of Watts.

But the retribution ultimately will fall on the stiff-necked whites who failed to understand that the brother in the midst had it in his power to save us from ourselves—and we rejected him. White America has the power to prolong Negro social and economic servitude, and thereby confirm the kind of family and personal suffering which the Negro community inflicts upon itself. The price we pay ourselves—in isolation from the rest of mankind and a suicidal war to save "freedom"—is more than many Negroes are prepared to pay.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, p. 9

<sup>2</sup> Interview in *National Catholic Reporter*, January 26, 1966

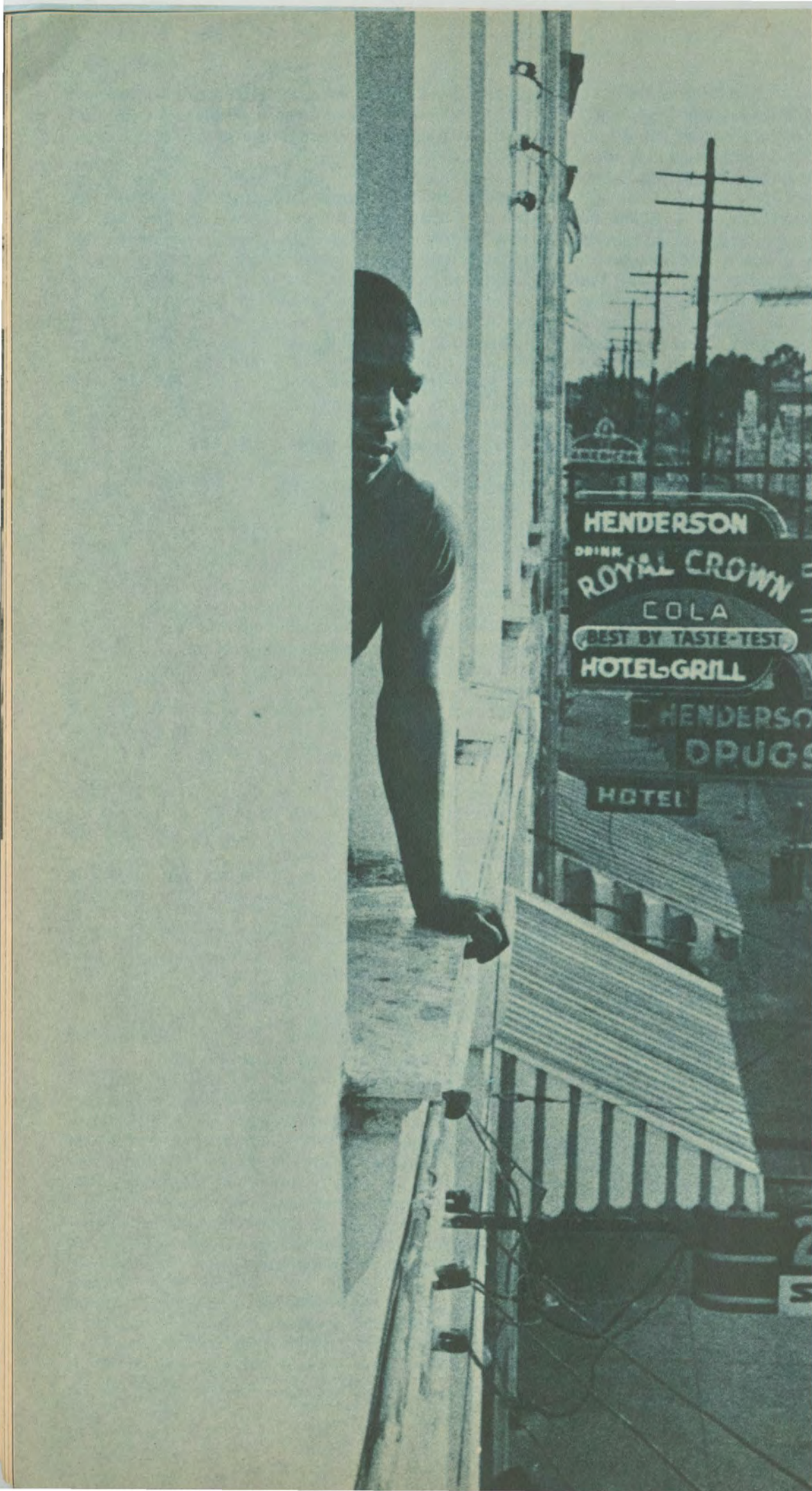
<sup>3</sup> Report, page 47

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 746. See also the article by Lee Rainwater, "Crucible of Identity" in the Winter, 1966, issue of *Daedalus*.

<sup>5</sup> *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?*, page 2

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, page 9

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, page 16



PHOTOGRAPH: ELSE

# THE WORLD OF RALPH ELLISON: BEYOND ABSTRACTION, IMAGINATION

By BARDWELL LEITH SMITH

The roadmarks of anyone's intellectual odyssey are reflected in part by whom one selects as one's heroes. Though I have never seen Ralph Ellison, he is one of my heroes. I find a freshness, flexibility, humanness, and wisdom in his thinking which is all too uncommon in this day, a day characterized perhaps increasingly by ideological rigidity, oversimplifications, abstractions, labels, and nametags.

This is a time when, paradoxically, we clutch at new certainties at the very moment that we so rightly question traditional values. We are, in other words, afraid of ambiguity. The evidence of absolutist tendencies within a supposedly relativist generation are not hard to find.

Ralph Ellison is one of my heroes, because in the midst of considerable captive thinking he stands out with an independence of mind. In his essay entitled "The World and the Jug" in *Shadow and Act*, he challenges the assumption of some white radicals that "unrelieved suffering is the only real Negro experience," that the true Negro writer or person must therefore respond with ferociousness. Ellison reacts in protest not because he is blind to the suffering of the Negro, nor because he is uncommitted to the freedom movement, but simply because, when "prefabricated Negroes are sketched on sheets of paper and superimposed upon the Negro community," he resists this oversimplification. To him, it smacks of "specious political and philosophical conceits."

Ultimately, such a view is a distortion of diverse human reality, an attempt to force persons into preconceived molds. It is abstractionism playing with the raw material of human life. The jug referred to is a manner of thinking which insists

that the sole experience of Negroes is colored *only* by their blackness, never by their humanness. Segregation, therefore, is seen as "an opaque steel jug with the Negroes inside waiting for some black messiah to come along and blow the cork." Ellison is rightfully alarmed at this image of reality, but even more he questions the arrogance of one who blackfaces himself and claims to know the experience of all Negroes. Ellison's horizons have been the world, not simply the jug. And, he wisely claims, he is not alone.

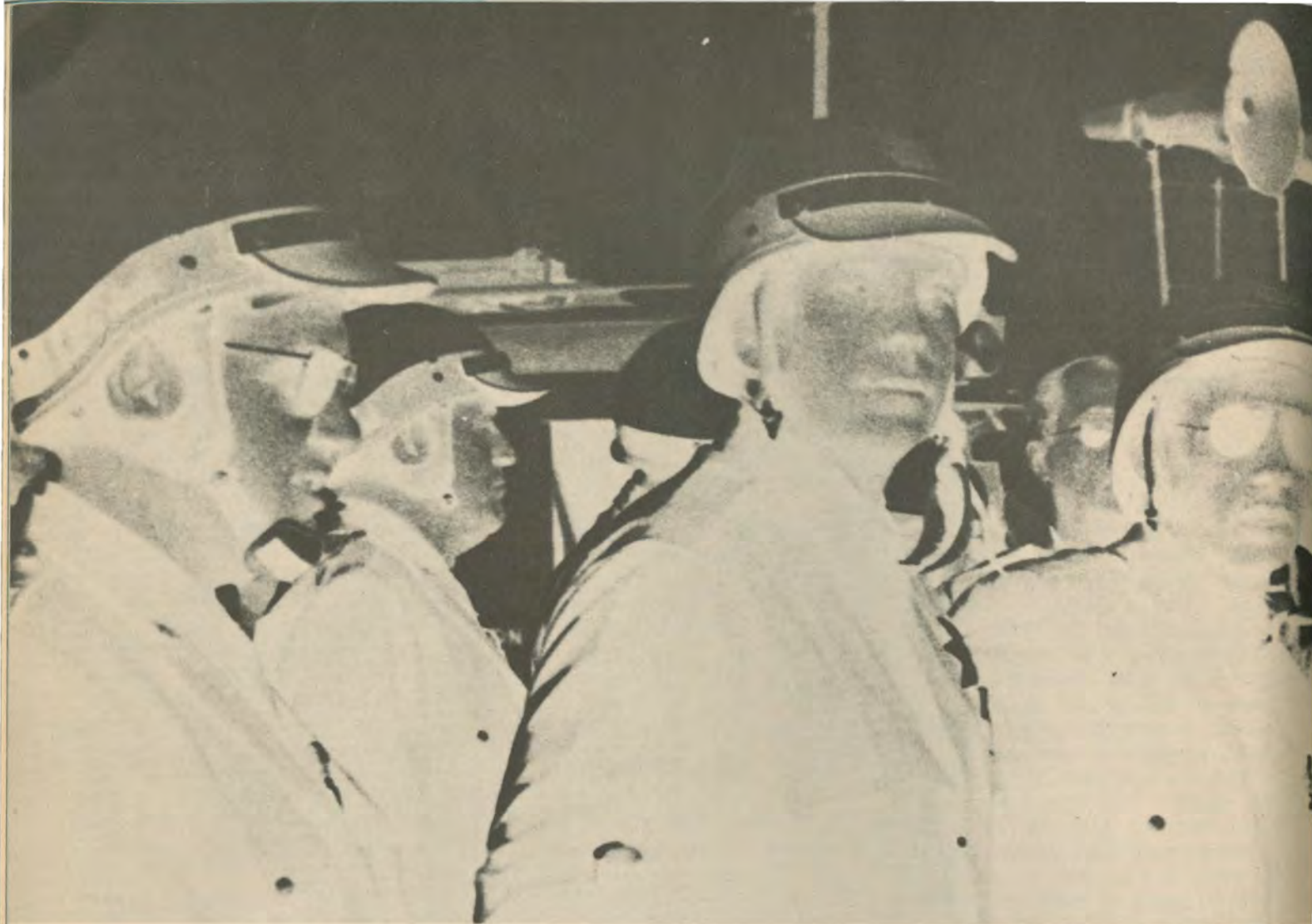
Ellison's experience and his protest against prefabrication of human beings may, at first glance, seem to be in strong contrast to increasing instances on college campuses, for example, where Negro students (with every justification in the world) express their dissatisfaction with being treated "just like any other student." The essence of their complaint is not that they are being ignored, certainly not that they are discriminated against in the ordinary sense. It is rather that their friends and peers are somehow pretending their blackness does not exist, that they are, in fact, just as white as the rest of us! Could this be but another face of prejudice?

When we stop to think, as many white persons are now forced to do, we perceive the insensitivity this situation unveils. Though stemming from motives essentially generous, ignoring the cultural, social, and historical realities of the past three centuries reveals the lack of imagination of which men remain capable. While not implying that one's sense of guilt ought to result in self-flagellation (this would be a cheap emotional out), one wonders if whites can afford to forget what the Negro has been, what he is still being, forced to endure. To ignore the Negroness of the Negro is therefore not only to forget history, it is to suggest that all is now well. It

is to presume that bygones can now be bygones. And, it makes the unspoken assumption that absorption into the white culture is the desideratum of each Negro in the first place. One saving grace is that no thinking white person really subscribes to these assumptions, though the nation at large must still be shaken out of its insensibility.

The protest by Ralph Ellison against lumping Negroes together into one vast abstraction may appear in contrast to the above. Actually, what Ellison resented was being told he should think *only* as a Negro, only in terms of unjust laws and customs. To him this would be making blackness an absolute which kills the imagination and crushes one's humanity. This would be a form of blindness which ignores diversity and denies uniqueness to each American Negro, which "makes the Negroness a metaphysical condition." Ellison's pride in being a Negro is not at issue, but that he is first and foremost a human being is what he insists. Neither racism nor radicalism can deny him this priority. He is man first, then Negro, though it all adds up to Negro man. Neither one of these facts can be forgotten. Too often, whites wish to make him man only; whitewashing history if not ignoring pigmentation. True, he is man first, but he is also Negro and this he rightfully bids white Americans remember.

I cite Ellison and point to the irony of Negroes being accepted as "whites," since in each is portrayed the ease with which we create abstract images of persons which bear small resemblance to actual men. Again, it is ironic, though not surprising, that stereotyping should occur in an age of serious value-questioning. Again, the difficulty is our living with ambiguity. Tragedy, moreover, ensues whenever men dismiss the opportunity such questioning presents by closing minds to persons and positions different



from (even opposed to) their own. In essence, this may be what the freedom movement at large is all about. If there were ever a movement which called a nation and a people to their senses, which required self-examination about all our values, it is this one. Clearly, an indictment exists here without parallel in American history.

The issue of civil rights, as many have noted, is but one phase of a radically creative revolution which must continue to reach and affect all parts of the body politic. The movement is nothing less than a summons to make policy and social reality conform to the image we still wish to present. For the most part, the image is admirable; it is the reality which lacks truth. Yet it is increasingly true that the image itself is in many respects inadequate. The American Dilemma is not simply the gap between theory and practice; it is also the fact that our ideals themselves require reexamination.

Indeed, our concern should not be that the freedom movement is

going too far, rather that it may not go far enough. While opportunities for economic and social freedom are long overdue for Negroes (let alone others discriminated against) in this society, our continuing concern must be that we will stop too short. If the freedom movement means business, it must use this unique opportunity of history to demonstrate not only in behalf of social equity but, beyond this, it must protest against the cruel and unreal abstractions by which we all continue to caricature one another. The whole battle for civil rights has, for instance, coined a new vocabulary of such stereotypes. "Beatniks," "radicals," "outside agitators" and "communists" pit themselves against "hypocrisy", "Uncle Toms", the "power structure" and the "establishment." The labels are endless. The in-fighting occurs within the ranks, let alone between opposing camps.

While we expect this in any struggle for social equity, we have a right also to hope for more than this. The freedom movement is too vital,

it has attained too significant a momentum, to fall short here. To contribute to the hardening of lines, the erecting of barriers, instead of their eradication, would be tragic, indeed. The implications of this for the racial picture in this country are complex enough. I do not wish to over-simplify. I merely wish to register a note of apprehension. Some questions suggest a number of different ways in which men must learn to face one another:

*Beyond abstraction, imagination.* The question raised here has appeared in one form or another throughout my remarks: Is not a crucial ingredient of our continuing divisions the failure to see beyond prefabricated images of other men? Poverty of imagination compels men to fall back upon canards, upon sterile (often fallacious) images which in themselves distort reality by making one blind to possibility and fixed in distrust. When failure of nerve characterizes a generation, it is not unrelated to the impoverishment of its imagination. How little imagination it takes to





PHOTOGRAPH: ELSE

call a Negro a "nigger," a civil rights worker a "Beatnik communist," a Martin Luther King an "Uncle Tom." Or, in other contexts, no greater imagination is called for when Muslim slanders Hindu, when Indian berates Pakistani, or, indeed, when Christians label Buddhism as pagan idolatry. If the freedom movement is to have continuing and expanding relevance, demonstration must occur against evils of this kind as well.

*Beyond enmity, reconciliation.* The almost automatic product of abstractionism is the hardening of lines between peoples of different camps. Frozen images undermine the possibility for relationships of trust. Expectation shrinks, rendering reconciliation inconceivable. Opposing sides consider themselves as trespassed against, viewing the other as embodiment of evil. At this point, Dante's idea of Hell takes on credence: "Hell is the prayer of the persecuted for some world which will do justice on the wicked."<sup>1</sup> Again, one's question reverts to the imagination. How in the midst of

difficult and very real antagonisms can men expect authentic change if they are more committed to enmity than to reconciliation? Who, after all, is our enemy? More often than not, it is ourselves.

*Beyond despondency, hope.* As despondency is not something which can be wished away, so hope is not something for which there is no basis. In fact, the most natural fruit of creative imagining is realistic hope. Hope is by no means a final product, the end of a line. It is more a disposition of spirit which sees beyond barriers, which in the process creates possibilities. Hope is all too aware of the abstractions by which men characterize one another, yet it urges the imagination to look again. Hope does not easily forget the painful experiences which have led to positions of realism, yet it bids the future to experiment in ways not attempted in the past. And, hope is hardly blind to the enmity flourishing within the world, yet its commitment to reconciliation prompts men not to accept hostility (indeed, the seemingly endless

chain of vengeance, retaliation and bloodshed) as the inevitable norm.

Perhaps the most natural by-product of the creative imagination is its contentment to allow men to be different. One could call this love as well as imagination. In either case, it frees one to see and appreciate the wonderful diversity among men. As has been said, "the bond of man with man consists, not in similarity, but in dissimilarity."<sup>2</sup> In other words, neither imagination nor love attempts to place men into jugs. It gives men the world in which to stretch and grow. It frees them to become themselves. It frees them from seeing others through abstraction. It even frees men to live with dignity in the midst of ambiguity. And, finally, creative imagination can cause each man to dare to look in upon himself, to ask: "Who is my enemy? Is it I? Then deliver me from my enemy."

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Gollancz, ed., *From Darkness to Light* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 239.



THE CHURCH COLLEGE  
AND THE  
SECULAR CITY

By ROBERT FRIEDRICH

PHOTOGRAPH: DWORKIN

If existence is indeed startling to Protestant colleges, county seats of rural America's urban centers for Christian community. The new mood may be discovered in Harvey Cox's *Secular City*, an extrapolation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Christianity without the church." Cox extends an invitation to assist in what he views as the funeral of the church-sponsored universities. "The church has been reconciled to parental responsibility," he makes abundantly clear, "as well as descriptively." For the City of God are no longer to be viewed in contrast to those of the City of Man: the magic of rite and the intercession of priest has dissolved into the freedom and weight of secularity. The atonement must be re-enacted, with the church now called to sacrifice herself for a de-mythologized community of man.

The theological recovery of the sacred through a dialectical embracing of the profane run of the present discussion begin a discussion of college and church because there is every little doubt that Cox's image of the university is one shared at least implicitly by the great majority of those engaged in teaching roles at church-related institutions; a Protestant college or university has long since accepted the essential standards of "the secular city" as its own.

That this was not always the case is obvious. Colleges both in America and in Europe were originally the creatures of the church. They received their endowments, obtained their administrators—and, initially, their faculties—and recruited their students through her. The norms for campus life were churchly norms: required chapels and ecclesiastic courses in religion were embraced by clerical standards for social and personal behavior. The colleges in turn guaranteed the continuity of the church's physical props or assisted sects in their transformation to acculturated denominations through the education of lay leadership and the pre-theological training of clerical students or faculty who might take issue with the theological assumptions peculiar to their institution did privately, for, until the Land-Grant colleges began to provide secular alternatives in the latter half of the 19th century, the choice was largely a religiously structured education or none at all.

The situation today, of course, is dramatically different. Five out of ten students seeking higher education turn to institutions related to the church; only one in ten to a Protestant college or university, however nominal the link. And any projection of the future suggests that the proportion will continue to drop. The average contribution the church makes to operating budgets is about 13 per cent. Though overall financial support has gone up, church-related institutions have not been able to keep pace with the increase poured into the public or private non-sectarian sectors. Again, there is little reason to expect that they will not continue to fall increasingly be-

hind. Administrators have broken free of the necessity of having been prepared as clerics, while faculties are chosen in terms of their secular academic achievements and promise. Student recruitment has, of course, long since been turned over to the modes developed by secular specialists in public relations and employment. Required courses in religion are typically indistinguishable from those taught in private and public institutions; the required "chapel" of yesteryear has, by and large, evolved into vaguely humanitarian convocations or been dropped entirely. Undergraduate preparation for those going on to divinity schools, though still proportionately heavier in the church-related institution, has been shifting toward the public and private, non-church sector, with approximately half the burden now carried by the latter. Many church-related schools have simply priced themselves out of a market commensurate with the economic resources of the lower-middle-class strata from which the average Protestant pre-seminarian springs; where the institution or its related church attempts to avoid this by providing special scholarship help for those thinking seriously of the ministry it risks, of course, the domestic cultivation of the bane of the mission field: the rice Christian.

All of this, a recent Danforth study of 800 church-related colleges and universities tells us, is couched in a context whose prestige image is in fact quite secular. Faculties—whose salaries lag behind the private non-sectarian and the public sectors—strive for status through patterning their curricula after what are deemed the better private schools and feel personally rewarded as their graduates carry their names on into the great secular graduate schools. Having been selected in terms of secular criteria, quite justifiably they "live and move and have their being" in the secular city. Stronger academically than they are religiously, church-related colleges are assimilated into the culture and become indistinguishable from their secular models:

The intellectual presuppositions which really guide the activities of most church colleges are heavily weighted in the secular direction. . . . religion as a world view or explanation of existence is not penetrating college education.<sup>1</sup>

The church college has in fact already been absorbed for all intents and purposes into the "secular city" which Cox would have us honor.

This is not to say that the church-related colleges will no longer have a distinctive function to play in the larger society. Certainly they simply will not die; they in fact are healthier in a material sense than they have been for some time. And, federal programs which are carefully constructed to skirt the church-state issue have underwritten and will continue to underwrite their expanding needs even if a regression in proportionate contribution from the parental churches sets in. But that role will be an increasingly *social* one. Under the impact of a society which has come to view higher education as appropriate to the acculturation of all intellectually normal adolescents—and whose tax monies will be most appropriately funneled into the expansion of publicly controlled institutions; a status system in which higher education comes to play an increasingly central role setting and defining the subtle (and not so subtle) criteria for one's social

<sup>1</sup> Manning Pattillo and Donald Mackenzie, *Eight Hundred Colleges Face the Future* (Danforth Foundation, 1965), pp. 45-46.

class position; a culture whose family system continues to thrust its traditional responsibilities upon surrogate institutions; and a process of socialization which honors its melting-pot heritage by segmenting the kettle three ways—under the impact of these forces the church college will come, barring a shift in emphasis which as yet remains out of sight, to play much the same role met piecemeal by social fraternities and sororities over the past century. Most national sororities and fraternities began as “religious” communities. However, they soon relegated their religious roots to the occasional symbolic ritual. The felt need they met rather was one in which the socially and economically advantaged might retreat from the press of the “secular city” into artificial communities which might provide a sense of personalism within the comfortable surroundings of their own faith-groupings.

This model that spills over, of course, into the realm of the private college in general. A goodly proportion of non-sectarian institutions, however, are a poor fit because the stamp of unusual intellectual ability—*conditio sine qua non* for admission—is no respecter of faith or previous condition of cultural or economic servitude. Even if church colleges were able to compete financially in the academic market place for their proportionate share of the most talented faculties and, in the admissions market, for the most talented students, they might still stand frustrated. For they are burdened by the fact that the cross continues to be foolishness to the wise. And so, from a sociological point of view, the Protestant college as a type seems determined to settle for the safe, if mediocre, communality that is contemporary suburbia’s inheritance from her rural antecedents. If God has indeed died, if the Church is only an institution, if faith is now to be defined in but secular terms, then the *Christian* significance of the church-related college has, as Cox maintains, long since ended. Here we stand; we have done no other.

But let us suppose God still dies for us daily, that the Church continues to elude in part her sociologists of religion, that the faith transcends both secular and sacred vocabularies. What then? How *might* church and university reciprocate within the format of the church college while each maintains its separate integrity?

Certainly the church’s relationship to the university can no longer be assessed in terms of its contribution to buildings, capital, or routine categories of an operating budget. Money, as crucial a factor as it may be, has no way of transforming itself into faith simply on the basis of its source. Nor has the Christian faith anything to do with the maintenance of middle class propriety in matters of dress, tonsure, or the denial of the right to responsible use of legal beverages. It is clearly denied if membership in a human institution—the church—is used as a criterion for presence upon a faculty or preferential inclusion within a student body. It is honored but by the standards of the larger secular culture when it is segmented out into chapel hours, religious emphasis weeks, and baccalaureates. When invoked formally at faculty meetings it runs perilously close to joining hands with the football team as it bows its collective head before the kick-off. No, it is much more than these currently prevalent symbols of 19th-century Protestantism. The faith that is the church college’s only excuse for distinctive existence instead must be spelled out in terms of peculiar responsibilities and peculiar freedoms appropriate to the new day of mass education, the professionalization of

the liberal arts, and segmentation of man.

The church again and again has demonstrated its unwillingness to confront man except in terms of his wholeness and his link with that which is ultimate. And these are the very dimensions of his existence which public and private education in general have been unwilling or unable to engage. Here lies the vocation of the church college. Secularity by its very definition remains stranded with the division and specialization of function, with a rootless relativity, with man defined as means, with change itself as focal value. The church college has the freedom to risk responsibility in depth.

More particularly, it possesses the freedom to encourage its faculties—to select them if need be—to push the student beyond the professionally dictated confines of his discipline so that the student approaches ultimacy in its cognitive forms: in an examination of the discipline’s epistemological, and thus ontological, presuppositions; in the following of a given proposition to its ultimate implication; in perceiving the potential relatedness of all the separate wares hawked in the academic market place. Public and private secular schools are not so privileged. They need share no faith in the purposiveness and relatedness of the totality of existence. Their charge is from the piecemeal god of secularity. Their hands are tied and their agents subtly punished when they step beyond the curricular divisions and segmented roles of the secular city. Faculties of church-related universities are charged instead to speak and act and write beyond the limits of academic respectability, to be fools, academic fools, for the Christ that confronts them—or indeed for the absent Christ, to witness to His loss. They are and must remain free to trace the trail that ultimacy winds through the world of the cognitive.

But they should do more. They are not allowed, as their secular cohorts may be, to confess that education is *but* cognition. They may not rest upon the laurels of their intellectual virtuosity; they are asked to be honest as well. And honesty calls for the acknowledgment that cognitive models or predispositions—their own as well as those of others—rest upon choice, upon implicit if not explicit valuation. Their fortunate fellows in secular institutions may expect—indeed are encouraged—to close shop once the cognitive wares have been placed on display. The church-related scholar must draw himself within the circle, must accept engagement within class as well as without, must acknowledge and act upon the existential roots of his own intellectual structures. He must, in other words, witness to his own confrontation with ultimacy so that the cognitive wares he sells may be confronted in their entirety. For the Christian faith stands not upon formula; it risks its footing quite explicitly in faith. Though the secular academician is equally unable to take his stand upon cognition alone, he has no obligation to confess that fact to his students or to his colleagues. His secular context encourages him to perceive his action as segmented into roles; and the role of cognition and the role of the man of faith, like state and church, are to be insulated one from the other.

The focal service the church *might* provide the university, then, is a dedication to ultimates in the cognitive sphere and the engagement of those ultimates honestly and openly with the existential self. Both follow from a confrontation with the church’s faith in the purposive unity of God’s acts of creation. Flowing from these should be that special sensitivity to one’s fellow creatures

which causes them to be perceived as ends rather than as means. Though it is an ethic that has come to be shared with many who speak in the secular mode, it is all too easily lost sight of as the university accepts the bed and board of the state and is transformed by sheer numbers into the secular city itself.

The church institution is in a position to deny that the clean lines of efficiency, however admirable they may be, are not next to godliness. Secular schools may wish to avoid the electronization of the educational process. But, viewing the latter only as cognitive communication and but sentimentally attached to man as person, they are rapidly capitulating to its bureaucratization and routinization. The church college does so at the peril of denying itself. One can communicate with machines; machines can communicate with each other: but machines cannot *witness* to one another. Thus the church-related institution is commanded to witness to the integrity of the I-Thou in the processes of education as well as in its content, to insure that the professor risks something of himself through the dialectical impact of teacher upon student and student upon teacher.

Finally, the church is in a position to guarantee the integrity of academia's prophetic mode against subtle temptations toward professional disengagement and the less subtle incursions of the morality of the state. Its academic freedom is not freedom *from*, but freedom *to*; not protection *against*, but responsibility *for*. Obligation upon its campuses does not end with the code of ethics of one's discipline, with the legislation of the AAUP, or with the flags of one's state and nation. It can end only at the foot of the cross.

If the church is in some measure yet a vessel of God's grace,\* then its academic groves might still be led to reflect a concern with cognitive ultimates, to witness to the latter's link with the existential choices demanded of the self, to maintain the integrity of the person in the procedures of education, and to call the scholar and teacher out of the security of his institutionalized loyalties to concern and commitment for all.

But what of the reciprocal contribution of the university? Is the creature of the church still but recipient? Certainly its original function as a preparatory school for the clergy has long since withered. And, few Protestant colleges can still claim that the majority within their student bodies may be expected to become lay leaders within their denomination. The campus may provide facilities for conferences for their clergy and/or selected laymen, but the very fact that such meetings are scheduled so that they will not interfere with the academic calendar witnesses to their peripheral nature. What, then, can be left?

Much. That is, much remains if the university is more than simply institution, more than the flux of professors en route through the status hierarchy of their chosen discipline, more for students than pre-professional breeding grounds, employment agencies, or markets for marriage; much, in other words, if the university too reflects in some measure the miracle of His creation.

In its dedication to truth wherever it may lead, the academic community may act to prevent the church from compromising herself with easy answers to the complexity of her calling. It does so through the painstaking delineation of the empirical from the existential, of nature from history, of philosophy from theology. It serves thus as a guarantor of the integrity of the creation, assist-

ing the church thereby to speak of and witness to its author and His everpresent power to create anew.

The contemporary "death of God" theology—nourished not by accident at our church-related universities—illustrates a second outgrowth of this truth commitment. For what is pointed to metaphorically is the university's insistence that it must assist the church to tag and bury every temptation upon the latter's part to harbor semantic hypocrisy. Intellectual honesty—to God and to His creation—demands the cleansing of our symbolic life, the media by which *I* seeks to communicate with *Thou*, just as existential honesty demands the cleansing of the self. God's mighty act of creation goes on, oblivious of our hope to package it in neat categories once and for all. The university's sensitivity to the historicity of our linguistic models stands as a continual reminder that God not only was and is, but is yet to be.

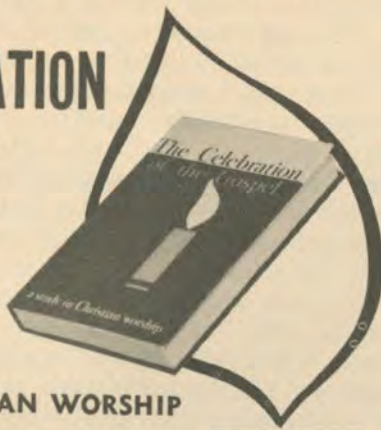
Thus the academic community that is in responsible relationship with the church will find itself exorcizing those images in our common vocabulary whose contemporary coloration would deny our Lord by cataloguing Him among the artifacts of the museum of man. Our Lord liveth. The university reminds us that our symbol life does as well. It not only would deny us the psychic security of linguistic hysteria, but it seeks to sensitize us to those symbols which appear at the cutting edge of each new generation's confrontation with its uniqueness. If God is to live then the metaphors by which we approach Him must equally live. This fact the university can assist us in confronting.

Of perhaps less significance, yet relevant, might be the university's intimate awareness of the limits of its own prime strength: its rationality. It is important that the Protestant church, relying so heavily upon the preaching of the Word—upon exhortation—be reminded of the irrational roots of rationality. This the university may be in a privileged position to do, for in pushing back the curtain of cognition as far as it will go it has had to confront in depth the facticity of the unconscious, the resistances of cultural patterns and social structures, the ultimate privacy of the intrasubjective, and the screen by which language filters reality. All these may help the church to remain aware that it is by God's grace and not her exhortation that we shall be saved.

Finally, it is well to remind ourselves that, in an age in which the church seeks reunion and the world at large its first slender strands of unity, "university" is literally a place in which all are turned (*versum*) toward one (*unus*). If ecumenicity is indeed an appropriate characterization of the openness and intimacy we seek from one another, there are perhaps no better exercise grounds—perhaps no better models—than those evolved in the name of the university.

Unfortunately, the church and the university are largely but institutions—caught up as institutional life is today in the segmented flux of the secular city. No perceptive sociologist is in a position to deny the general descriptive and predictive logic of Harvey Cox's conclusion that the "organized church" no longer has a distinctive role *vis a vis* the university. Church colleges may be expected to continue to degenerate into functional appendages of that city, distinguished only as havens for the socially advantaged who seek the succor of a familiar institutional identification. Yet no biblically informed man can deny either that God somehow calls forth a saving remnant to witness to the possibilities of His creation.

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# BOOKS

Harry Golden, *A Little Girl Is Dead*. The World Publishing Company (1965).

On the Day of Atonement, the priests drove a goat out into the wilderness, laden with the sins of the people. When the supporters of the Jerusalem Temple sought to rid themselves of a disturber of its alliance with the *Pax Romana*, one of the priestly upholders of things-as-they-are considered it better for one man to suffer death than that all should be inconvenienced. Every once in a while some scapegoat is put out of the way so that the people may enjoy the vicarious thrill of being both inflicter of and sharer in his suffering. Such a scapegoat was Leo Frank, who, save for the fact that a child was killed in the factory of which he was superintendent, would have lived and died in comparative obscurity. Leo Frank was somewhat different from the ordinary run of American political offenders. Unlike the Chicago anarchists, unlike Tom Mooney, unlike Sacco and Vanzetti, Frank was well-to-do and a college graduate. But, as the historian of Israel told of Naaman the leper—but . . . he was a Jew. Worse than that, he was a capitalist battering on a land that had not, in 1913, reconciled itself to the fact of the Industrial Revolution. The rural Georgian was used to the rule of "sensible men of substantial means," as Bagehot put it. However, when he was reminded of it by those who stood to profit thereby, Leo Frank was, after all, a stranger and a sojourner, a foreigner. If the mob that lynched him did so because of the pittance he paid his workers, or for the child labor that was tolerated under shameful conditions, its behavior might have been in some sort understandable. But Harry Golden writes about what took place in the bad old days, in 1913, when the social conscience was still slumbering. Only faint stirrings were discernible in the North.

Mr. Golden does well to remind us that such things have happened here. And only an incurable optimist with his head in the clouds would say that the days of lynchings are at an end. As in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, all the forms of law were adhered to in Leo Frank's case. He was given the right to use all the appellate machinery of the courts, even to the Supreme Court of the United States. His appeals fell upon deaf ears: the lower courts were found to have correctly followed the book of rules. Even if the jury that convicted Leo Frank was not unlike those that sent the French *aristos* to the guillotine, he had been given the due process of law. What mattered it, or so held the majority of the Supreme Court, if a mob outside the courtroom clamored for the defendant's death? The case had aroused considerable public feeling and hostility. The majority saw no merit in Judge Holmes' dissenting opinion that "lynch law is as little valid when practiced by a regularly drawn jury as when administered by one elected by a mob intent on death."

What were the facts? On Confederate Memorial Day, Saturday, April 14, 1913, Mary Phagan, a white girl of fourteen, a worker in the National Pencil Factory in Atlanta, of which Leo Frank was manager, went to get \$1.20, her weekly wage. She was able to work only one day in that week, because of shortage of material. Mr. Frank paid her. She was never seen alive again. Her body was found in the factory basement. Frank was tried for the murder. Why? Local politics probably provides the answer. Author Golden suggests that something more unusual than a Negro was needed to be thrown to the lions to entertain the patrons of the arena. Leo Frank was chosen because he seemed fair game to an ambitious prosecutor who was not particular how he got a conviction. To hound Leo Frank to his death also suited the book of an old-time demagogue, Tom Watson, who needed a new whipping boy. He feared that he was losing his following as he discovered that people were tiring of his attacks on Wall Street and the Roman Church. Frank was brought to trial before an aging judge, who had his doubts as to how well he could protect the defendant from the mob that had made a mockery of the administration of criminal justice. He had grave misgivings about the ability of a terrorized jury to render an honest verdict. The conviction was a foregone conclusion. After the appeals to the higher courts—a process that took two years—had been denied, Frank's only hope was in executive clemency. It took rare courage for Governor Slaton to commute the death sentence to one of life imprisonment. Frank was hustled off to the state prison farm between dark and daylight. While there, he was the victim of a murderous assault by a fellow convict; and in August, 1915, as he was still convalescing from his injuries, he was removed from

the farm and hanged by a lynch mob. Such is another American tragedy.

It is morally certain that Leo Frank never laid violent hands on the Phagan girl. A rape-murder was entirely out of keeping with his demonstrated character and conduct. He was a ready-made victim for those who stood to profit by inflaming the mob and keeping its passions at white heat. The Frank case is not unlike the Dreyfus Affair. There were many points of similarity. Both cases showed heights of human grandeur and depths of human degradation. Harry Golden does well to pay tribute to the moral courage of Governor Slaton, who sacrificed his political future to follow his conscience. And he does well to print the Holmes dissent in full as an appendix to the book. (What else, however, would one have expected of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.?)

We need to be reminded, ever so often, that mobs, thinking they are instruments of divine vengeance, can make justice a by-word and a mockery. And courts need occasionally to be reminded that the shibboleth of due process can be made to cover a multitude of sins.

Harry Golden has caused us to think. Some of the thoughts will not be pleasant. There is much to be learned from the Frank case. Are we capable of learning? It is not so long ago that the unlamented McCarthy stood quite high in the opinion of not a few of his fellow countrymen. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

—ALFRED A. GROSS

### Helen and Philip Stern, *Oh, Say Can You See?—A Bi-Focal Tour of Washington*. Colortone Press.

Nowhere in America is our Nation's promise so high and its performance so low as in the Nation's Capital.

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Progressive Congressmen have been fighting for self-government for the capital for years, and I and others introduced home rule legislation in the 87th, the 88th and the 89th Congresses. Last year, when a limited home rule bill finally came up for a vote in the House, the conservative coalition used complex House rules to simply make the bill disappear—as if by magic. The coalition offered and passed a substitute postponing any meaningful action and effectively killing home rule. Two hundred and eighty-three members of the House—most of the Republicans and all of the Dixiecrats—voted against home rule or limited democracy for the Americans who live in the nation's capital.

Aside from the moral, political and ethical arguments for home rule, the Sterns' book makes the most fundamental, practical and human argument. Through the House Committee on the District of Columbia, dominated by rural and conservative representatives, the Congress has given Washington and Washingtonians shockingly inept, discriminatory, hypocritical and impoverished government.

Documented and dramatic, the book uses pungent prose and excellent, full-page pictures by George De Vincent to make its point. For instance, the Sterns point out that, in the words of the Visitors' Guide to Washington, "The White House . . . was the first public building begun in Washington. . . . In all (it) has

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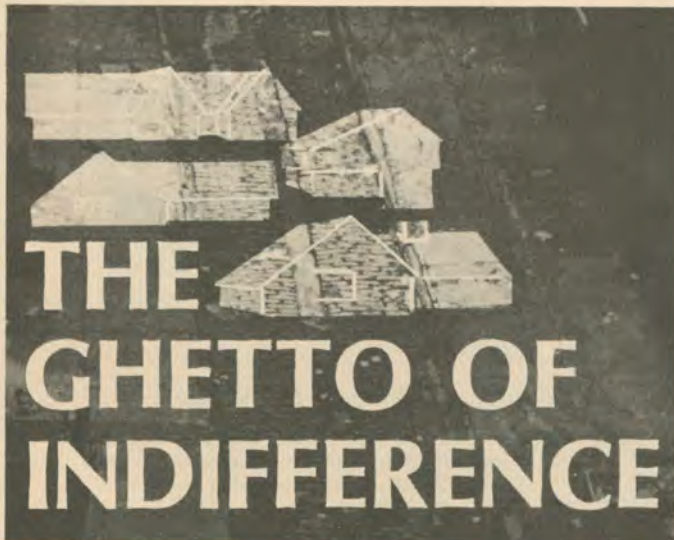
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Nearly half the captions in the book are direct quotes from visitors' guides or postcards, emphasizing the fact that the ruling Congressmen may think more in terms of beautifying Washington for visitors than in terms of providing adequate services to residents. The book shows a small boy playing with broken bottles among the ruins of a half-demolished house. The caption says, "The city itself is dotted with playgrounds, parks and picnic grounds . . ."

The Sterns note that Washington is proud of the blocks of townhouses in the southwest, which replace slums. But the former slum residents have gone into worse slums. Over the past five years, the District of Columbia has cleared away more than 4,000 homes and built only 407 new, low-rent homes to replace them. There are 5,500 families on the waiting list for public housing. The average family waits four years before a vacancy turns up.

If seeing is believing, and the facts make it more so, the Sterns' brilliant little book should shake up Americans and disturb the complacent. If it gets into enough hands, the book may even disturb the Administration and the Congress so that we can vote to give Americans in Washington the fundamental democratic rights we are willing to fight to preserve for other people all around the globe.

—WILLIAM F. RYAN

Stephen C. Rose, editor, *Who's Killing the Church?*  
Chicago City Missionary Society (1966), 141 pp.,  
\$1.50.

This book of essays is dedicated to the memory of a number of modern day martyrs who "have taken upon themselves the crucifixions of our time." Its publication is sponsored by the Chicago City Missionary Society, one of the most exciting centers of experimental ministry in the world today. Its editor, and author of several sections, has made *Renewal* magazine one of the hottest items on the shelves. Contributors include Don Benedict, Gordon Cosby, Bob Spike, Harvey Cox, and several others who are leading the renewal of the church.

There is a great deal of anxiety blowing through the churches, from local level through to higher echelon offices. Sometimes it shows in frantic opposition to the new liturgies of the new theologies. Sometimes it shows in hostility to those who criticize the traditional structures and call for a better disciplined and more vigorous ministry and mission. Reading these essays leaves one with no doubt, however, where the real love of the Church is to be found: it is to be found among those who have had the moral courage to draw the knife. They shall win Isaac in the end, and not the peddlars of cheap grace and peace of mind.

Social psychologists tell us that studies of shop and office show that the most productive employees are not those who bite their tongues and never complain, nor even those who always have a happy word. The most loyal and the most productive are those who are free to ask questions, who are constantly critical of themselves and the common effort, who are always eager to improve the operation. If you want to get work done, in short, hire a prophet of the Lord and not a Baal-worshipper!

"Who's killing the Church? God Himself. The Church is called to lose her life in order to find new life." (p. 5)

Bruce Hunt writes on the Chicago Business-Industrial Project (pp. 49-52), Jared J. Rardin on the Germantown Methodist Church (pp. 70-76), Howard Moody on Judson Memorial (pp. 82-92), Bill Southwick on a Chicago northside coffee house ministry, Peggy Way on "Women in the Church," and John Fry on "The Denominational Dollar." These, and other essays of quality, are both critical and prescriptive. The reader will learn much, and he will be much inspired.

Bob Strom and Don Benedict both discuss the failures of the geographical parish church of conventional style (pp. 13-19, 42-48), and both go on to deal with the problem and promise of experimental ministries. This is the manner of the other essayists, and it is far more *faithful*—theologically speaking—than any word of peace—peace, when there is no peace.

Stephen Rose, who is joining the staff of the World Council





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# CONTRIBUTORS

**MIKE THELWELL** is a native Jamaican, now teaching English at the University of Massachusetts after having worked for two years with SNCC and MFDP.

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**POETS** for April: **ANTHONY TOWNE**, since we began the long process of commissioning graphics for his poem, became one of  *motive's* book review editors. So for those readers who know his work better in that latter capacity, it's worth mentioning that his poems have appeared in *Sewanee Review*, *Yale Review*, *The New Yorker*, and similar garden spots.

**GEMMA D'AURIA**, playwright as well as poet, has had work represented in *New Mexico Quarterly*, *Prairie Schooner*, and other journals. Her recent collection was entitled *High Noon*.

**SIDNEY SULKIN's** work has appeared in the *Kenyon* and *Southwest* reviews, and has been repeatedly anthologized. He is also the author of one novel—*The Family Man*.

**GERALD LOCKLIN** teaches at California State College, Long Beach. His work has appeared widely.

**TED-LARRY PEBWORTH** is at L.S.U., and is making his second appearance in  *motive*. Since his poem "Comfort" appeared last October it has been picked up with commendation by several magazines, and reprinted. He studied with Paul Engle at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

**ARTISTS** this issue: **DON STURKEY** is an award-winning photographer with the *Charlotte Observer* in North Carolina. **ED WALLOWITCH** is a free-lance photographer in New York City. **ELIZABETH KORN**, whose work was featured in  *motive* in October 1961, is a frequent contributor. We haven't heard from artist **T. T. BLADE** since his graduation from St. Cloud State College in Minnesota in 1963. **KEN THOMPSON**, a recent graduate of Peabody College in Nashville, has gone "on the road" with "The Remicks," a jazz group. **JON ELSE** attends school part time in Sacramento and works as a consultant in the anti-poverty program. **MARTIN S. DWORKIN**, of the Columbia University faculty, has exhibited his photographs around the world. **ROBERT HODGELL** and  *motive* are synonymous.

**BOOK REVIEWERS** include: **MARY McDERMOTT SHIDELER**, author of *The Theology of Romantic Love: A study in the Writings of Charles Williams*; **FRANKLIN H. LITTELL**, professor of church history at Chicago Theological Seminary; **WILLIAM F. RYAN**, Democratic congressman from New York's 20th District; and **ALFRED A. GROSS**, director of the George Henry Foundation in New York.

of Churches in Geneva, has contributed several brilliant essays of his own. "Whither the Gospel in Race Relations?" (pp. 118-23), and "The Post-Assassination Church" (pp. 124-41) is each worth the price of the book. All the more so, when lay study conferences can buy the book in batches of 100 for just \$1.00 apiece!

—FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

Charles Williams, *Shadows of Ecstasy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965. Paperback, \$1.95.

Fifteen years ago, when I first read *Shadows of Ecstasy*, I found it thrilling, provocative and a little puzzling. When I reread it before writing this review, I found it terrifying.

Fifteen years ago I had no hope—or fear—that in the Western world, at least, the supremacy of the detached rational intellect might be successfully challenged by a resurgence of the imagination, or our civilization shaken by a return inward or backward to primitive ways of acting and reacting. Now, for good or evil (or more probably, for good and evil), these remote eventualities have become immediate possibilities. And the directions from which such an attack are likely to come can be defined with reasonable assurance. To name only three works that illuminate these renascent powers in both their beauty and their terror: Lewis Mumford's "The Revolt of the Demons," his review of C. G. Jung's autobiography, in *The New Yorker* (May 23, 1964); John V. Taylor's study of Christianity in Africa, *The Primal Vision*; and J. R. R. Tolkien's three-volume fairy story for adults, *The Lord of the Rings*.

If indeed we are on the threshold of an age of the imagination, in which the perception and interrelationships of images becomes a legitimate and even a major subject for study, Charles Williams' novel *Shadows of Ecstasy* should be one of our basic texts, to be read before we decide whether we ourselves will cross that threshold, or turn away from it and seek another door into the future. The story takes place principally in London, in the indefinite present—more plausibly in the late 1960's than in 1931 when the book was first published, or 1925 when it was written. The plot centers around the threat and then the actuality of the invasion of England by an African army. Its immediate purpose, as defined by its High Executive, is "the freeing of the African continent from the government and occupation of the white race . . . [and] the restoration to mankind of powers which have been forgotten or neglected."

The High Executive is an Englishman, Nigel Considine, who since his young manhood has known that his life has its "origin and nourishment in the great moments of the exalted imagination," and has set himself so to direct his imagination that all his experiences be-

come food for both spirit and body. At the time of the story, he is two hundred years old, radiant with an almost angelic energy and ecstasy, and fully in control of the African chieftains, witch doctors, and tribesmen whom he has been organizing for this rebellion during most of his lifetime. Against this background are set the stories of half a dozen English men and women, closely related by blood, marriage, and friendship, who are particularly affected by Considine himself and by his follower, the Zulu king Inkamasi, who is bound to Considine by a quasi-hypnotic spell.

There is Roger, Professor of Applied Literature at the University of London, who follows Considine because in him Roger finds someone who has explored the depths where great poetry has its source. There is Rosamond, Roger's sister-in-law, hating Considine and Inkamasi because they awake in her the primal impulses whose existence she will not acknowledge but cannot subdue. There is the Anglican priest, Ian Caithness, who is convinced that Considine is the Antichrist and is thereby led to betray his own faith. And there are Roger's wife Isabel, and their friend Sir Bernard Travers, who alone are immune to Considine's enchantments because they have already made peace between the Africa and Europe within themselves, and unlike Considine, they do not repudiate defeat and death. "Can you live truly till you have been quite defeated?" Isabel asks Considine, and he replies, "But it isn't such submission and destruction that man desires." He has made himself invulnerable to age and disease, and is therefore a lord of life. But Isabel has achieved lordship over something greater than life.

This novel is not a treatise on the immeasurable powers and dangers of the imagination. It is a story—and an enthralling one—of people who affirm and deny, use and misuse the morally ambiguous, primitive energies that produce art, impel worship, and sustain love. Considine's strictures against a culture that suppresses them is penetrating and just, although the alternative that he sets in motion is subtly and seductively damning. Caithness is not an allegorical figure representing Christianity or a church, but a devout and intelligent man who behaves exceedingly well at times—notably in his liberation of Inkamasi from Considine's control—and badly at other times. Roger's return to Isabel may constitute a victory or a defeat for them both. But the warnings are clearly stated, and so are the brilliant potentialities of the time when man's imaginative functions are again honored, and their discipline is again taught.

*Shadows of Ecstasy* is reported (I no longer remember where) to have been Charles Williams' favorite among his seven novels. It was his first, written over a period of six weeks, and is rich with the exuberance of youth and a vivid imagining. Like nearly all his work, it first appeared long before its time. It looks as if its time is now close upon us, or may even be here.

—MARY McDERMOTT SHIDELER



In the year 2140 A.D. the Internal Revenue Service of the United States government, being the only official agency with any credit left (or right, for that matter—Texas oil and finance existing only in legend), decided to send a space search team to the constellation of Orion.

The preparations were as elaborate as they had been on Cape Kennedy in the early days of solar flight. This was to be a new venture into time and position beyond what the ancient thinker, Albert Einstein, had called the absolute in acceleration, viz., the speed of light. The new age astronauts would have to be thrown into a different continuum, the speed of light being too tedious for travel between the constellations.

The twins climbed into their astro-age capsule, redundantly baptized "Gemini 2-2-2." They were locked into deep freeze with all bodily functions suspended; the anti-gravity was initiated and the capsule disappeared into an alternative time level.

Only, as generally happens in fantasy fiction, "Gemini 2-2-2" hit the wrong time belt and the ship settled down near Amsterdam, year 1640 A.D. When the astronauts were defrosted, they tumbled out of the ship, the instruments showing the atmosphere to be remarkably similar to that of the earth, only with a much higher percentage of oxygen—what was known to the Astronauts by hearsay as "pure air."

They walked toward a hut on the edge of a canal, a quaint windmill noisily creaking nearby. They were met by a sloppy old man with a clutch of brushes in his hand. He was daubing with paint on a canvas.

The astronauts vaguely concluded that the old gentleman was creating a painting, something they had seen in museums. The artists of 2140 preferred changing lights and sound and four dimensional dreams as their media.

The old man called out something they interpreted as a greeting. He seemed mildly curious, for a moment, about their 22nd century attire, then he resumed his daubing

on a canvas which seemed a self-portrait—an elderly man contemplating the bust of another. Puzzled, doubting eyes peered from a scraggly face framed by a shadowy, formless void. The spacemen watched curiously for a few minutes, turned to go, when the old man finished his work and scratched his signature. They noted the letters: R - e - m - b - r - a - n - d - t.

"Let's go," said astronaut #1.

"O.K.," said #2.

They walked to a nearby collection of buildings with waterways for streets and public edifices with sharp spires that towered over the houses and shops. Some of the spires were topped by crosses, others by a specie of bird known as Rooster.

The visitors collected many small artifacts and specimen. They made copious notes of what they observed for six days and six nights. On the seventh they returned to their craft, activated the automatic apparatus, went into hypermotion and awoke in their native time and place.

There was considerable stir upon their return.

"How did you like the planets of the constellation Orion?"

"Wonderful."

"What was it like?"

"Something as earth must have been in early times."

"People?"

"Yeah, people. And water. Lots of water. But on the whole a rather retrograde culture. Backward, you know."

Astronaut #2 broke into the dialogue. "They even had artists, men who made pictures with pigments on cloth. Remember that old guy we first saw?"

"Yeah. Funny old man. He had a kind of earth-like name. Remember?"

"Huh uh . . . I forgot to write it down. I don't recall."

*From which we are justified in concluding: The Metropolitan considers a Rembrandt to be worth \$2, 230, 000. Others wouldn't give a damn. (a damn is an ancient coin worth a fraction of a centime.)*

—ROGER ORTMAYER