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THE DILEMMAS OF A RECONCILER

SERVING THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT



RICHARD K. ULLMANN



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RICHARD K. ULLMANN (1904-1963)

Richard K. Ullmann was born in Frankfurt on Main and took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Frankfurt University. From 1927 to 1930 he was a lecturer at the Sun Yat Sen University of Canton, and from 1934 to 1937 he had a German language school in Serres, Greece. After some time in Buchenwald Concentration Camp he reached England as a refugee from Nazi oppression shortly before the outbreak of the war. From that date till his death he worked in adult education and in various Quaker activities, for many years serving as an Associate Lecturer at Woodbrooke. Brought up as a Lutheran, he joined the Society of Friends in 1946.

He was a vice-president, and member of the working commission of the *Christian Peace Conference* which was convened for the first time in Prague, in the summer of 1958, on the initiative of a group of Eastern European churchmen and theologians. Dedicated to furthering relationships of Christians in East and West Europe, this group has proved increasingly successful in overcoming the cold war spirit which divides the church today far more deeply than do denominational differences. The Prague movement reached a peak in 1961, in the first all-Christian peace assembly, with a participation of nearly seven hundred Christians from all over the world. *The Dilemmas of a Reconciler* reflects the author's experience with this organization.

As this pamphlet was going to press Richard Ullmann was stricken with a heart attack and died August 8 at Birmingham, England. In addition to the present work he left behind him the following writings: *German Parliaments* (in co-operation with Sir Stephen King-Hall, 1954), *Friends and Truth* (1956), *Between God and History* (1959), and the Swarthmore Lecture of 1961, *Tolerance and the Intolerable*.

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THE DILEMMAS OF A RECONCILER

SERVING THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT

MY MOTHER was a popular reconciler whenever there was trouble in the family or among relatives and acquaintances. Her technique, as far as I can judge after forty years, was very simple but notably effective. She would listen carefully to the complaints of one party, and having listened long enough to assure the much aggrieved speaker of her fullest sympathy, she would say kindly, but much worried, "I see all this very well, but it is really you who are at fault." And she would explain why this was the case. Then she would apply exactly the same treatment to the opposite party.

Usually it worked, maybe because after her explanations each side began wondering why this sympathetic listener had not accepted uncritically the self-righteous version of one's own point of view. He would ask himself, perhaps for the first time, whether nothing could be said for the other side. In this way his emotional state of mind would slowly be infused with greater reasonableness, and this gave the reconciler a chance of bringing about the conditions for the moral and psychological give and take in which the settlement of a personal quarrel consists. In this process it makes little difference whether material interests are involved or not. I do not think that my mother was ever much concerned with the objective rights and wrongs of a case, possibly because she was instinctively aware of the much deeper truth which is achieved by actual reconciliation. Nor was she a very religious person, in the ordinary sense of the word.

When we Friends describe our work for international reconciliation, we are prone to speak in similar personal terms. We like to think of a disinterested mediator who meets a situation of conflict with sympathy and care for the people involved and then tells each side where it has failed to understand the justifiable grievances of the other, hoping thereby to achieve better understanding between classes, races, nations and power blocs. It is sufficient, however, to imagine a Quaker reconciler meeting first one and then the other Mister K. and talking to each in this personal way, to realize how inadequate such a comparison is. We simply cannot apply, without many qualifications, the techniques of personal contact to social and international relationships.

Personal and Impersonal Relationships

First of all, the two Mister K.'s may or may not be emotionally involved in personal hostility. We know from history that great statesmen and generals have sometimes a genuine admiration for the adversary, very much like two chess-players. But their mutual emotional involvement is rarely the offshoot of personal problems between them. They are involved not as persons, but as exponents of groups and power systems over which they have merely a limited control. To maintain that control, however limited, is at least as relevant for international understanding as are the specific problems dividing the two systems; for what good would come from any personal reconciliation between leaders if they had to pay for it with the loss of their positions, while their groups were still persisting in a fight to the death?

In personal quarrels the reconciler meets with relatively free agents—free, that is, insofar as their characters and emotions allow them freedom and as they do not succumb to the bad influence of their retinue, of a husband, a wife, or a “good” friend. Above all, they are free to decide, beyond all rights and wrongs of the case, for a solution of personal self-sacrifice.

In the relationship between groups and power systems, the "self-sacrifice" for which their exponents are asked is not a true sacrifice of the self (apart from surrendering their personal leadership, which may well hinder rather than help), but is more likely the sacrifice of the interests of the poorer section of their own countries or of third parties such as national minorities. The statesman, therefore, in spite of all emotional ties to his group, makes his decisions not in emotional reaction to personal hurt, nor merely on the justice of the case, but in rational judgment of a given situation and its inherent limitations. For him the intervention of the reconciler is at best one political influence among many.

It is true, of course, that the statesman, with all his rational assessment of the situation, is influenced by the emotions and preconceptions of his group, precisely as it is true that as a man of influence he, in his turn, can affect his group to a certain degree, thus moving from rational assessment to internal political action. This influence on his group may look like a person's impact on persons, yet it is quite different from the truly personal influence described in the beginning of this pamphlet. It belongs to the category not of *personal*, but of technical and social action.

Many a Christian peacemaker, frustrated in the use of personal approaches, has turned to these techniques without realizing that by using the tactics of pressure groups—lobbying and mass demonstrations—he has given up the assumption that peacemaking, unlike peace propaganda, is disinterested personal service. He no longer tries to meet the psychological and moral conditions of quarreling groups, but to push his own peace policies by hook and (sometimes) by crook. The reconciler's interest should be directed not towards policies but towards people. This is an important part of what we call "disinterestedness." If he loses it, he loses his spiritual power—the one power that can do without majorities, weapons, and other forms of material strength—because he has made his escape into

mere politics where matter and matters count more than the spirit.

But with this we have touched the first major dilemma of a reconciler, his task of pursuing a personal concern in the sphere of impersonal relationships. The assumption that peacemaking in the international field is solely a matter of disinterested personal service has never been built on sound foundations. A reconciler will hardly appear to the eyes of statesmen as a detached arbiter or mediator to whom they may wish to open their hearts about their mutual entanglements. For the reconciler himself is no mere person; he, too, is an exponent. Even if truly disinterested, he is still an exponent, not of reconciliation pure and simple, but of a *policy* of reconciliation. Paradoxically, he must work out such a policy, step by step, if he wants to succeed in international peacemaking, and at the same time he must try to remain a partisan of God in a world where varieties of worldliness compete and seem to rule supreme.

Nor can this world help seeing in him the adversary rather than the reconciler. For even supposing he could act as a lone prophet without any background other than the Voice that spoke to him in the wilderness and sent him forth, he would still appear to the politicians as the advocate of a policy rather than as merely an honest broker. Maybe he is able, under the guidance of the Spirit, to impress them with a quality different from what they normally expect from a politician. This, of course, is his great chance and his hope. All the same he will be placed by them on the chess-board of politics as a pawn to be used, or as a useful go-between through whom the opponent may be informed, misled, or influenced in some other way. This fact alone deprives him to a certain extent of his status of mere reconciler.

If he is honest with himself, he knows that with all his detachment and disinterestedness, which he ought to sustain to the limits of his ability, his national background, his education, his mother tongue, his very concepts of right and wrong and good

and evil, will never allow him to be simply a partisan of God. He shares the glory and prestige of his group, but also its guilt and shame; and when he feels injured by wrongs committed on his own side, his bad conscience will either make excuses or lean over backwards to make excuses for wrongs committed on the other side. Indeed he may do both. His sense of collective responsibility is at once a major motive toward reconciliation and a major obstacle to true detachment. He cannot deny that willy nilly he, too, is a partisan of earthbound interests, and that the statesmen are not entirely misguided when they judge rationally how he may fit into their game. Does he not offer himself for this very purpose? And does he not consider carefully the ways and means by which he, in his turn, might use them for the purpose of his policy of reconciliation? Using people, however, and being used by them, confront the reconciler with another serious dilemma. Let me describe it in all its concreteness as it has recently operated at Prague.

Used and Being Used

For several years now the *Christian Peace Conference* of Prague has convened meetings of Christians from the Eastern, Western and non-aligned countries of Europe. Most Western participants, accustomed to hearing the word "peace" used by Eastern Europeans in a merely propagandistic sense, at first attended those gatherings with much inner reservation. If they did not suspect their Eastern brethren of conscious duplicity, they still thought of them as stool-pigeons of communist policy, and they were not prepared to become its dupes. Especially those who felt a genuine concern for East-West reconciliation wished to avoid any possible defamation as "fellow-travellers," knowing well that a major condition of successful peacemaking is to remain trusted by both sides.

In the course of time, however, an increasing number of Western participants in the Prague Conference have become convinced that their Eastern brethren are profoundly concerned

for, and actively engaged in, overcoming the spirit of the cold war, first and foremost within the Christian Church. Without minimizing the divisiveness of political issues, they have called for the trusting cooperation of Christians from all over the world to labor together for mutual understanding of different social conditions and ideologies and above all for a common witness to a deeply divided world, a witness of their unity in Christ.

Still, with all their faithfulness, there remain some gnawing doubts. How is it possible, we must ask ourselves, that these conferences can gather "behind the Iron Curtain" unless with the approval of communist governments? How is it possible that churchmen in Eastern Europe enjoy this freedom of meeting with us and even sending their representatives to attend conferences in non-communist countries and to join the World Council of Churches, at a time when the Government-sponsored anti-religious campaign against them is stepped up once again, as it so obviously is? If there is no duplicity in the attitude of our fellow-Christians, can we say the same for the attitude of their governments?

We may fairly assume that these governments are interested in our Christian conferences very much in the same way in which they support the exchanges of ballet companies, football teams, chess players and other forms of "cultural" contacts, namely to impress the other side with their achievements and their good intentions, and thus to further their policy of "competitive peaceful coexistence," whatever this may mean. This makes us cautious and circumspect in our criticism, because we do not wish by such criticism to harm our Eastern friends or to be deprived of further contacts with them. Whether such restraint be for the good or the bad, we had better admit without further prevarications that our Eastern brethren are being used for communist policy, and that through them we are being used in the same way. Let us admit this, well knowing that anti-communist readers may tear the last sentence from its context and quote it as evidence against us. Perhaps they will do

it with a bad conscience after having read on. The crucial question is whether we are right to resent being used and to refuse cooperation under these circumstances.

We must refuse cooperation if and when we feel sure that we are being used exclusively for wrong purposes. Yet, wanting to be bridge-builders, we must be ready at times to be the bridge over which the others are invited to walk. At all events, we should pray every day that God may use us for his own purposes in whatever situation we may find ourselves. I contend here that it is possible to be used by communist governments for the purposes of God; indeed, that they themselves are being used by God in spite of their atheism. Many will deny this. Their narrow theology assumes that because these people know nothing of a God they are not known to Him either; that those who exclude God from their account are automatically excluded from His.

They fail to recognize that God is using communist governments to open the door for our meetings with our Eastern brethren at the very moment when these fellow Christians need our friendship and spiritual support in a difficult situation inflicted on them by the same governments; at the very moment, too, when we Christians in the West are in dire need of learning, through their faithfulness, how to be Christian in a sub-Christian or post-Christian society and what positive and creative aspects our friends in Eastern Europe have discovered in communism, thanks to their every-day closeness to it. Indeed, if we are being used, we ourselves are using the facilities granted to us by their governments to deepen our knowledge and understanding of forces without which cooperation and peace-making will be impossible. We all, communists and Christians alike, are part of the "contingencies of history" of which Reinhold Niebuhr has spoken. We are engaged in purposes which are not of our making.

Certainly the door opened to us by Eastern governments would be closed quickly if we were trying to use it for anti-

communist subversion. It is a sad fact that many Christians, so-called, believe firmly that this should be our way of serving Christ; like the Zebedees, they seem not to know what manner of spirit they are made of. We cannot wish to use our brethren as a fifth column of Western policies. We rather seek together with them to transform "peaceful competitive coexistence" into true cooperation for the welfare of all mankind. Precisely by refusing to misuse our brethren for Western purposes we make it difficult for their political masters to shut the door in our faces because it would have an adverse effect on their propaganda for peaceful coexistence. This means that we are strengthening the position of our fellow-Christians and their importance for governmental policies and thus are once again using their governments for our own purposes while being used by them for theirs.

The notion that on no account must we allow communists to use us for any purpose whatsoever is quite untenable. It is based on the uncritical assumption—adopted by myself up to this point for the sake of argument—that communism is evil by definition and, hence, that the communists are inherently malevolent and pernicious. The ardent communist or anti-communist who recommends complete abstention from any relationship with the other side except war or subversion, has not grasped that in this *cold* war he, too, is using the other side, and is used by it, all the time. As he feeds a caricature of the other side to his own propaganda machine, he thereby unintentionally makes himself a caricature and feeds the propaganda machine of his antagonist. Thus the two arch-enemies confirm each other's prejudices, serving to each other as in a game of tennis. It is no new observation that enemies need one another for their enmity. The conviction that anything benefiting the policies of one side must necessarily be to the disadvantage of the other in no wise meets the actual situation of our time.

If it suits communists, as it suits ourselves, to avoid the outbreak of nuclear war or any war that might escalate into one,

it cannot be wrong to let ourselves be used for preparing the ground for policies expressing that common interest. The "contingencies of history" have driven most sane people everywhere to a fuller recognition that the two antagonistic systems have become interdependent in fact. We can therefore observe a laborious movement from the obsolescent doctrine that war between capitalism and communism is inevitable (a doctrine held also by many anti-communists in the West, though it was originally a Marxist doctrine!), to the doctrine of competitive peaceful coexistence. Perhaps our usefulness to communist policies may help to hasten this development, perhaps even beyond "competitive coexistence" to cooperative coexistence and mutual aid.

We are also witnessing a slow development from an outdated concept of science contemporary with Marx or Lenin, to the modern insights of the second half of the twentieth century. We see Western and Eastern scientists assisting each other in this process, "using" each other. Admittedly, it is the field of natural science which is affected in the first place, but since it is producing a general change of intellectual climate, the field of social science cannot escape its influence for long; and first traces of change can be discovered without difficulty in recent Marxist thought. Perhaps our usefulness may be instrumental in a small way to reduce the false categories of "*scientific materialism*" versus "*superstitious religion*." The recent increase of atheistic propaganda, already mentioned, might possibly be interpreted as the last-ditch stand in a losing battle. The development away from rigid dialectical materialism, however, is not likely to return to traditional forms of religion but rather to some radical scientific humanism, more or less puzzled by the things of the spirit. In any case, all such changes happen through people ready to be used; and like all changes, they happen on all sides, if differently in different environments.

I am sure that we must allow ourselves to be used, and must

feel free to use others for the right purposes. But how can we presume to know the right purposes? How are we to escape the inescapable entanglements when entering situations of conflict, burdened as we are with our many prejudices? I have no ready prescription for avoiding *misuse*, even misuse for the sake of love. The reconciler has little to go by except his will for utmost integrity in every action, and under divine guidance. The will for integrity, however, comprises dilemmas of its own.

Rigidity and Acquiescence

Let us begin again with a concrete situation. A reconciler will, as a matter of course, be opposed to racialism and oppression of any kind and will therefore urge on his government such policies as are conducive to freedom and justice for all. When meeting citizens from communist countries, however, and hearing very much the same denunciations which he has never been slow to express himself, he will suddenly discover that he is modifying his position in the direction of gradualism. A group of young American Quakers, Paul Lacey and his friends, have, in their report, "Experiment in Understanding" (1959), described their own reaction when their three young Russian visitors criticized segregation. They write (pp. 12/13): "We . . . found ourselves surprisingly defensive at times. We felt their attitude on segregation, for one thing, ignored the complexity of the problem and the degree of progress made in recent years. Before very long, we found ourselves defending with great vigor a moderate go-slow position which none of us would entertain in any similar discussion with Americans. It seems to be a law of human behavior that rigid attitudes call up equally rigid responses."

I also remember a young clergyman from the East End of London, a left-wing social democrat and ardent pacifist, who attended one of the Christian Peace Conferences in Prague. When confronted with a barrage of Eastern denunciations accusing all Western governments of warmongering, he turned

round to me and sighed in despair, "I shall return to London as a Tory." We know only too well how quickly our attitudes stiffen under outside attack and how hotly we then defend hardly defensible causes. We act like a family of brothers who quarrel all day long among themselves, but still quickly stand up for one another if an outsider tries to interfere.

Still, as indicated in the passage quoted, there is more to that rigidity than emotional reaction and loyalty to one's own tribe, more than "my country right or wrong." After many arguments, calm and heated ones alike, about "colonialism," I have come to understand that my friends in Eastern Europe mean something quite different when using this word pejoratively from what I mean when I oppose the continuation of colonial domination in Africa or Asia. They speak of a system where I speak of an intolerable political and human situation. Deep-rooted racial antipathies are for their theories *symptoms* rather than *roots* of class war, and ugly events are interpreted not in terms of unsatisfactory relationships between groups of people, but in terms of the dialectics of history. Hence they are handicapped in appreciating facts such as tribalism or tabus, or in realizing that colonial symbiosis has created links which cannot be broken suddenly without inflicting greater harm on the freed nations than a more gradual change which may, or may not, be exploited by vested interests. Aid given by the West to recently liberated and to developing countries is regarded without exception as "neo-colonialism," even when managed by United Nations agencies. Aid given by communist countries, often on much more stringent terms, and including the supply of weapons, is regarded as sheer altruism, by which the historically inevitable world revolution is being promoted.

Clarification of these divergencies has been made more difficult by the reaction of certain Western critics. Partly through rigidity, provoked by Eastern attack, partly in an honest attempt at creating a better understanding of the processes of decolonization, they have compared conditions in Africa with

those in Eastern Europe. They have applied the words "colonialism" and "neo-colonialism" to the situation of the smaller countries of the communist bloc and have thereby charged this emotive word with even greater emotions. Similar difficulties prevail in discussions of the events of 1956 in Hungary when sincere Western peacemakers, in search of true mutual understanding, have evoked a rigid and even antagonistic attitude on the other side.

In short, all of us are hypersensitive in some respects, all suffering from traumatic experiences or hidden sin, and hidden guilt, and hidden injury: the Negro who suspects slights where nothing but friendship is offered; the anti-colonialist from a colonial or ex-colonial power; the citizen of a central European state which at one time had been involved in national minority problems, had then been betrayed to Hitlerism by the free democracies of the West and had finally been liberated by and for communist rule; the Russians decimated under German occupation; the Germans kept divided largely by the force of Soviet tanks; and so on and on in tragic procession.

What, then, is the reconciler to do? Is it compatible with his personal integrity to avoid mentioning any issue which may hurt feelings on one side or another? Should he give up his efforts to clarify the issue of colonialism, knowing that any explanation is counted as evidence against him for still harboring secret colonial longings? Is he to acquiesce in superficial friendliness all round? In this case he could achieve very little towards true reconciliation. Yet, acquiescence is often the only way open to him. Thus he may agree to statements which have become acceptable to all sides only because the words chosen are vague and ambiguous and will be interpreted by each side as it pleases. The different interpretations of the word "peace" is the best-known example, but the same applies to terms like "justice" and "freedom" and to political formulas such as "universal disarmament under strict international control."

There are many verbal agreements, consented to either con-

sciously or unconsciously for the sole purpose of covering deep disagreement. The great temptation for the reconciler is not only to *accept* clever formulations for the sake of achieving an outward consensus, but even himself to suggest unclear expressions, hoping to convert disputants to a state of reasonableness in which they can talk together and perhaps even listen to one another. He takes refuge in ambiguities, well knowing that he may thereby be falling below the best standards of truthfulness. Perhaps he consoles himself with the realization that there is, after all, some integrity in treating emotional blockages with what may be compared to the white lies of a psychiatrist. He would do better, however, to look for comfort in less doubtful methods.

He may find it in the experience of Paul Lacey and his friends, already mentioned. Reporting about conversations with their Russian visitors, they write that, "Generally our debates sounded more acrimonious than they actually were, but the few outsiders who had a chance to eavesdrop must have concluded that we fought every mile of the trip. In fact, however, we discovered that we were making contacts on several levels. Beneath the war of words we were learning respect for one another's thinking and integrity as persons." This is very true in *personal* encounters once you have managed to take your interlocutor seriously. In this situation every new exasperation with him, because he holds such "dreadful," such "impossible" views, may help to bring him much closer to you, and your mutual friendship will deepen with every new disagreement clearly accepted. Again to quote Paul Lacey and his friends: "Well-meaning people often look so hard for the obvious areas of agreement that they ignore the constructive uses of frank disagreement. . . . Time and again we found that our real unity grew not from agreement, but from the ability to see the other's point of view while maintaining our own with integrity—not from reducing the areas of conflict, but from distinguishing sharply the issues truly separating us."

This, indeed, is a great achievement of reconciliation on the level of personal relationship: we stop judging each other by our own rules of the game, we accept the fact that there are different games being played according to different rules. Without adopting the other's code, we no longer question his honesty when he follows it honestly; indeed, we respect him for it. We begin to grasp that many concepts on the other side are not due to hypocrisy, ill-will, and hostility, but to the existence of a different code. We must live in the hope that the mutual respect discovered on the personal level may survive after the interlocutors return to their own environment and may help to increase the body of opinion that labors for genuine understanding between groups and nations.

Unfortunately, however, the "areas of conflict" mentioned by Paul Lacey, the hard impersonal facts of dissension, remain, despite all personal respect and confidence. Where the two interlocutors on both sides are mere exponents of their group, an issue may lose its poison for them as individuals, yet still remain unresolved. And the reconciler is still confronted with the quandary of standing up for his integrity and appearing rigid or else of acquiescing in duplicities. All along he has to make adjustments in his attitude to what the situation may demand, hence there is always some play-acting in his endeavors, at least something of St. Paul's effort of being all things to all men, or of the Quaker concern to "speak to the condition" of people. This means that the reconciler must be as interested in the possible effects of his words as in their truthfulness, though this poses a new challenge to his integrity. Assuming that he has achieved an unusual standard of objectivity, he still must project facts in a focus that enables the quarrelling parties to see and understand them.

Objectivity and Focus

As a reconciler he works under a twofold discipline: to understand, and to be understood. Normally Friends stress only

the need of understanding the other side. This seems all-important to them because most conflict situations arise from misunderstanding and an unwillingness to see the other side at all. Having acquired some knowledge and understanding of this other point of view, however, Friends consider it equally important to convey their findings to their compatriots. This means they try *to be understood* in their home environment as interpreters of the other side. This home environment being familiar to them as a matter of course, they are almost instinctively aware of its preconceptions and emotional blockages. They will therefore adjust automatically their interpretations to the "conditions" of their audience so as to circumvent unfriendly reactions, and "to get their points over" by making them as acceptable as possible.

A British Friend observing American Quakers at work, will be partly amused and partly dismayed by their frequent assurance to their American audiences that, in all their efforts for better understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union, and with all their concern for peace, they are "of course" not communists, have no truck with communism, are out of sympathy with communist or socialist tenets and wish as much as any of their compatriots to overcome communism, though only by peaceful means and by the spirit of truth. Clearly, a considerable part of their interpretation is a defence against any suspicion of fellow-traveling. They do this, I presume, not merely for political self-protection, but also in order to remain trusted when presenting their information gathered from communist countries, which must be accepted as reliable if a better understanding between the power blocs is to be achieved.

The British Friend, if at all self-critical, will soon discover that he uses the same technique when in an American environment. He will admit that in this respect the British are much easier to handle because of their greater readiness to come to an understanding with the Soviet Union—an attitude, by the way,

which in America is usually called British unreliability and softness. Thinking over his reports to British audiences, however, he will realize that he adopts a similar method at home, only in a more subtle form. After all, every good instructor adjusts his information to the understanding of his pupils. The reconciler will, for instance, give as much or as little of his negative impressions as will make him appear trustworthy so as to convince his audience that he has not been "taken in" by the other side; and he will dose his positive impressions to the maximum which his audience may tolerate. In neither case will he neglect truth; he will still endeavor to give an "objective" over-all picture. But his concern for objectivity is intertwined with the need of persuasion, for the sake of peacemaking. He may well apply to his own purposes Lord Stewart's adage that justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done.

He has to apply the same principle "on the other side," for him a strange and hence far more difficult environment. Here he does not understand the background from the outset but has first to acquire understanding. It may seem easiest simply to listen and to put questions, but this will not lead very far. At best he would give the impression of supine acceptance of everything he is told, at worst he would rouse suspicion about his real intention. Nobody will open up to him in matters which may lead to his deeper understanding of their problems and motivations unless he is himself willing to open up to them. He must therefore try both to learn understanding and to be understood in one and the same process of tactful exchange. He must try to put his own doubts and those of his compatriots into a focus through which his interlocutors can understand him without misinterpreting his intention, and he must do this at a time when he is not at all sure yet what the right focus may be. He cannot put things "simply as they are," or rather as they are seen by himself and his side, but as they can be seen and understood by others. He undergoes a process

of education full of pitfalls, mistakes, humiliations and self-reproaches.

The more, however, he attains through growing experience the ability of focusing correctly, the greater the temptation to speak merely to the condition of each side and thereby to lose sight of his real task, that of interpreting each side to the other. While the focus of the telescope must be adjusted to the vision of each, nevertheless each must be directed to look through it at the other and the things between them, and to see them clearly and not through the blur of their abnormal sights.

One of the merits of the Christian Peace Conference of Prague has been the growing realization among its leaders that all their efforts will be in vain unless they can get the focus right. They do not always succeed, but there have been remarkable attempts in the right direction, even in its early days—attempts which have convinced the present writer of the integrity of its leaders. In 1959, they suggested a call to Christendom all over the world that the 6th day of August, the anniversary of Hiroshima, should be set aside as a “day of repentance.” It was pointed out to them that such a call, if issued from Prague, would inevitably be understood, even by well-meaning Christians in the West, as a denunciation of the United States; it would sound to them as if the good Christians in communist countries were exhorting their bad American brethren that they should repent for what they and their compatriots had done at Hiroshima. Both focus and perspective were quite wrong, and the appeal would have divided rather than united Christians from East and West. The tenor of the appeal was then changed, “repentance” was replaced by “prayer,” the first nuclear bomb was described as a sign of the place to which Christians everywhere had allowed the world to drift, without protest, indeed, with their connivance and cooperation, and that for this reason they must now unite in prayer to think again and to rediscover the duty they have before God and to the world. Admittedly, even after these fundamental changes

of tenor, which expressed the true intention of our Eastern brethren, the appeal needed long and careful interpretation in Western countries, and for some the idea of a Hiroshima Day of Prayer is still out of focus, though not merely because the call has come from "the other side."

It is unfortunate that many an action undertaken for the sake of peace has missed its purpose because too little care or none has been taken to focus it rightly. In my view this criticism applies to the San Francisco to Moscow March in 1961, to the display of anti-nuclear protest banners by Western pacifists during their stay in Moscow on the occasion of the Peace Rally of 1962, and to the attempts of *Everyman III* to land in Leningrad later the same year. In all three cases the focus was adjusted to the West, whether the participants were aware of it or not, and the perspectives were all Western, too. After having been reproached so often that they directed their anti-nuclear demonstrations only against their own governments and that they would not be allowed to do this kind of thing in a communist country, they had to prove to themselves, for the sake of truth, and to their own side, for the sake of objectivity, that they would and could do it as well on the other side. Some of the Marchers admitted afterwards that they found it very difficult to answer when asked in Eastern Europe whether they had experienced German occupation and really knew what their demand for unilateral disarmament implied while the German Federal Republic was rearming. The failure of the *Everyman III* venture has brought grist to the mills of all those who did not expect anything better from communists, and has strengthened their arguments against policies of reconciliation; the same applies, if to a lesser degree, to the display of the anti-nuclear banners, and I know from personal friends in the East that they did not feel helped in their conciliatory efforts by this form of "illegality."

It would be odious to express such criticism here simply to offer a further example of the need to focus actions for

peace correctly. There is another side to it. While those three incidents tell us that, in the pursuance of peace, integrity is not enough, they remind us with equal force that clever adjustment to different outlooks is not enough either, and that reconciliation is impossible without truth. Nuclear weapons remain the same whether they are made and tested in the East or in the West. Well might the Marchers counter my criticisms with a quotation from Grigor MacClelland's pamphlet "The Prophet and the Reconciler" (1960), in which the prophet accuses the reconciler in these words (p. 4): "You soft-pedal the Truth. You are afraid that if you let them know what you really think, they will laugh at you and you will lose what influence you may have. In the end— if it hasn't happened already—you will become corrupted and lose your faith and it will be left to others to carry it on."

The reconciler ought to be very conscious of the validity of these admonitions. He knows that he must preserve his integrity for the sake of reconciliation precisely while making considerable allowances, again for the sake of reconciliation. Hence he is seen wavering all the time between two extremes. Either he remains "objective" to all sides, detached as far as possible from concrete situations, truthful by preaching nothing but peace pure and simple, and aloof from political policies. Or he enters imaginatively into the conditions of the quarrelling groups, feeling with them their sense of wrong when they feel wronged (even though objectively it may be a very minor wrong), understanding their self-assertive rightness when they feel right (even though they may be missing what can be said for the other side). He does all this in the hope that through such understanding and love, for their common humanity's sake, they may eventually be brought to the path of reconciliation, in little steps, and after many a compromise and much acquiescence.

All work and reconciliation depends on the reconciler's own ability to reconcile truth and love within himself; and how often

does he feel torn between the two! Indeed, this is the basic dilemma, from which all the others can be derived.

Truth versus Love

In the first section, dealing with the reconciler's relationships on the personal and impersonal level, we looked at the sociological aspects of his dilemma; in the second, at his political involvement; in the third, at the psychological relation to his own behavior; in the fourth, at his need to meet the psychology of antagonistic parties. All these aspects overlap to a very large extent, the underlying dilemma being always a moral one, and its implication being always of a spiritual nature. It is this moral-spiritual dilemma which has presented itself to me as one between truth and love.

Many Friends repudiate the suggestion that they have any interest in theology. They would not hesitate, however, to tell me that there can never be a conflict between truth and love, not realizing that this is a theological statement. I would call it an affirmation of faith, one with which I profoundly agree, even though it is in the nature of a "creed." We would probably agree, too, in finding the unity of love and truth symbolized in the person of Jesus, the reconciler between God and man, and man and fellow-man. The means by which Jesus reconciled truth and love in and through himself was the cross. Except for the cross, we could never grasp the comprehensive unity of love and truth which we affirm as a quality of the divine Spirit working in the world.

There is, however, a difference between affirming our faith in the quality of the divine Spirit, and putting it into practice in the service of reconciliation. We must pay the price of inner conflict, of anxiety and spiritual suffering if we wish to be the disciples of Jesus in this service; and we experience the reconciler's dilemma most deeply as a conflict between truth and love.

Once again an actual incident will best explain what I mean,

even if it may seem rather insignificant if called grandly a "conflict between truth and love." In 1960, the Christian Peace Conference accepted, after many difficult discussions about both theological and political aspects, a statement that "No Christian should have anything to do with nuclear war or the preparation of it." I myself was chairman of the committee which prepared this formula. It adumbrates the possibility of conscientious objection, a position far more difficult to take and keep in many countries of the European continent, both East and West, than in the United States or Great Britain.

Two years later when first the Soviet Union and then the United States had resumed their testing of nuclear weapons, we were agreed that we had to express our disapproval, and did so in clear, if cautious, words. As we found it right to avoid mentioning the Soviet Union by name in the autumn of 1961 when they resumed testing, we from the West, when discussing with our Eastern brethren the American tests in June 1962, insisted that the United States should not be named either. In the end they yielded, clearly with some soreness, and probably conscious of the fact that it might be difficult for them to explain this to their authorities. As so often before and since, each one of us could not help considering in the secrecy of his heart whether our insistence on objectivity in treating both test series exactly alike might not imperil the existence of the Christian Peace Conference and thus deprive us of future contacts and exchanges.

At this juncture a West German pastor, an ardent pacifist, put the motion that we should strengthen the expression of our concern against all nuclear weapons tests by repeating explicitly the statement of 1960 that "No Christian should have anything to do with nuclear war or the preparation of it." In the tense atmosphere already prevailing, we could not achieve a true consensus as we usually can after long debates; a vote had to be taken and the motion was lost. The crux of the long story is this: I abstained from voting.

My abstention was unquestionably a denial of the truth as I see it, and as I had helped to formulate it two years previously. I felt very clearly, too, that I stood not only for myself, but was the representative of Friends Peace Committee and an "exponent" of Quakerism. However, I also saw my Eastern friends sitting next to me, with all their burdens, and in all their irritation after having been persuaded by us into accepting the right focus on the test question. I would be traveling home the next morning, perhaps triumphant about all the "victories won for truth," and would leave them behind with the difficulties which we could not help creating for them. It was impossible for me to separate myself from them and their burdens, even to add one more for the sake of repeating a truth already proclaimed two years earlier. I still do not know, and perhaps never shall, what to think of my vote. It is not simply a moral question, one of right or wrong. It has caused me much inner unrest because it questions my title and authority in the pursuance of a task which I feel I have not chosen, one which has come my way without my seeking.

The need for reconciling truth and love both within ourselves and outside, and the frustration in meeting this need, emerges most clearly when we face the problem of appeasement. Appeasement in the political sense implies, since Munich, a series of concessions made to an aggressor who will not be satisfied eventually with anything less than total victory. In the moral sense, however, it means trying to buy an outward peace at the cost, not of self-sacrifice, but by sacrificing third parties. Morally there have been very few peace settlements in history which were not impaired by appeasement of some sort.

Today, peace in Europe depends on the acceptance, at least for a long time to come, of the partition of Germany. Appeasement consists not in the acceptance of this solution, but in accepting it without even counting the sacrifices involved. The reconciler cannot exclude from his care and loving concern all

those people in East Germany who, quite apart from political, economic-social and ideological factors, feel deeply unhappy in their present situation for quite personal human reasons. Nor can he exclude from his love and understanding their neighbors in Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, who have suffered much under German occupation and have justifiable reasons to fear a rearmed Germany. A separate East German state under a government dependent on Eastern support seems, in their sense of insecurity, the only guarantee of peace and the only way to reconciliation. To most Germans the only guarantee of peace is reunification, though unfortunately the interpretation of what it is that is to be reunited, under what form of government and with what "sovereign rights of self-defence," varies a great deal.

There is much truth on both sides; and the more one enters into the conditions of the people concerned, quite apart from the forces playing power politics with human suffering, the deeper grows one's understanding of the truth of their arguments and their sincere feelings of fear, oppression and insecurity; the greater also the realization that there is some injustice, some untruth, on both sides which neither is able to see or ready to face. Under the judgment of truth both sides are right and wrong; under the constraint of love, both sides should be understood deeply in their sense of injury and should be actively helped in the pursuance of their just rights.

It is the just rights that clash quite as much as the wrongs; they procreate more wrongs precisely because they, *the rights*, are irreconcilable. Only a free sacrifice of some of their own rights, only love, could lead them out of the impasse. However possible this may be at times on the personal level, it is desperately difficult on the impersonal. What *is* love between groups or nations? Should we hope that the contingencies of history will bring about reconciliation where the power of the spirit seems to fail? Should we at least hope for mutual toleration some time in the distant future? Meanwhile, however, with

every increase in our understanding of their mutual entanglement, our desire grows to help them here and now, for their own sake as much as for the sake of peace.

Soon after the last war a German girl who suffered from the conflict between two nations she had learned to love, broke out into the words: "The worst thing is that one can understand both sides." Perhaps we should consider this worst thing a blessing, a real achievement on her part. But it is an understanding that brings little happiness. Where is the reconciler to go from here to help both sides to an understanding of *each other*, comparable to his own understanding of both of them? And how to coax them from the differences between them to the understanding in love that surrenders some of their own just rights?

It may well happen to the reconciler that in his frequent contacts he knows himself loved by many on each side. Hence, with every spoken or unspoken rejection of his friends on either side, he feels himself rejected together with them. It is at such moments that he knows how little his human efforts count. Only faith, faith in the cross, can sustain him in his service of reconciliation, beyond any consideration of success and failure.

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