

State of the World

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Today I propose to step aside from the series of tapes called "An Abstract of the Philosophy" and direct attention to the general world condition. We might call this "The State of the World." I have been directed this morning to the problem concerning the world by a consideration of the discussion of the energy situation in the January 6 number of the magazine called *Time*.

No doubt nearly everyone in the civilized world and perhaps many in the portion of the world that is less than civilized is aware of the fact that we face a crisis which is both economic and ultimately social because of an energy situation produced by a cartel of those countries that do produce an excess of petroleum. The situation grows out of the fact that a cartel was formed which acted rather ruthlessly to produce a fourfold increase in the price of petroleum that was sold to the industrial world, namely, Japan, Europe, and the United States. Because the rise in the price was so extreme an immediate crisis is in principle produced.

The implications of the situation are far reaching and involve a great deal more than our personal inconveniences because of increased prices in petroleum products involving not only gasoline and heating oils but the basic material used in the manufacture of many products of a chemical nature which are of importance in our economy. The problem that grows out of this is much more than that of a simple increase in costs or a curtailment of the freedoms with which we have been familiar during recent decades. One feature that grows out of this cartel action is that a great deal of the capital of the industrial world outside of the Marxist countries will be assimilated by the cartel countries, and they will have not only an increase of resources for their own use, but an accumulation of capital necessary for the running of the world economy which will be in excess of their own usage. There results the possibility that within a few years, if the governing powers of these cartel countries wish to do so, they could take over the corporate entities of virtually the whole free industrial world, and we would be in a state of bondage or dependency upon the will of these nations, or at least of the stronger ones among them, and thus would find the end of Western dominance in the world immediately a present fact. This would call for many adjustments and would produce many major difficulties.

Indeed, this cartel action could become the instrumentality by which the prognostication of Spengler in his [*The*] *Decline of the West* would be effectuated. You remember, Spengler by an analysis of the course of various cultures in the world, derived the conclusion that the West was at the beginning of a decline and that other powers were emerging. I can see that by the action of this cartel, this would be implemented and facilitated so that that decline, instead of being delayed, would be accentuated and become imminent or almost imminent. This is a matter of very serious importance to us and to the world as a whole, but this is only one factor which characterizes the world situation. It is

one that is most immediate, most dramatic, but it is by no means the only factor bearing upon a tragically serious worldwide general situation. I will list briefly the various factors that are operative today so that the picture may be drawn as clearly as possible.

In addition to the energy crisis, we have hanging over our heads that which we call the atom bomb. Scientific man has emerged into a position far in advance of the general political and moral evolution of mankind as a whole, and the result has been, among other things, that scientific man, or modern man in the form of scientific man, has unlocked a stupendous power in nature while the moral development of humanity and the political development of humanity as a whole has not advanced to a point commensurate with this discovery. The unlocking of the energy potential in the atom, on one side, is a partial answer to the energy problem that I have already discussed, but it is a power unleashed that carries the potential of world destruction. Most of us are well aware of this fact and so far diplomatic movements and a general feeling of handling world problems by discussion has helped to hold back the action of this destructive potential; but, nonetheless, with a world so poor in its general moral sense, there is a real danger of this destructiveness being released. And what it means is this, that if carried to its fullest use, it could render all life on this world impossible; and a great time might have to pass before life could be again established here. This is the unleashing of something more than simply a human kind of power; it is, as it were, a opening up to something like a cosmic dimension of force which requires for its control not only high intelligence, but also a very considerable wisdom and a keen development of the moral sense. We have the scientific intelligence, but we lack the political wisdom and the superiority of moral understanding and action that is necessary for the controlling of such a power.

Now next, as the third point in the total situation, we'll consider the population explosion along with its implications. The students of population have stated that the world for the first time in known history achieved a population of one billion human beings around 1860. But since 1860, or during the last 115 years, that population has increased to approximately four billion human beings. If one reflects upon this, it is frightening, for in 115 years three times as many human beings came to live in this world as had achieved life here in all the period of known history. Now, the potential to reproduce population is proportional to the numbers of the population, and therefore the potential of population increase follows a geometrical ratio. But in order that human beings, along with all other creatures, may exist, there must be food, and our increase in food potential is by increments that follow an arithmetical progression. And it is a mathematical fact that no matter how large the steps in an arithmetical progression may be, ultimately, a geometrical progression will exceed it; therefore, we have the potential of a population growing beyond the power to produce food, with the inevitable result of starvation. And while a portion of the population will starve, meanwhile the other portion of the population that survives may be dragged down to such a low level of subsistence that the maintenance of a superior culture becomes impossible.

There is connected, too, with this problem the matter of environmental deterioration, that which is known as the ecological problem. There are many today who, out of their insight and generosity of feeling, have espoused the humbler creatures who live in this world which have often been rather ruthlessly destroyed. They do today have representatives among mankind who speak for their survival. But, if we are to postpone

the starvation of mankind as far as possible, more and more of the producing surface of the earth will have to be devoted to the production of food for mankind, and there can be only less and less food possibility reserved for these humbler creatures. This is just an elaboration of a fundamental problem. Indeed, I predict that when a decision has to be made in the future as to whether the life of human beings should be preserved or the life of wild creatures should be preserved, mankind will make the decision that the human being comes first. I'm not saying this should be or that it should not be, but only predicting the way we will in point of fact act. Remember, saints and sages are rare in this world and the mass of human beings will move by essentially primitive consideration of survival as far as possible at all costs. A saint might be willing to die in order to save the life of an animal, but the average human being will not make that sort of decision.

Third, fourth, or fifth rather, we have the problem produced by dialectic materialism. Dialectic materialism, or otherwise known as Marxism and popularly called communism, is a development of very serious importance. I prefer to call it dialectical materialism rather than communism because communism can be oriented to a totally different principle as is the case in most of the monasteries throughout the world. There is such a thing as a Christian and a Buddhist communism in such organizations, but they do not involve the principle of dialectic materialism; and for the relatively free countries of the world, the threat does not come from voluntary communism as a principle, but rather from that form of entity which we know as dialectic materialism. This developed as a result of the thought of Karl Marx, who had been a student of Hegel and took over the triadic dialectic of Hegel and gave it an inversed interpretation. Hegel was spiritually oriented, in the sense that he was oriented to consciousness, or more strictly, to that which is conscious, and thus gave a position that stands in radical contrast to the orientation to the object, which in its grossest most elemental form is sheer materialism. Karl Marx retained the logical pattern which follows this form: that the actuality of any entity or condition which we will call "*a*" implies the coexistence of that which is "*not-a*", and that then the integration of these two leads to a synthesis in which both parts are seen as cooperating entities in a whole. The process was conceived by Hegel as being essentially autonomous and as a principle of universal development. But in his case it was orientated to the spiritual pole of being. In the case of Karl Marx we have a radical inversion, and the orientation is towards the object or the material fact, which in this case was related primarily to the material fact conceived as social. The inversion reminds one of a principle that has been formulated in the form *demon est deus est—demon deus inversus est*;¹ in other words, that the demon is an inversion of the deity, so that Hegel being oriented to the divine pole, the inversion becomes an orientation to the nefarious or demonic pole.

Now, along with this development of dialectic materialism we have the application of a moral principle which is very characteristic, namely, that the end justifies the means; in other words, the thesis is that assuming the end to be good, then any means is justified to bring about its fulfillment or effectuation. This is a dark and essentially evil moral principle. It was the principle that was used to justify the Spanish Inquisition, and

¹ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Press, 1893, 443. The text actually reads, "*Demon est deus inversus.*"

it has historically led to the most nefarious action imaginable in the history of mankind. The real truth of the matter has been formulated by Emerson when he said the end is resident in the means; in other words, what you bring about will be profoundly colored and even dominantly colored by the means employed.² If vicious and essentially evil means are employed, even though the formulated end was desirable, the ultimate result will be more colored by the means employed than by the end envisaged. Any means has meant the implementation of the dialectic materialistic movement by any agency whatsoever: mental deception, the use of murder, of torture, and of brainwashing. In other words, it effects in practice the enslavement of all the peoples who are caught in governments oriented to this principle, and this we can see verified by the fact that the dialectic materialistic governments have to use every means that they can to keep their own people imprisoned within their territories.

That is one of the problems faced by the world today, but, in addition, we have many others. One in this country, particularly, I do not know how greatly it extends to the peoples of other portions of the world, is the irrational multiplication of laws. It has often been said that freedom that is desirable is the freedom that is organized under law, and there is truth in this. But most law is of necessity a restriction of freedom, and multiplication of law can reach the point where it becomes an extreme denial of freedom. The ideal is that of the minimum amount of positive law compatible with social, economic, and political existence. But in this country, based upon the knowledge of certain entities which I shall quote, the multiplication of law has become extreme. In an article which I read several years ago written by the late Elihu Root, who in his day was one of the outstanding elite ornaments of the legal profession, a man who had been secretary of state during Theodor Roosevelt's administration, said this, that the mass of law in this country is in excess of 1,000,000 laws and that the laws are often contradictory, meaning that in obeying one law you automatically violate another, and that thus the total situation was impossible. More recent evidence which I have seen gives the figure more positively as a total of more than 1,300,000 laws. Now, what this implies is, that the law is essentially unknowable because of its mass, even unknowable to those who specialize in the law because the human mind has not the capacity to assimilate such a law mass. Yet every human being is supposed to live according to the law regardless of what his profession or activity may be. Now, no man can say that he has not violated a law which he does not know exists, yet under a principle of jurisprudence which holds in this country, ignorance of the law is said to be no excuse for the violation of law. Thus we have a situation where the law mass is such that the law cannot be known and yet the individual is held responsible for the obeying of all the law, and every individual, to be secure, would have to know at least enough of each law to know that he has not broken that law. Then again, laws are often contradictory, where, inevitably, violation is unavoidable. The situation is radically irrational and therefore inherently unjust and a disgrace to our society particularly to the individuals known as politicians who have produced this situation and especially to the profession most represented among the

² Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Compensation," in *Essays: First Series* (Boston: James Munroe and Co.), 841: "Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end preexists in the means, the fruit in the seed."

politicians, namely, the legal profession. I would say that simple clear-cut morality indicts these men for producing an outrageous condition.

Beyond this, now, we have other factors important in this country and in the West, possibly more or less worldwide, and that is the general breakdown of sexual discipline and of the rational handling of problems. In the breakdown of sexual discipline we have had an emergence of massive pornography and of homosexuality spread widely, indulging the very worst lustful tendencies in man, a general breakdown, as it were, of what we might call the morality of man to woman relationship.

Then there is the emergence of a vast interest in violence or conflict, of injury and imposition of death as a means of trying to effect the fulfillment of one's interest or as an instrument of entertainment. This again is indulgence of one of the most vicious of human lusts. It is all a denigration or repudiation of the principle of reason and of moral resolution of problems. This is part of the world field. This principle of violence has been employed also by certain individuals as a means to effect world change. But let us remember that the means employed determines the change that would be effected. All those who seek to change the world by means that are violent are knowingly or unknowingly working towards a lower state than that which we now have. Indeed, a revolution is needed, but that revolution is away from the principle of violence and sensual indulgence to the rule of reason. This is a point of very great importance.

I might direct your attention here to a certain essay of Sri Aurobindo on Heraclitus where this subject is discussed.³ Heraclitus recognized that there are two forces in the world. The first and most primitive is the principle of force itself as the prime determinant. Naturally, the elemental operation of energies between planetary bodies is one of force, and we find this as a dominant feature in the life-zones below man. Each achieves its results by the force it can put out in one form or another. And it also is the governing principle in the early evolution of man. But there is another principle inherent in the nature of being and that is the principle of reason, and the effort of man to become civilized is the effort to replace the principle of force by the principle of reason. But so far the progress is only partially successful. As we look abroad in the world today, the nations arm themselves, presumptively primarily for their own protection, but also to the end of aggression if the protective power of any entity should become too limited. A principle of force hereby exists in the relationships between nations which really dominates over the principle of reason; although, the principle of reason works in the effort to solve international problems by diplomatic means. But on the whole, the diplomatic means is relatively weak in influence as compared to the dominating force of sheer power. And this is reflected further in our interrelationships in our general society. The relationships of productions in the economy are supposed to be oriented to the principle of war or competition. Actually, those who really wish to transcend this into a relationship of cooperation with their brothers in the same field are coerced by the political entity to continue in a relationship of war. And in our entertainment through the means of sport, the principle of war is accentuated to an enormous degree. I submit that we are not yet civilized until this principle of war or force is subjugated and rendered

³ Aurobindo Ghose, *Heraclitus*, in vol. 16 of the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 335-371.

radically subservient to the principle of reason. Otherwise, the highest point we reach is that of an intellectual barbarism, something very inferior to that level of culture which has led to our scientific achievements.

I might bring out this point in connection with our theory of jurisprudence, that there again the principle of war is emphasized rather than the principle of reason in that the relationship between the attorneys before the court is an adversary relationship, which in the last analysis is only one step above the primitive trial by battle. It's easy to point out the weaknesses of this principle in jurisprudence, and I propose to do so on another tape, but here I merely make this point to show how prevalent is the principle of adversaryism, competition, or war—essentially a principle that belongs to barbarism and most emphatically not to a rational civilization.

This, then, brings before us a picture, very briefly outlined, of a world situation that is far from ideal, in fact, one which is fraught with the potential of real disaster. Beyond the items which I have covered so far, there are three others that need our serious attention. These are the development of the cult of ugliness; the second, the drug culture; and third, the open indulgence in black magic practices.

First, concerning the culture of ugliness, this has been preeminently manifested by a portion of our young people, manifesting in three distinct forms: the first, in composition and performance of music which violates all the rules of essential harmony and produces a nauseous resultant which reminds one more of a manure pile than of anything more satisfactory than that; also the same thing in the anarchy of form in the development of plastic art; and third in the use of degenerating kind of dress and care of the person. In all of this, we have at least an unconscious orientation to ugliness, but which I have heard has been openly advocated as a desirable thing, even I heard it quoted the statement of one artist to the effect that the production of ugliness transcends in value the production of beauty. One thing that particularly stands out here is the use of the most obnoxious and ugly kind of dress on the part of the very individuals who should be the supreme carriers of the quality of beauty in our human whole, namely, the culture of ugly dress by our young women—the wearing of overalls that are patched, the keeping themselves unkempt as though there were a positive virtue in making themselves look like hags or charwomen. There may be something good in this, because it can have the effect, at least with the more evolved of our young men, that they turn against anything that has to do with a man-woman relationship and may even be attracted to the taking of religious vows and seeking life in a monastery. That might have some positive value in it, and if that is what these young women are seeking on the part of the best of their young men, well they are moving in a wise direction; but, if they intend otherwise, they couldn't be more foolish than they now are. As I look upon these young people in their dirty and patched jeans, I am reminded of other days when I wore such garments which we then called overalls for the performance of the dirtiest and most foul-smelling of farm work, and these jeans as seen now arouse in my memory images, olfactory and visual, that are of this dirty and foul-smelling nature. And, inevitably, it makes the association with the individual behind such garments very much an association with these images. I cannot too greatly object to this practice of the cult of ugliness.

There is, in addition, the drug culture, which seems to be intimately related to the cult of ugliness, and this has been widely practiced by many of our young people. This

culture is based upon a property of certain poisonous chemical substance such as those which originally came from certain mushrooms, from the mold that grows upon rye seed, and from certain forms of cactus, as well as other herbs that are known in the world. Many of these have been synthetically produced in our laboratories. Now, these substances have the property of modifying states of consciousness, and among these states of consciousness are some that are, judging by the reports, definitely intriguing; and, judging by these reports also, there have been experiences that counterfeit authentic mystical experiences. And, as a result of this, there is an interest in escaping the problems of life by indulgence in a state of intoxication that is even more dangerous than the intoxications produced by alcohol.

Now, there are some men who have had the courage to investigate the action of these drugs, particularly Dr. Lilly and Dr. Grof. Dr. Lilly manifested the supreme courage of experimenting with many of these agents upon his own person, and for this I can only feel the greatest of admiration, for here is investigation involving danger—not simply the danger of death, which is the hazard of a vast number of our searches for truth, but the danger of psychical disintegration and the decay of the moral character. I cannot too greatly express my admiration for a man who has the courage, in his interest for the human whole, to dare such dangers. And I respect the work of Dr. Grof, although apparently this work in his case was not upon his own person, but through securing the reports of the use of these drugs upon the persons of psychotic individuals and upon the persons of volunteers (both in student bodies), on the part of professors, and of theologians, giving a mass of reports, said to be over 3,000 in number, showing the kind of consciousness that can produced by them. The results range over a wide domain, some of them positively hellish in character, others rather exalted imitating in many cases states of consciousness that are authentically part of states of Realization or Enlightenment—but, not to be confused with the latter.

What we have here is a reproduction by an improper method, by a shortcut, by a trespass of that which should be attained by the most rigorous of possible discipline. Remember that these exalted states which are to be called Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment are the fruit, first of a long evolution, and then of a conscious effort which the Buddhists tell us takes normally a period of seven incarnations.⁴ It is utterly absurd to imagine that merely by taking a drug one can short-circuit this enormous effort—an effort which not only involves control of the mind, but rigorous moral discipline. And do not think for one moment that we are the first to know of the existence of such chemical substance. They existed in herbs that were discovered long ago, and we may rest assured that if by the use of a mere chemical substance derived from some plant the breakthrough to Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment were possible, the Buddhist authorities would long ago have known of this; but on the contrary, they have told us that normally the development requires concentrated effort over a period of seven incarnations. What really happens by the drug is a false breakthrough, involving a damage that may actually

⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Pasadena, Calif.: Theosophical University Press, 1946), 69:

Calm and unmoved the Pilgrim glideth up the stream that to Nirvana leads. He knoweth that the more his feet will bleed, the whiter will himself be washed. He knoweth well that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvana will be his....

postpone the Realization perhaps for many lifetimes as compared to what might have been the case if there had been no tampering with the drugs. Realization is not intoxication, but ultimate sobriety, a clear vision, a clear conceiving, that transcends that which is normal with unilluminated, though intelligent, men.

And finally, there is the development in our day of an explicit form of black magic identified as devil worship or in other forms. In some cases this seems to involve blood sacrifices where there have been murders involving individuals that have no relationship whatever with the would-be murderer. This I submit is one of the very worst manifestations of our age.

Now, looking back over the list of dark and gloomy facts concerning the present state of the world, it would appear that perhaps as never before we are living in a day when there has been a resurrection of evil and a development of vice in the world. And in this connection, I am taken back to the words attributed to Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* where he says that when there is an insurrection of evil and a resurrection of vice in the world, then he comes; in other words, the darkest day is also the possible day of the arrival of the redeemer.⁵ This is the hopeful light behind the dark shadow on the surface of our life here and now. The problems that we face here are of such an overwhelming nature that the normal resources of mankind, even of the men of good will who are less than *illuminati*, are inadequate for the handling of them; and therefore it is a time when the aid of the great ones, former men, or illumined men, who watch and guard this humanity, may enter in again with real force to handle the problem. That, I submit, is the only hope. But for me this is more than a hope. This intervention I regard as certain. And in this connection, I refer you to the tape on *transubstantiation* which was given some time ago.⁶ It was there said that the condition facing this humanity in this world was so intolerably awful, that the time was insufficient for change by *transformation*, but that to meet the situation there would have to be a process there called transubstantiation, meaning that there would be an inflow equivalent to a replacement in the total consciousness of this humanity so that it might be saved from massive disaster.

⁵ William Q. Judge, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1947), 31. The text actually reads:

I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness.

⁶ See the audio recordings, "Statement Regarding Transubstantiation," parts 1 and 2.