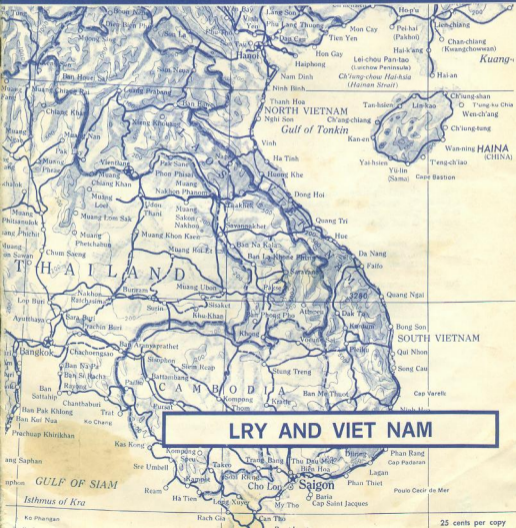


# THE PROMETHEAN

Symposium for Liberal Religious Youth

March 1966



THE PROMETHEAN

A SYMPOSIUM FOR LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH:

LRV AND VIET NAM

March, 1966

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Editor, Henry Koch

The ideas and opinions expressed by contributors to THE PROMETHEAN do not necessarily represent the position of every LRY'er nor of Continental LRV. This is a symposium which welcomes diversity of opinion and invites letters to the Editor from youth and adults.

Note: The next issue of THE PROMETHEAN is to focus on "The Psychology of The Adolescent" and the subsequent issue on "A Radical Look at Liberal Religion." Both issues will be published this spring.

For your information:

The October 1964 number of AT ISSUE, published by the Department of Adult Programs, Unitarian Universalist Association, is entitled, "Whose War in Viet Nam?" and offers excellent basis for discussion and action.

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CREDITS AND INTRODUCTION

The introductory poem and the closing song, Young Woman, were written by Woody Wright. Woody lives in Lawrence, Kansas, and is Vice President of the Missouri Valley Federation of LRY.

Rev. Thomas Smith, author of Viet Nam and the New Church, is the minister of the Lansing, Michigan, Unitarian-Universalist Church. He has worked with the LRY group in Lansing and two of his children were active in their local LRY. Rev. Smith's article concerns his congregation's reactions to a series of sermons on American military commitment in Southeast Asia and his view of the church's role in social protest.

Nelson Barr is a member of Resurgence Youth Movement and lives on New York's Lower East Side. to mr. and mrs. america is reprinted from the journal of the New York City area Resurgence Youth Movement, Resurgence.

Excerpts from Michael Harrington's recent articles on A. Phillip Rendolph's Freedom Budget and the LBJ Budget are reprinted here from the December 18, 1965, and January 23, 1966, issues of New America, an official publication of the Socialist Party. The editor of New America, Paul Feldman, was kind enough to grant us permission to use excerpts from Harrington's articles at a meeting in New York of the Ad Hoc Youth Committee on Poverty. Michael Harrington is the author of The Other America.

Alan Sheats is Chairman of the LRY Business Committee, an associate member of LRYAC, and President of the Norfolk-Suffolk Federation of LRY. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Roger Williams is Trustee of the Michigan Federation of LRY, and lives in East Lansing, Michigan.

Bruce and Ruth Elwell are former LRY'ers from Waterville, Maine, and Winnetka, Illinois. Bruce was Editor of The Promethean last year and has held numerous other offices in LRY. Ruth was also active in the LRY Affiliations Committee. They now live in Philadelphia, where they make and sell sandals and leather goods.

#### EDITORIAL

This spring high school seniors and college students across the country will be taking a standardized examination that will decide their fate in General Hershey's legalized lottery -- the Selective Service System. Even then, perhaps, many LRY'ers will continue to refuse to face the very real prospect of a summer vacation in Viet Nam. It is unfortunate that only a threat to personal inertia can stir American students to protest of the undeclared war in Viet Nam, but it is still more disturbing that even with this impetus only a few will react. From our vantage point we can discern no great unrest among LRY'ers, no genuine dissatisfaction with President Johnson's domestic or foreign politics.

We continue to receive federation newspapers and federation conference flyers filled with the usual assortment of local group reports, free verse, and "in-group"

humor. Now and again we are heartened by a particularly striking topical poem or report of LRY involvement in community work projects or social protests, but the occasions for optimism are very few. Perhaps we are mistaken, political protest is not an appropriate outlet for the energies of a church youth group. However, we cannot, in any case, understand the apparent lack of dialogue concerning the major social dilemma of the twentieth century -- international warfare and the threat of nuclear armageddon.

Certainly, none of us can deny that the prospect of nuclear warfare with China (or any other nation which we might come in conflict with in this century of world war) will affect us. None of us can refuse the demands for intelligent study that the Viet Nam war presents.

LRY has a moral responsibility to abandon the assumption that the pattern of international politics will continue unchanged. We must, as the authors of the majority of the articles in this issue insist, begin the process of education and deliberation which will lend force and direction to our voice in the management of the affairs of state.

However, the demands made on LRY in this issue of the Promethean are not merely calls to study and deliberation. Some of us would have LRY'ers go beyond study to action. The proposals presented here range from active participation in the war on poverty and protest of the war in Viet Nam complemented by a basic commitment to the American political and economic system to abandonment of the existing social and political structure accompanied or, rather, preceded, by complete personal disavowal of conventional social values.

We assume a responsibility for dialogue in LRY concerning international politics, domestic programs, and social conventions. Our only question is whether or not LRY should or can be one vehicle for a social movement designed to end the present, precarious international political chaos sustained by nationalism. We do not question LRY's duty to inform its members of the need for a more equitable distribution of the products of an affluent American society, but we wish to know whether or not LRY as an organization will become an active force in the re-ordering of the present class structure, what President Johnson and others choose to call the War on Poverty.

Yours is a  
    Quiet world  
        Of thought  
            And meditation,  
As you watch a  
    green and yellow pen  
        Flicking absently  
            Back and forth  
                Between your fingertips,  
As you watch your hair  
    Slide down  
        Into a puddle  
            Before you  
And as you see  
    The wind  
        coming in the window  
            To play with  
                Your thoughts  
                    and the sparkling springs  
                        Dancing on your eyelids

Yours is a  
    Quiet world  
        of serenity,  
But don't forget  
    To let the world ripple  
        Your pools  
            and watersides,  
And to wave your  
    Wheatfields.

--Woody Wright

## VIET NAM AND THE NEW CHURCH

I read, just before the 1964 elections, a political sermon to my congregation. The author was Stephen Fritchman, Los Angeles Unitarian minister. He stated why he was not voting Republican. I was censured by some. Two congregants confided that they supported the Republican candidate. Each had a different reason: one because "he had integrity in his heart"; the other because his election would "hasten the revolution."

I voted for a party that is giving itself to exactly the opposite of what it promised. It says "peace" when it means "escalation." It says "We are for free elections" and prevents elections in Viet Nam because it is sure the communists will win. It says it believes in the Great Society and quickly diverts money to the military.

Our President is in bondage to the Pentagon. They control him as they did Eisenhower; the difference is that Eisenhower admitted it. The Pentagon controls because of the huge volume of business it provides to industry. It is in the Pentagon's vested interest to perpetuate the myth that the People's Republic of China is an ogre.

For this reason we need an increasing understanding of China. I tried in my small way to do what Felix Greene and Edgar Snow are doing to rid Americans of the stereotyped image of the Chinese.

I spoke of A New China Policy by Kenneth Boulding and others. His presuppositions are: the oneness of mankind; the moral capacity of the Chinese; the necessity for consistent ends and means in American foreign policy; the necessity for cooperation with the positive forces of social change; the belief that improvement is possible; and the importance of maintaining a capacity for flexibility. I urged with Kenneth Boulding that: we move to halt the military threats and incursions against the mainland by Taiwan; that we should acknowledge the People's Republic of China as the government of China; that we demonstrate our concern for the well-being of China; that we end American restrictions on communication, exchange, and trade with China; that we declare our readiness to join China in projects of mutual advantage and concern; that we prepare for negotiations with the People's Republic of China on mutual problems. But no letters were written and no concensus was reached by the members of my congregation.

One person took me to task, however, for spending a worship service and sermon on Mao Tse Tung. I read seven of his inspiring nature poems and spoke of his talents and his successes--not of his competitor's evaluation of him.

After my sermon on Civil Disobedience I became angry at the blind worship which several of my congregants had for unjust laws and for the office of the Presidency. In trying to distinguish between a politician's commitments and ultimate ethical commitments, I spelled out President Johnson's flagrant violation of the law when it suited his purposes. (i.e., U.N. Charter, Geneva Agreement, Congressional prerogative to declare war, etc.). When one congregant took me to task as being irresponsible several cheered him on with loud applause. Perhaps I had invited some of this by my expressions of anger.

At another time when I had indicated that Hubert Humphrey was not a free agent, but a Charley McCarthy, I roused the righteous indignation of a congregant. It is my experience that even Unitarian-Universalists can be unbelievably naive about the behavior of their favorite politicians.

Last Sunday for a pulpit editorial I read Bertrand Russell's statement from Frontier. No sooner had I spoken the last word when a congregant came to his feet and told me that too much epsom salts too often could make a man sick. After his three minute discourse another congregant chastised me for supporting Bertrand Russell's statement. Another thought we should discredit Russell because he believes in free love. Two people also rose to say they did not think that, considering its importance, the American attitude toward the Far East was discussed too frequently in our worship services.

The previous week fifty of the hundred congregants subscribed to the contents of what later appeared in a two page ad in the New York Times asking four of the top political leaders involved in Viet Nam to cease fire and hostility and talk.

By and large I have been treated eminently fairly. Those who disagree with me violently are amongst those who like me best. There is a remarkable amount of tolerance in our church--even for the minister. There has not yet been any real threat to the freedom of the pulpit.

Six conscientious objectors have come to me to talk about their position in regard to the Selective Service classification system. I have not said it yet from the pulpit because I know it will hurt two people whom I love and respect. But I do say it now, and will in the future, to any boy accepting a IA classification in the draft, "How can you square personal involvement in the war with your religious ethic?"



The chief criticism that I find with expressions of social concern from the pulpit and from the congregation is that it does not eventuate in commitment and witness of any obvious dimension. In retrospect I feel that we ought to have voted on such resolutions as these: (1) That we urge our people to refrain from becoming part of the Viet Nam war machinery. (2) That our congregation write the President urging an increase in funds for the poverty program and a decrease in the military budget. (3) That we send a letter to Mao Tse Tung expressing our appreciation for the craftsmanship and esprit of his poems and other writings and greetings and wishes for prosperity to the people of the People's Republic. (4) That we urge our Senators and Congressmen to insist that conditions in the U.N. be so ordered that Russia and France will be willing to have the Viet Nam war handled there. I regret that we have no measure of what decisions individuals in the congregation have made. Our consensus, properly communicated, could make a difference in the kind of world we will be living in tomorrow.

The religious community needs to concern itself increasingly in the affairs of state. We need to examine men and women for the Presidency now. Both parties could be brought to look for statesmen in the 1968 elections if we began to prepare the proper questions--and to find the proper working places in our parties. There is also need for an articulate third party at this time. Major parties have run out of imagination. They are dedicated more to winning elections than to building a viable economy--and a country with a soul. We need statesmen today to "escalate" us from the dark confines of narrow, self-defeating nationalism and to channel American talents into building World Law.

Our churches need to play their part in this long hard work for creative change. We need to do this with a sense of community, with respect for one another, and a willingness to have our beliefs challenged. This means considering matters of importance and things of worth together under tension.

--Rev. Thomas Smith

to mr. & mrs. america

to mr. & mrs. america

righteous little towheads

eyes of vacant blue--

those quaint picaddillos

in all them furreign parts

are coming home to roost/

(stomp right in--

sit right down--

and put them darkies to work...

for its din, din, din,

you're a better man than i

but you gotta let old massa call the shots)

but folks--they ain't playing those old favorites

anywhere this year.

they're making new sounds

with: hammers in santiago

quiet smiles in saigon

bright cymbals in peking--

& the eyes of your children

are looking thru you/

--Nelson Barr

EXCERPTS FROM \$100 BILLION FREEDOM BUDGET

AND

L.B.J. BUDGET: NOT ENOUGH BUTTER

There are two aspects to the guns or butter question. Can the United States fight a hot war in Viet Nam and social war on the home front with its present resources? That is an economic issue. But then, even if such a two front strategy were possible in an econometric sense, is it politically feasible?

It seems clear to me that the American economy could provide the funds for the tragic war in Viet Nam and for a stepped up war on poverty at home. The commitment to a land war in South East Asia is supposed to cost between \$5 and \$10 billion dollars. The war on poverty, taken in its broadest definition (that is, as including programs like the Appalachia Act as well as the Economic Opportunity Act, but excluding insurance programs, like Social Security, which pay for themselves, now run at perhaps \$5 billion.)

However, it has now become clear that the American economy will have grown in 1965 by over \$50 billion dollars. It is thus quite possible to find an extra \$10 or even \$20 billion if the country is politically determined to do so. Indeed, a conservative estimate of the National Planning Association's Business Committee in 1963 said that America could, over a twenty year period, spend \$2,150 billion for housing and urban development since the expected total Gross National Product over the same time span was going to be \$16,800 billion. I cite these figures--I believe that they are properly referred to in the trillions--only to give a feel of what our current technology can do.

But will we make this commitment? There are two political reasons why we may not: the interests of wealthy people in the United States to maintain their hold on a very large piece of all that GNP; the political-psychological consequences of the war in Viet Nam . . .

A good example of the problem is the recent McCone Commission Report on the Watts riot. The report gives a dramatic description of the depths of the malaise. But its economic prescription is totally inadequate on the basis of its own well documented figures on the plight of the Negro community. Jobs is the key issue and while the report advocates federal and private retraining programs, it does not call for the kinds of federally generated jobs programs that could make even a dent in unemployment. In short, there remains an unwillingness to advocate federal intervention and democratic social planning for a full employment economy without which areas around the country like Watts will remain explosive Ghettos of economic deprivation. (Witness the second Watts riot -- ed.)

Now it is clear that the financing of both wars, the hot and the cold, out of the enormous proceeds of this economy would require the re-imposition of some taxes on the rich, i.e., the breakup of the Johnson consensus. But this, neither the President nor the men of wealth are currently willing to do. The Federal Reserve Board action in tightening money is a clear statement that the conservatives in this country--including those who back Mr. Johnson--expect the poor, not the rich, to finance the war in Viet Nam.

In all of this, I have thus far been taking the war in Viet Nam as a fact of American life. Yet, the tragic, immoral and impossible American commitment to a land war in Asia is not simply "out there," thousands of miles away from home. For it will profoundly affect the American political atmosphere. And this is a second reason why one should not be politically sanguine about the possibilities of America continuing to develop its social conscience and consciousness . . .

Survey data already indicate that perhaps one third of the American people regard anti-war demonstrations as something that should not be allowed. And, in its present phase, the Viet Nam war is only about six months old. Thus, I think that the democratic left will have to prepare for a struggle with new-McCarthyite tendencies in American life and will have to battle against the garrison state thinking which will regard social programs and criticism as dangerous and akin to treason.

Politically, then, the financing of a massive war on poverty will require change and struggle in the United States. On the one hand, such a perspective goes beyond the Johnson consensus and challenges the reactionary Keynesianist subsidizing of the very rich. On the other hand, it requires that there be the most firm resistance to the growth of a military psychology in this country. The end of the Vietnamese war would, in this context, not simply be a victory for world people and the people of Viet Nam--it would also create much more favorable auspices for domestic progress . . .

President Johnson's budget is a masterpiece of political cost accounting according to the methods of the Great Consensus. It is designed to appeal to those who seek fiscal responsibility and to the advocates of an increased war on poverty. Indeed, the budget is constructed with mirrors. For instance, "Great Society" expenditures are computed as increasing by \$3 billion--but almost every single appropriation is under the sum previously anticipated, or even authorized, by the Congress. This kind of arithmetic is designed to satisfy the critics on the Right by cutting back on welfare spending, and to disarm opposition of the Left by increasing welfare spending at the same time . . .

All of this poses a difficult problem for the democratic Left. On the one hand, the reactionaries, super-patriots and inflation mongers will seek to attack what is good in the budget. Here, it is necessary to support the President and his moderate commitment to social spending against the Scrooges of American politics. But on the other hand, it would be disastrous if the Left surrendered its critical function and became simple apologists for Mr. Johnson's proposals . . .

The social programs put forward by John F. Kennedy almost inevitably followed a certain mathematics. A study group would assess a problem like area development. It would come up with a statement that X amount of dollars was required to deal with the situation. In anticipation of opposition from the Congress, the President would send a proposal for  $1/2X$  over to the Hill. The legislators--this, remember, was something of a heyday for the Northern Republican-Southern Democratic coalition --would then trim that down to  $1/4X$  and the nation would get a program, which by official definition was 75% deficient.

Kennedy justified this approach on the grounds that his Presidential victory was so slim and that he needed to conciliate with moderate Republicans and Southern Democrats in order to rule. When Barry Goldwater helped to destroy the Congressional Republican Party in 1964, he relieved Lyndon Johnson of the burden of being so prudent. But now, because of the commitment to the war in Vietnam and in response to conservative fears of inflation, the President is going back to the old arithmetic.

Thus, it is true that the war has not caused the abandonment of the Great Society social programs--but it has caused them to be cut. For, and this is crucial to understanding the Budget, in the "natural" order of things, one should expect an automatic increase in social spending of considerable amounts . . .

Thus, the Budget technique with existing social programs is to increase them, thus redeeming the pledge to continue the construction of a Great Society despite war in Viet Nam, but to hold down the rate of increase and even to keep it below the figures already authorized by Congress, thus demonstrating that the President is a prudent man, indeed.

In his State of the Union message, Mr. Johnson had put forth a bold new idea: Federal participation in the renovation of entire central cities. More recently, there has been considerable gossip in liberal and labor circles that the President might actually endorse an extremely ambitious program in this area which was prepared under the direction of one of his task forces. And indeed, it may well be that the President will, in his proposals on housing, finally propose general goals of creating a decent context for urban life in America.

But, and this is typical of the new program approach in the budget, the funds proposed add up to \$5 million for planning how this would be done. Thus, the President can argue that he is concerned about this crucial domestic priority--but he doesn't have to pay very much for the privilege. And since there are no specific target dates given, such a program can be kept in the planning and preparation stage for as long as is necessary--and while city housing and life continues to deteriorate.

However, let me conclude by re-emphasizing an early point. It is absolutely and crucially necessary to point out that, by Lyndon Johnson's own definitions and in terms of actual Congressional authorization, this Budget is inadequate. That means that the democratic Left must push, not simply for its own program, which goes beyond the welfare state, but also to demand that the nation live up to its own avowed goals.

At the same time, it would be foolish to dismiss the Budget as simply a gimmick. For it does continue some very important programs, it will be under reactionary attack, and the democratic Left must join with all the progressive forces to beat off this assault.

--Michael Harrington

## PROTEST AND COMMITMENT

Time after time there have been demonstrations against the U.S. policy in Viet Nam, injustice to Negroes in the South and so forth. Following these demonstrations newspapers and magazines have printed cartoons depicting the demonstrators as a bunch of grubby looking kids who are too damned lazy to fight for their country. The people who draw, print and appreciate these cartoons see the demonstrators as being insincere, much less do they understand why the young people are protesting.

Yet, young people often either do not themselves understand why they are protesting, or if they do understand, they do not make this clear to the public. When one speaks of protest and commitment, one speaks not only of a dissatisfaction with a part of society but a change in the part of society he is dissatisfied with. This applies in any case, whether it is the United States' foreign policy or parents' imposition of their attitudes on their children. It is all a part of social action--social action in a very broad sense, which LRYers seem to dabble in but never paint a whole picture with.

Protest and commitment complement each other. Protest demands change, not change in and of itself but change in the sense of careful modification toward some anticipated goal. Independent of commitment, protest is destructive and negative as it is no more than a reaction to dissatisfaction with the status quo offering no constructive alternatives. Protest that is an expression of one's commitment, on the other hand, is valid because it is an expression of one's convictions and of some positive action. However, commitment without protest can be just as ineffective because people have not heard protest, they are not aware of the need for change, so sincere commitment to improve conditions often meets with apathy and failure.

Protest and commitment when joined together provide a tremendously powerful means of effecting social change. Phil Ochs' songs such as "Here's to the State of Mississippi" and "The Ballard of William Worthy" are extremely eloquent protest songs made even more so by his commitment to his country which he shows in songs such as "Power and Glory". On a group level, there have been many projects to improve conditions in the South such as those sponsored by SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). However, it took protests such as the Freedom Rides and the crisis in Selma to make the country acutely aware of and sympathetic to the problem.

Commitment then, is the mind behind protest. It is an individual or group that believes their way is the right way or a better way, and shows this through action. Their protest is the rationale for their commitment. It shows the need for change. It shows those areas that need improvement. Be it the draft card burner who must have a strong enough commitment to go to jail for his convictions or the high school student with long hair who must be willing to leave school rather than change his appearance, protest and commitment must be the components of a larger whole, they must be opposite sides of the coin of change.

--Alan Sheats

## VIET NAM REFLECTIONS

The last time that the United States declared war was December 8, 1941. Since that time our forces have fought in Korea, the Middle East, Santo Domingo, and Viet Nam. A million men and more have seen action and hundreds of thousands have been killed. But in all of this the voice of the American people has been stifled and information restricted in the name of security. Every "expert" has his own set of statistics, facts and a logical explanation that makes them sound correct. It all boils down to the fact that the American people have not been told the truth and if the truth were suddenly presented to them now they wouldn't believe it.

It is my personal fear that in the name of security the American people have been rendered impotent as a force in the future of this country.

In 1964 when Viet Nam was an issue (LBJ spoke of it while Barry was ranting and raving about morality and crime in the streets), the Democratic party pictured the opposition as a warmongering bunch of 19th century militarists while they, the Democrats, were sane, twentieth century humanitarians who would keep Viet Nam from becoming World War III. So the American people voted LBJ into office for four more years along with the congress that he had asked for to approve his measures. Within a year of his election we find ourselves in the midst of a bloody war with no end in sight. Suddenly the draft hangs over our heads and the "sane" leader that we elected to establish the peace has done everything but drop atomic weapons and invade the north. Peace has slipped through our fingers more than once but the public hasn't known about this until it was too late. But it's no good to cry over spilled milk. It is better to learn what we can from Vietnam and see that it doesn't happen again.

What lessons are there to be gained from this fiasco? First, the major concerns of American foreign policy SHOULD be the welfare of the common people. Diem had American support long after it was obvious that he was an enemy of the people of Viet Nam. We became identified with an unpopular regime and I have no doubt that this is hurting us to this day. What of our aid? Does it go to the peasants in the rice paddies? Or does it pass through several levels of government administration?

Second, and perhaps of even greater importance, is the return of the American people to a position of influence in our governmental policy. By this I mean telling them the truth about what is going on and debating these questions in congress. War has become a matter of Executive order and in this way has escaped the control of congress. This should not be. On the other hand, with the complete responsibility for the war in the hands of the Executive it is easier to keep the conflict from escalating. There is always the fact that we haven't declared war which can be used to keep the scope of the conflict down so some justification can be made for it. But whatever the policy of this country is, the electorate should have a say in formulating it. I don't mind having to go down with the ship as long as I can have a hand in plotting the course ahead of time. Today there is a remoteness about American government that is not good. It scares people away and makes it the province of a select group of politicians. Since a government is run of, by, and for itself, this can not be a country "of the people" until this exclusiveness is broken.



In the protests against Vietnam there have not been many LRY'ers. Why? I cannot speak for the whole of LRY, just for my own MICHINDOH area, and the answer here is that we aren't sure. Like other Americans we have been the victims of managed news releases. There are no "experts" in LRY who have studied Southeast Asia or have been there. All that we can do is tag along with some other group that is informed and is mobilized. However, there is concern among LRY'ers about the War on Poverty.

Here is something close to home that we can roll up our sleeves and get to work on. The War on Poverty is much more human, there are people to meet and work with, which is something that you don't get protesting Viet Nam. It's also (let's face it) easier. There is no threat of arrest, unless you're fighting city hall, and you don't have to recruit thousands to make any kind of impression. LRY needs the War on Poverty as a cause to hold it together, Viet Nam cannot do this. The War on Poverty needs volunteers of the type that LRY can provide--the protest movement needs numbers of clean cut, articulate people, this LRY cannot provide. Though there are LRY'ers who are protesting the War in Viet Nam, this is not the place for the movement at this time.

--Roger Williams

A SORT OF MANIFESTO TO THE EDITOR (and a final statement to LRY'ers after a collective twelve years of membership and activity)

Regarding your "Editorial Summary" in the December, 1965 PROMETHEAN, we feel you're on the wrong track. Real revolution won't come from commitment to the peace or civil rights movements because it's not just the Vietnamese or the Negroes who are exploited by this absurdly contradictory system, it's all of us, and helping the "less fortunate" (a stinking elitist term and attitude) become more comfortably exploited and assuring them the right to choose their exploiters won't solve a damn thing.

(For that matter the type of commitment that involves helping those "less fortunate"--whether you call it that or not--leads inevitably back to bureaucratic politics. The "committed student" was and is tied in a very real way to the status quo . . . He is committed to playing the particular games he has involved himself in. He is a potential bureaucrat because he is so involved in protesting effects--and usually effects on other people or groups--and organizing attacks on these effects that a genuine move to smash causes would leave him on the side of the reaction. It is safe to say that the "committed" civil rights worker enjoys playing the little civil rights game and wants desperately to be able to step up to the Big Time in games people play--politics; witness the degeneration of the mass direct action movements in the South into voter registration drives and attempts to "influence" the major parties.)

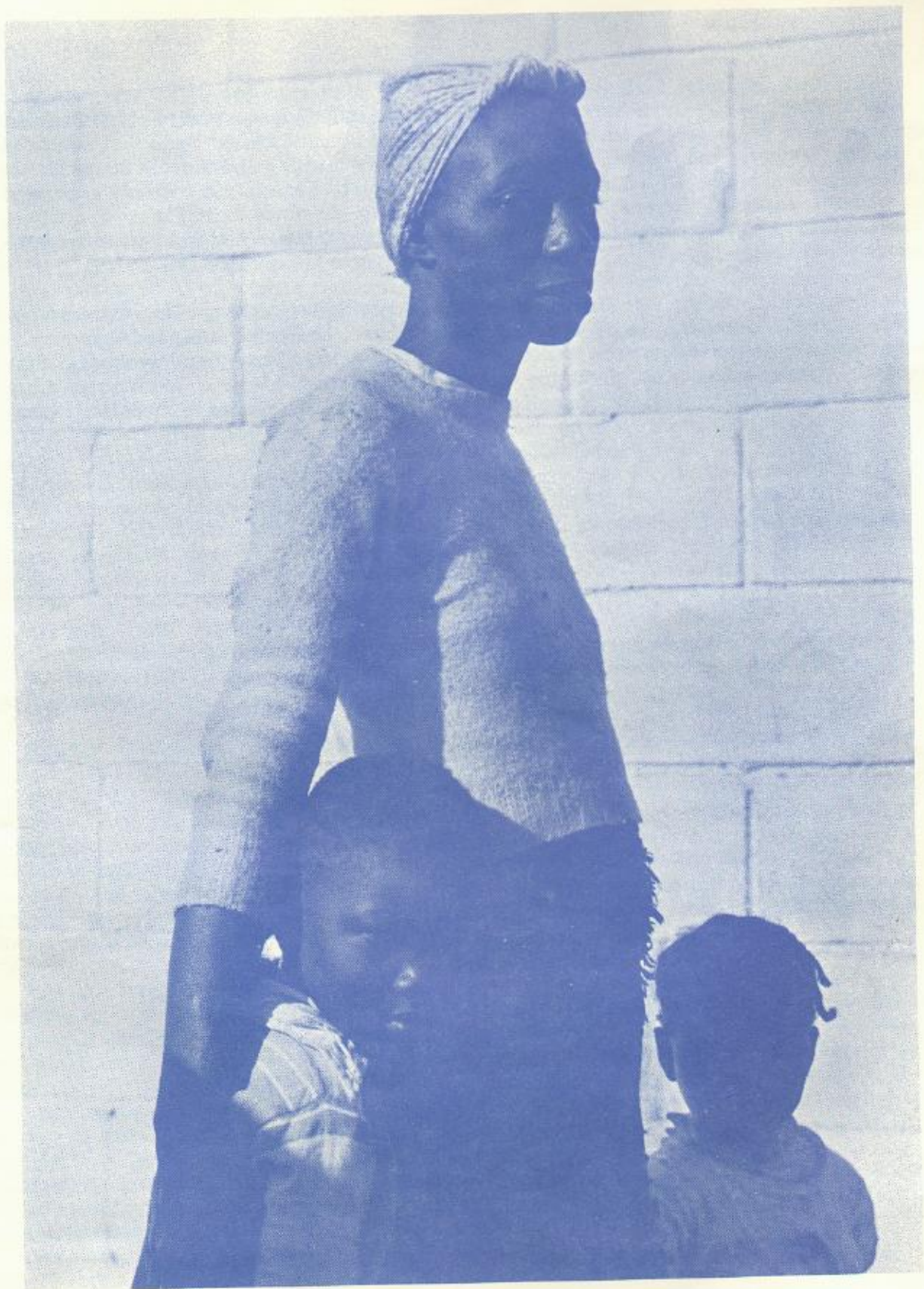
Nobody is free in this system. Personal disentanglement like Dylan's isn't the answer, but it's a big step, the only step possible once one fully realizes the total fallacy of the "American Dream". (And the liberating forces in his poetry unleashed on the young public cannot be denied.) Cults aren't the answer either, but a cult of rejection of society's values, a cult surrounding the "image" of a particular singer or group and their "sound", a cult such as say the Stones inspire, is a vast improvement on the hipster cult of the fifties which lacked even the energy to actively reject. (Beats, in practice, accepted the inevitability of society's authority and retreated into a cloud of pot smoke . . .)

We are tired of endless demonstrations, marches and drives of the voter registration ilk. Perhaps our sectarian background is showing, but we don't want to reform society. One can't remodel something built on a contradictory foundation. We have to start over, and we can't build a new society working within the old. We have no interest in "doing good," be it volunteering for VISTA, registering Southern Negroes or petitioning a Texas cracker to please stop his dirty chess game in Asia. Bobby Dylan is ever so right when he says that "what goes wrong is much deeper than the bomb." A friend of ours speaks to much of the contemporary dilemma when he says that very few people feel or realize their own pain . . . Let's stop playing around with symptomatic "causes", they'll all be respectable in ten years anyway. Let's get motivated by the pain that's inside us, individually and collectively.

Let's start being free human beings. To do this we must strip off the values and standards of society in us (that "something that doesn't speak") and that requires a lot of honesty and a lot of courage for there's murder and there's unspeakable violence down inside all of us--down where we hurt. This is not entirely unrelated to Wilhelm Reich's "layers of character"; i.e., to get down to man's co-operative, free basis you must tear off the trapping of "civilized" man and work with the barbarian underneath.

So we would rather see LRY'ers being real with each other, using the courage found in their numbers to reject and, if it's there, be barbarians, and then maybe even being able to help each other grope toward something that does speak, than wearing peace buttons or picketing segregated bowling alleys. We want to see a commitment to fundamentally changing life as we know it. If this be "coolth," then, like Dylan, we're cool, too.

Yours for the Liberation,  
Ruth and Bruce Elwell



She is a tree of life to them . . .

Proverbs 3:18

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# THE PROMETHEAN

THE SEARCH  
FOR NEW  
MEANINGS  
IN  
TRADITIONAL  
RELIGIOUS  
SYMBOLS



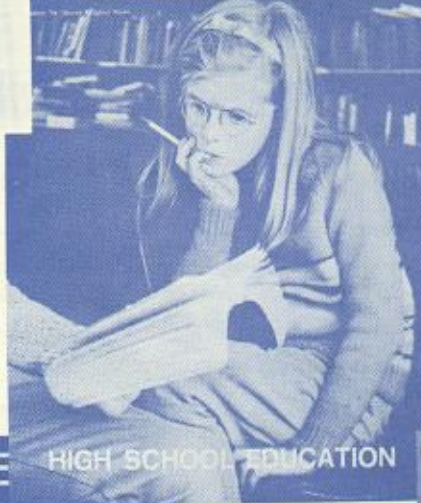
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SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE  
1968

I think of our earth home . . .  
Of those we live with and of ourselves . . .  
Of what we mean and what we must do . . .  
And the wonder of it all . . .



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LRY



VANGUARD OF THE MOVEMENT

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BE SURE YOU HAVE ALL OF THESE!

