

Foreword

This issue of *Unitas Fratrum* is dedicated in its entirety to the deliberations of the American Indian Symposium held in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (USA) on September 27, 1986. The articles printed here were originally presented as lectures and their publication, in this enlarged edition, was made possible by a contribution from the Sun Inn Preservation Association of Bethlehem. The editors of *Unitas Fratrum* gratefully acknowledge the support received and welcome this opportunity to collaborate in the effort to bring a subject of great mutual interest to the attention of a wider readership.

The Sun Inn Preservation Association sponsored the Symposium. Its realization, however, was accomplished primarily by volunteers who dedicated their personal time and skills without demanding public recognition and who took satisfaction in simply knowing that this conference was the fruit of their labors. All who helped deserve thanks even though not mentioned here by name.

The Bethlehem American Indian Symposium was the idea of Grethe Goodwin who also sparked the notion that the Symposium should be both a gathering of scholars and a *celebration* of the cultural richness of American Indian life. When it turned out that her departure from Bethlehem for retirement in the state of Maine would occur before all preparations were complete, her good friend Camilla Smith assumed conference responsibilities as chairman of the Sun Inn Association's Indian Committee and, in keeping with the plans of Grethe Goodwin, implemented the Symposium in collaboration with the Association's then executive director Rachel Osborn.

Bethlehem is home for the Sun Inn and for the Moravian Church Archives which contain the eighteenth and nineteenth century mission records now so indispensable for a deeper understanding of American Indian life. The legacies which Moravian missionaries and church officials have left attest to the astuteness of their observations and to the care with which they recorded what they saw. As Herrnhut's emissaries, they were inveterate, prolific letter writers and compilers of detailed reports. They felt a moral commitment to give personal accounting to the Lord and to keep informed the brethren and sisters-in-faith at home who sponsored them. Their writings reflect the values they brought to their commitment. Missionaries shared many of the preconceptions of their time; and Western Europe, we must remember, on balance, considered itself superior to those it

sought to influence. To acknowledge this does not negate the assertion which is finding widening support, that Moravian missionaries, generally, had a better understanding of Indian customs and traditions than has for long been recognized. Indeed, Moravian missionaries were confronted with tasks and challenges beyond the scope of their primary assignments, and their accounts serve as significant sources of information beyond the range of missionary goals. Grethe Goodwin stressed it in planning the Symposium. It is the reason why, today, historians, ethnographers, musicologists, and linguists, to mention but a few, all come to Moravian archives to study and to learn.

The Sun Inn's legacy, too, is rich. Its golden age overlapped with many of the crucial years during which the American Colonies matured toward nationhood. Bethlehem's public inn, or *Gasthof* (guest house), was a hospitality center for its community and for its visitors, including many a distinguished American and European, and also several American Indian leaders who had come for ultimately futile negotiations. The inn still stands at its original site near the very heart of downtown Bethlehem. Entrusted to the care and management of the Sun Inn Preservation Association, it has been painstakingly restored. It is now a conference center, museum, restaurant, and informal gathering place. In short, it continues to enjoy a unique position in its region's life.

The Symposium's keynote address was delivered by Professor Bowden and deserves special attention as both an important orientation and a superb assessment of the state of current research into American Indian history. The revisionist thrust of which Professor Bowden speaks, apparent in much modern historical scholarship and present in this Symposium's deliberations, and interest in the study of ethnic groups as demonstrated by this Symposium's success and its desire to celebrate their heritage, have become increasingly popular trends. Is there a link between the two? The answer suggested here is yes, because the mood for celebration and the urge to re-interpret history become most meaningful when recognized as manifestations of a deepening mainstream yearning. In much the same way in which the nineteenth century came to be propelled forward by the idea of progress, the twentieth century, in its waning years, is increasingly preoccupied with the notion of world peace. Inter-cultural understanding and the search for international stability - by means of revisionist history and the celebration of ethnic diversity - share it as a common psychological affinity. What gave such special force to it in our time? Most simply put, one answer is fear.

Trends which give expression to a psychological mood, of course,

rarely, if ever, derive from rational calculations or from single causes. (Unless, perhaps, we are speaking of the fashion industry?) And to identify fear as a common denominator imparting cohesion to the facts and forces molding human behavior is not to lay claim to its representing the single cause which now shapes history. To stress its primary importance, however, helps place this American Indian Symposium in the wider context within which it can be viewed with greater profit.

Western technology, through warfare and modern communications, played an important role in effecting the conquest of the world by Europeans. It also helped spawn and strengthen interest within and outside Europe in cultural and political self-assertion. The hope for self-determination became a major issue in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth, it has become an uncompromising demand. As one consequence, the so-called forward march of technology produced the accelerated trend toward racial integration and the inclusion of peripheral elements in the main bodies of their societies, while at the same time providing for those who controlled it the means to wield power others unable to resist intrusions in their realm.

Another consequence was that it intensified paranoia, which is to say, discrimination and efforts ruthlessly to preserve advantages held without regard to consequences. Technology was also placed in the service of genocide. But even such horrid manifestations as the Holocaust, in net effect, ended up promoting rather than weakening the trend toward integration! They oriented public opinion toward the stress where it now stands: the need for deepened and broadened sensitivity to the validity of traditions and heritages not conforming to one's own.

What is happening is generally more intuitively than consciously perceived. Yet, it is also clear that it is functioning as a counterbalancing response to the global alarm to which the impact of Western technology has given rise. Once dominant and hailed as the tool which secured for Europe its victories in almost all its confrontations with non-European societies, technology has become a force feared also by its originators. The very same technology which once provided so much of the fuel sustaining Western arrogance has become a reason for the rise within Western Civilization of much anxiety. The export or application of technology to non-European societies has ended its use as an instrument of force enjoyed by Europeans alone or primarily. Technology now threatens Western civilization as much as it once threatened others. It is this realization which is dawning upon ever widening segments of humanity and which links

the Symposium's invitation to celebrate another culture with the critique of Western conduct filling the publications of revisionist historians. Technological progress in its destructive capabilities has reached that dreaded point in evolution at which the potential dangers posed by abuse are so immense that they have created general awareness and become a driving and a molding force in public as well as scholarly deliberations. This is one reason why this Symposium's conclusions, humiliating for Western Civilization's selfimage, do not arouse intense defensive urges toward denial and rejection but actually have become fashionable and foster a tendency to find fault also with Western Civilization's noble intentions as unwarranted arrogant expressions of the assumption that European values are *per se* superior and hence to be embraced. We now incline toward judging ourselves guilty in principle because we compounded our destructive impact by duping innocent, indigenous victims into accepting our notions at face value.

The cries of *mea culpa*, so often heard these days, serve a useful purpose. They promote sensitivity toward others. But they must not be allowed to subvert the study of history into an exercise in polemics. The encounters between European and non-European cultures have, indeed, produced many lamentable results. But to judge these historically (as distinct from morally) in a valid way, one question to be included among those posed must ask what really shapes historical development. Man's capacity for moral judgment has always existed and is at the core of what sets man apart from animals. Yet, in historical analysis, understanding must precede moral evaluation. Only a clearer understanding of the "Why" in history can truly place in focus our concern for consequences. Whether to our liking or not, our assessment of what forces shape events and patterns of development becomes distorted when value judgments predetermine the agenda. To insist upon a separation of the two is not to advocate historical relativism. As human beings we are, indeed, endowed with the capacity for moral judgment; and by virtue of our knowledge of what is moral, we must apply moral standards to the justification of our actions and opinions. But how a question is posed (and why) influences the answer. We must take care to guard against self-deception. In short, we must admit that in the historical arena, our capacity for moral judgment has rarely proved sufficient to enforce moral behavior. The reason is simple: the absence of a superior force compelling compliance even where self-interests are at stake. Such is the human inclination that it does not respond only to moral instincts. Until our twentieth century, no challenges, other than those posed by philosophy and religion, ever existed to promote universal and mutually binding codes of conduct, despite much diplomatic language to the contrary, and our profession of religious or secular humanist faiths notwithstanding. Before the twentieth centu-

ry, technology was merely a tool and superior technology merely a superior tool as the record clearly demonstrates. The conclusion to be drawn is that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were eras of imperialism and European arrogance not because humanity was handicapped by a less developed sense of morality. The twentieth century has become the age of self-recognition, in the sense of self-doubt, at least for Western Civilization, not because we have reached a higher moral plateau from which to judge ourselves. The inclination, in certain quarters, to deny Western values in favor of almost anything originating outside our cultural sphere has nothing to do with the discovery of an inherent weakness in our civilization's moral fiber. The real difference between the twentieth century and preceding ages is that our century is the first to use tools in the historical arena which are, or can be, so subsequential in their impact that no choice remains but to pause and reconsider. The question no longer concerns only the effectiveness of the tools used but the survival of the user, too.

In this context, moral questions become guiding principles because the fate of the user of technology as much as the fate of its object are at stake and not because of abstract principles. Neither policies of genocide and discrimination designed to assure the perpetrator total control and, somehow, elimination of the dangers posed by modern technology, nor the commitment to the search for peace by promoting pluralism and self-critique can ever bring lasting peace. Both, in totally divergent ways, accent the fear of annihilation. And this promotes the chances for success. It makes universal peace a categorical imperative. The explosion of the first atomic bomb, and the discovery that the power to use the atom as a tool of force cannot be monopolized helped make this clear.

The transition, still in progress, from the self-assertive and insensitive attitude of the former "imperialist" mentality to the notion of tolerance has so far been anything but smooth. Because human greed has played and, we may assume, will always play a crucial role in human conduct, we can only continue to plod forward by trying to deflect the actions of those whose policies and aspirations are really nothing more than collective expressions of the fear of loss of personal advantage. Human nature, in its quest for paradise, will always include the capacity for both good and evil. "Lone Bear" Revey, the Symposium's only American Indian contributor, underlined that greed was never a monopoly of the "White People" (to use "Lone Bear" Revey's terminology). But technology, for all practical purposes, once was! Hence "White man's" selfishness prevailed because it possessed the technological advantage.

Technology, of course, also served and serves constructive ends. This understanding, too, is evident in the Symposium's presentations. No matter how overwhelming the evidence of the harm it helped inflict upon American Indian culture and to the Indians' heritage, technology also brought help, at the least in the hands of some participants in this confrontation of two cultures. The same generations which collectively shoulder blame for tolerating or contributing to abuse, provided from within their ranks those who helped and assured the indispensable preconditions needed for reconstruction and for the redemptive efforts of our present age, including, we must not forget, the technological means to create and preserve the Moravian missionaries' records so valuable now to our understanding of indigenous cultures and traditions. What restoration effort could hope to succeed today without the tools which Western technology placed in the service of this quest?

European Civilization in its interactions with other cultures and heritages appears in a poignant light when one hears "Lone Bear" Revey speak. His comments underline how much the value perceptions of Europe-originated civilization have become a *de facto* universal standard. As he provides fascinating insights into Indian life and history from the vantage point of Indian self-perception, his appalling and humiliating damage report concerning his people's encounters with Western man does not contain rejection of Western Civilization. Implicitly and explicitly it demonstrates how vitally dependent American Indian culture has become upon its "conquerors" for the resources and skills needed to nurture to success the Indians' own reawakening interest in their history and heritage. And precisely because this American Indian determination to recapture a lost heritage is resurging at this juncture in our century, it invites inclusion among the evidence we see today that we are moving toward fuller integration on a global scale. Will it ultimately also move American Indians away from their reservation-conditioned legally separate lives and erase their status as distinct from other ethnic minorities comprising American society? This possibility is mentioned here not for the sake of speculation but to stress that, as historical experience clearly demonstrates, the evolution toward integration begins with a conscious re-assertion of one's own heritage and the recapture of lost cultural pride.

To understand history "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*," to borrow Leopold von Ranke's phrase, "as it really happened," without accepting all its

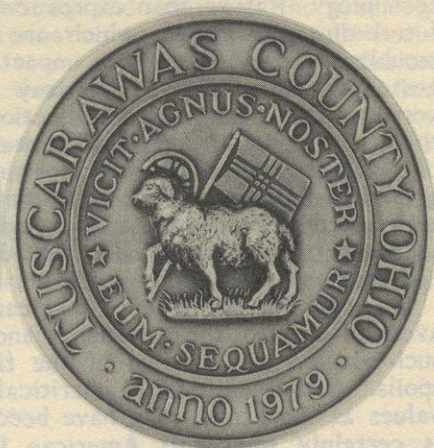
implications, demands a willingness to accept valid conclusions even if they sober and hurt pride. Are there reasons, then, to reject the contention formulated here, that the primary, overriding impulse today conditioning much historical reflection and giving direction to the changes occurring springs from fear and not from noble impulse? If not, this recognition, rather than weaken, will strengthen efforts undertaken in behalf of tolerance and understanding. General public awareness that modern technology with its devastating potential for destruction has become a world property will help promote rather than handicap acceptance of the notion that it must be neutralized, indeed, transformed into an instrument of reparation. The damage it could once inflict while in the hands of Western civilization alone is being inflicted now also upon Western Civilization itself. Self-interest, in short, demands a sensitized worldwide perception of this fact. The shift in scholarly perspectives evidenced in the Symposium's presentations and the very staging of an American Indian Symposium as a celebration are promoting of this recognition. The wish to "celebrate" the American Indians' heritage becomes a desire to atone, that is to say, to advocate healing. It pleads for a future to be faced together. Either all succeed or none. There no longer are alternatives.

Public interest in historical preservation and restoration, the effort to help nurture back to health nearly lost traditions and heritages, symposia held to promote more balanced understanding, all are in their own curious ways manifestations of the fundamental change in course mandated for mankind as a whole by the changed role of technology. Rather than expressions of antiquarian interest, they are future-directed efforts which are proceeding against a background troubled by the destructive impact of technology. The evidence suggests that the study of history is regaining popularity. This is a very positive sign. As the rejection of history as overburdened with the useless, harmful dust of centuries is giving way to a perception of humanity as co-passengers on an ocean liner on which all passengers, all cultures represented, are embarked upon the same journey, self-interests may even regain legitimacy, provided we have learned to look first at the wake our ship has left so that the pattern created in the past may guide our direction into the future.

In summary, our Age of Nuclear Fission is bequeathing to us an aversion toward the emotional and rational appeal once carried by such slogans as "survival of the fittest," or "to the victors go the spoils." Self-rejection and uncritical inclinations to discard one's own values as "bankrupt" may have become one consequence. But another is certainly what this American Indian Symposium made its heart concern: to learn from the past so that we may constructively help shape the future. Self-understanding and the understanding of cultures other than our own are inseparably intertwined.

Unitas Fratrum, presents the selections printed here as an invitation to its readers to participate. May the study of history inform and entertain. But may it also meet the more crucial assignment outlined here. May it inspire reflection, elicit challenge, and demand re-thinking.

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Zeisberger-Heckewelder Medal (face and tail)