

The Saturday Review

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Great Expectations

EDITOR'S NOTE: On November 21, before the General Assembly of the United Nations, General Carlos P. Romulo, speaking for the Philippine Delegation, stated the case for Charter Review of the U.N. The debate concluded with a vote of forty-three to six in favor of the proposal to call a General Conference for reviewing the Charter "at an appropriate time." The editors are pleased to be able to publish a guest editorial by General Romulo from his Charter Review message to the U.N.

THE United Nations derives its ultimate power from the will of the world's peoples. It was born in the hopes of those peoples. And if there is anything more powerful in the world today than nuclear weapons it is the opinion of the human community.

What is it, therefore, that the world's peoples expect of the United Nations? What do they want it to become?

Only as we give honest answers to these questions can we debate the question of Charter Review with meaning and purpose. The world's peoples expect us to preserve the peace, for the preservation of the peace may be synonymous today with the preservation of life itself.

If we take soundings—which is to say, if we find out what our constituents in the human family are really thinking—we will learn that the biggest and not the smallest things are expected of us. As public men and representatives of our governments we are perhaps overenamored at times with the small, single steps at one time; but the large strides are

what the world's peoples want and deserve.

As I say, the people look to the United Nations for control of armaments. They know that control must rest on much more than polite agreements or solemn declarations. All our yesterdays are littered with Locarnos. The people cannot be blamed for expecting us to abandon the habit of error.

The people look to us to define the basis of enforceable disarmament under law. And, in an even more fundamental sense, they look to us to deal with the situations that lead to war.

In short, the world's peoples expect the United Nations to eliminate the present prime condition of world anarchy. They expect the U.N. to have force of its own adequate to deter aggression, instead of improvising after the damage occurs, as in Korea. They expect that any force vested in the U.N. will be fairly and responsibly constituted, and that no single nation be asked to put up the overwhelming bulk of the men and the material.

The people have a wisdom about these things and they know that no armaments plan can be effective and enforceable unless there is a direct connection between the United Nations and the individual violator. If we fail to support this principle and give it standing and authority, then Nuremberg loses its status in world justice and becomes instead the long limb of lynch law.

Perhaps the great expectations that exist among our clients make us uneasy because we are so well versed in the difficulties and the complexities. Indeed, we may know them too well. We of the U.N. have been living so

intimately with our day-to-day problems that the historical vistas tend to become somewhat blurred. We are apt to be impatient with those who seem unappreciative of the tangles and confusions that surround us and confound us. And so we counsel patience and more patience, hoping the world will be convinced we are doing our best.

But the great danger here is that we inside the U.N. may lose our perspective and a true sense of the historical panorama. The difficulties in which we are enmeshed and our preoccupations with the day-by-day complexities may cause us to put our working problems ahead of the historic problems. It may well be that the historic view of the people is the only correct one. It is because of this, and because I feel that it is time for us of the United Nations to bring our own perspective in line with that of the human community we represent, that I advocate a hard look at where we have been and where we are going.

We can attempt to ascertain whether a United Nations Organization which was born in the pre-atomic age has the structure and the substance required to control the war-making powers of nations.

We can ask ourselves whether it is proper and fair to the hopes of the world's peoples that the United Nations has so far largely been a collection of separate foreign policies, rather than an organization with policymaking powers of its own.

We can ask whether the peace in the world is to depend on improvised good manners or on the workable machinery of law that transcends human whims and changeability.

The fact that we may not desire to ask these questions will not keep the world's peoples from asking them. We do not save the United Nations by avoiding these questions. The questions are real. They become more severe, not less, by deferring them.

I do not hold with the argument that a properly constituted review conference would result in a break-up of the United Nations. If the United Nations is so weak that it cannot stand honest self-examination, then it is living on borrowed time indeed. It is precisely because I believe the world's peoples own the United Nations that their voice becomes mandatory. We are representatives and delegates, true; but in an even greater sense we are the custodians of the greatest idea yet to be conceived by the mind of man—that the violence among nations in the world may yet yield to the courage and imagination of men in constructing a rule of law, and that our modest-sized planet may in time and in fact become the Good Earth.

—CARLOS P. ROMULO.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A FEEBLE WEAPON

I WAS DISAPPOINTED and saddened by Edith Hamilton's article ["Words, Words, Words," SR Nov. 19], in which she attacks the poetry of Dylan Thomas for its obscurity. Her mock seriousness turns, unfortunately, into condescension, with the unintended though deserved effect of forcing the reader into resentful resistance.

Dylan Thomas is indeed controversial. The value of his work is uncertain and not all of it was successful. But it is certain that his poetry is not worthless "words, words, words." Elsewhere in the same issue Louis Untermeyer, in his review of "Dylan Thomas in America," speaks of Thomas as "the searching poet of 'Fern Hill,' the vivid dramatist of 'Under Milk Wood,' and the inspired chronicler of 'A Child's Christmas in Wales'."

I had begun to hope that critical attacks on the basis of "obscurity" had disappeared from your usually excellent pages after having seen, in the past, so feeble a weapon employed against such impregnable opponents as Eliot and Joyce.

RICHARD E. MADTES.

New Paltz, N.Y.

NOT THE ONLY ONE

HOORAY FOR EDITH HAMILTON! I had begun to think that I was the only one in this age that thought that Lord Alfred Douglas stated the aim of poetry perfectly when he wrote: "Trace/Under the common thing the hidden grade/And conjure wonder out of emptiness/Till mean things put on beauty like a dress/And all the world was an enchanted place."

If this be treason, etc.

CHARLES C. RAND.

Chicago, Ill.

WORDS LEFT BEHIND

IN REGARD to Dylan Thomas and "Words, Words, Words," by Edith Hamilton, not only has Jean Ingelow been clearly left behind, but so has Miss Hamilton.

J. N. WOOD.

Flint, Mich.

POETICAL CONFUSION

"WORDS, WORDS, WORDS," by Edith Hamilton, was the most amusing and revealing thing I've read in a long time. It demonstrates again that there is very little that's new in the world, and punctures, for me at least, the scatologically iridescent bubble that enclosed Dylan Thomas's poetry.

Inescapably, man has changed only slightly since arising from the prehistoric ooze. His mind, even now, is far from the shining instrument we should like it to be, and his creations, as exemplified by the works of Dylan Thomas and



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"So much for tigers. Now, suppose we try domesticating reindeer."

others of like bent, while fascinating for their mystery, beauty, and elusiveness, are perhaps merely objectifying subconscious confusion.

W. I. PRICE.

Genoa, Ill.

A RELIEVED READER

"WORDS, WORDS, WORDS" relieved me. I was inebriated to climactic in discernagating that I wasn't woaky in conclusionation that Dylan Thomas poesies were clamor-ridden gollysnookum. At least it was esthetic relief to agree with the synthesis analytic of Miss Hamilton's view-allergic. I rest content, freed of mental lice like those D.T.'s that spring from lingual toxicated plumage.

ROBERT W. SHIELDS.

Martin, S.D.

A POET'S CLAIM

EDITH HAMILTON is a remarkably accurate marksman when it comes to shooting fish in a barrel, but her aim goes wildly astray once the target moves or shows signs of firing back. Few can argue that the examples she quotes from Dylan Thomas (out of context, to be sure) are grotesquely obscure. They are superbly destructible straw-men, and she sets them up and knocks them down again with an admirable ferociousness. Actually, I could supply her with some others, even more hideous; I could also supply her with some equally weird examples of tortured obscurantism from the pages of Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and Shelley. All these would, of

course, only prove what most readers already know—that some of the greatest poets in the language have written some remarkably bad lines. This in no way vitiates their total achievement.

To be sure, Mr. Thomas at his worst is pretty bad, but aren't we all: poets, carpenters, bootblacks, and critics? Thomas at his best is magnificent. How many of the rest of us can make that claim?

JAMES L. ROSENBERG.

Manhattan, Kans.

THE CONGRESSIONAL CENSORS

I HAVE AT VARIOUS TIMES listened to lecturing ex-Congressmen state convincingly that our Congress was composed on the whole of men who were sincerely and honestly working hard to do the best they could for their country. This is probably true, but it seems incredible that such a number of Congressmen banned the excellent book "Profile of America" by Emily Davie ["'Profile' and the Congressional Censors," SR Nov. 5], which contains so much information that would go a long way to satisfy the curiosity of peoples throughout the world on our American way of life. There should be informed, openminded appraisal if Congressmen must pass on these books. We need draw no curtain here. Can we not profit from criticism, not fear it? This book apparently met such a need abroad that it drew no criticism—only here in our midst. We have more to fear from small minds than from such a book.

GLADYS TOZIER.

North Bergen, N.J.