

Middle East and Far East, followed by neutralization of these areas as was done in the case of Austria, the problem of guarantees against aggression being placed in the hands of the UN.

5. We urge that the U. S. extricate itself from military alliances with imperialist and reactionary regimes which are of dubious value even in a military sense, and instead adopt political, economic and cultural policies which will make her the symbol to the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and even of Communist lands, of their hopes for freedom, equality, and deliverance from the ancient curse of abject poverty.

6. We urge upon our fellow-Christians and upon governmental agencies and educational leaders serious study of the possibilities of nonviolent resistance to possible aggression and injustice.

7. We call upon the Christian Church to disabuse the American people of the notion widely held that Christian values can be defended and our Lord and his teaching somehow vindicated by the extermina-

tion of Communists. We plead with our fellow-Christians to help in carrying out our primary Christian task of winning adherents of Communism to Christ by the preaching of His Gospel and the daily practice of the ministry of reconciliation which He has entrusted to us.

God has not called us to be dragged like slaves in the wake of history plunging to its doom but to be the messengers and servants of Christ who is the Lord of history and the victor over the demonic forces in it.

It is with a deep sense of our own unworthiness, our little faith, our halting obedience that we send this message to the churches and to our fellow-Christians everywhere. But we believe that in response to faith, God will now, as in other times of man's sinning and despair, impart new light and power to His church and His people. The Church will then be a channel of grace and renewal for the world, and Christian citizenship will acquire a new meaning.

other voices

"A TIME OF SORROW AND RENEWAL"

The February issue of Encounter publishes the text of an address delivered by J. Robert Oppenheimer at the recent tenth anniversary conference of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin. Excerpts follow.

Among all the changes of this [past] decade there are two to which I would address myself. One is brutal. Ten years ago my country had barely lost, and still effectively had, a monopoly of the great new weapons, the atomic weapons; and for their use in combat our armed forces, and all others, had means of delivery not essentially different from those of the Second World War. Yet it was then generally held, and I believe correctly, that these armaments constituted for all of us a hideous argument against the outbreak of general war. Today there can be no talk of monopoly: we are deeply into the atomic age, in which many nations will be so armed.

Let me say only this: What some of us know, and some of our governments have recognized, all people should know and every great government understand: if this next great war occurs, none of us can count on having enough living to bury our dead.

This situation, quite new in human history, has

from time to time brought with it a certain grim and ironic community of interest, not only among friends, but between friends and enemies. This community has nothing to do with the injunction that we love our enemies, but is a political and human change not wholly without hopeful portent.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, that beautiful poem, the great Hindu scripture, is a sustained argument on the nature of human life and its meaning, introduced by Prince Arjuna's reluctance to engage in fratricidal combat, and by Vishnu's clarity that this combat was a simple and necessary duty, whose performance would preserve the way of Arjuna's salvation, and whose evils were of no deep meaning, either for him or for those whom he might kill. Can we be thus comforted?

Traditionally, the national governments have accepted as their first and highest duty the defense and security of their peoples. In today's world they are not very good at it. We all know that the steps which we have taken, alone or in concert, have at very best an uncertain, contingent, changing, and above all transitory effectiveness. This is one reason, important but perhaps not central, for a second change in this past decade. We have come to doubt the adequacy of our institutions to the world we

live in; beyond that, we have come to doubt certain aspects of the health of our own culture. In this, I speak with my own country in mind, because the traits that have given rise to our anxieties are as marked with us as anywhere. Yet I think I see that in the older, more traditional societies of Europe, the same problems are beginning to appear, and will inevitably grow more grave. I think that I see that in the measure in which liberty comes to the people now largely deprived of it, in the measure in which productivity, education, and the modern world come to the peoples that aspire for them, these problems, in their own form, will come too.

Compared to any high culture of the past, ours is an enormous society. It is for us an egalitarian one, in which we hope—and I pray that we may always hope—that there be no irrelevant exclusiveness from participation in its highest works, its powers, and its discourse. Ours, for special reasons of history, rendered more and more acute by the nature of the twentieth-century world, is a fluid society, with rapid change its hallmark. Like so many others, it is, in its politics, and much of its public life, a largely, even an inherently, secular society. We live, as we all know, with an expansion of knowledge overpoweringly beautiful, vast, ramified, quite unparalleled in the history of men. We live with a yearly enrichment of our understanding of nature, and of man as part of nature, that doubles every decade; and that is in its nature, necessarily, inevitably, and even in part happily an enrichment of specialization.

This age of ours is the scientific age, in which our work, our leisure, our economy, and an increasingly large part of the very quality of our lives, are based on the application of newly acquired knowledge of nature to practical human problems; in which size, egalitarianism, flux, are the social hallmarks of a continuing cognitive revolution.

I have been much concerned that in this world we have so largely lost the ability to talk with one another. In the great succession of deep discoveries, we have become removed from one another in tradition, and in a certain measure even in language. We have had neither the time nor the skill nor the dedication to tell one another what we have learned, nor to listen, nor to hear, nor to welcome its enrichment of the common culture and the common understanding. Thus the public sector of our lives, what we have and hold in common, has suffered, as have the illumination of the arts, the deepening of justice, and virtue, the ennobling of power and of our common discourse. We are less men for this. Our specialized traditions flourish; our private beauties thrive; but in those high undertakings where man derives strength and insight from the public excellence, we have been impoverished. We hunger for nobility: the rare words and acts that harmonize simplicity and truth. In this I see some connection

with the great unresolved public problems: survival, liberty, fraternity.

Let me be clear: I do not think that living in today's world is an easy task, or that any human society has ever solved the problems that now confront us, or has even lived with them in dignity. This is for us not so much a time of anger as of honest sorrow, of renewal, of effort.

Let me be clear also on the great virtues of today's world: the recession of prejudice, of poverty, disease and degradation which marks so much of it; the creative, intimate and lovely communities which thrive in it; the brilliance and wonder of the sciences that lie at the root of it.

What is at stake is a view that is not truly a necessary view, but one that has been the specific mark, the *cachet spécifique* of European civilization. If I cannot be comforted by Vishnu's argument to Arjuna, it is because I am too much a Jew, much too much a Christian, much too much a European, far too much an American. For I believe in the meaningfulness of human history, and of our role in it, and above all of our responsibility to it.

Great cultures have flourished without this belief; perhaps they will again. If the switches of great war are thrown, in anger or in error, and if indeed there are human survivors, there may some day again be high art, perhaps, and some ennobling sense of the place of man and his destiny, and perhaps great science. There will be no sense of history. There will be no sense of "progress in freedom."

Indeed, just this belief and this dedication have brought us where we are. All high civilizations have had a tradition of learning the truth, of contemplation, of understanding. Since Greek times, many have understood as well the role of rigor, of proof, of anchoring consequence to hypothesis. They have had as well the art of putting questions to nature, of experiment; they have had forms of communication, perhaps inadequate, but at once robust and intimate. It has taken all these, rediscovered and slowly recaptured in the last millennium, to make the age of science; but it has taken more. Transfused with these, there has been a special sense of progress, not merely in man's understanding, but in the conditions of man's life, in his civility, in the nobility of his institutions and his freedom, a sense of progress not for the individual soul alone, but of progress in history, in man's long story.

We may well have learned that if we of the West do not look to our own virtue, and that of our institutions and our life and lives, we shall be ill equipped to bring liberty to our colleagues now deprived of it, or to make either our culture or our liberty relevant and helpful to the lands newly embarked on unprecedented change. Let us, in many varied ways, turn to this, quite without flattery or illusion, but not quite without hope.