

1946
Hoernlé Memorial Lecture

RACE ATTITUDES
and
EDUCATION

E. G. Malherbe
Principal, Natal University College



S.A. INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS
P.O. Box 97 ————— Johannesburg

HOERNLÉ MEMORIAL LECTURE

A lecture, entitled the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (in memory of the late Professor R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, President of the Institute from 1934 to 1943), will be delivered once a year under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations. An invitation to deliver the lecture will be extended each year to some person having special knowledge and experience of racial problems in Africa or elsewhere.

It is hoped that the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture will provide a platform for constructive and helpful contributions to thought and action. While the lecturers will be entirely free to express their own views, which may not be those of the Institute as expressed in its formal decisions, it is hoped that lecturers will be guided by the Institute's declaration of policy that "scientific study and research must be allied with the fullest recognition of the human reactions to changing racial situations; that respectful regard must be paid to the traditions and usages of various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and that due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held."

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“Wars begin in the minds of men and it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be set up.”

—Mr. Attlee.

I

In delivering the second Hoernlé Memorial Lecture, I wish, at the outset to associate myself wholeheartedly with the eloquent tributes paid to Professor Hoernlé by our Chairman here tonight, the Rt. Hon. Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, who delivered the first lecture, and by Mr. J. D. Rheinallt Jones, the Director of the Institute of Race Relations, who wrote the introduction to the series.

I feel deeply honoured to have been asked to address you on this occasion. I deliberately chose as my subject *Race Attitudes and Education*, because these are two matters on which Alfred Hoernlé was a great authority and about which I learnt a great deal from him. There is also another reason. He was the father of our Army Education Services of which I was the Director. This organization brought me into very intimate contact with him during the last three years of his life. How enthusiastically he threw himself into this work, often, alas, to the detriment of his health!

At a very early stage in the war, when we were building up our army, Professor Hoernlé realized that, other things being equal, troops fight well in proportion as they understand the things they are fighting *for* as well as the things they are fighting against. After much trouble he succeeded in convincing the military authorities that this was particularly true in the case of a South African volunteer army whose members were probably more politically conscious than those of a conscript army. The ideals and beliefs which stirred in the minds of our forces were however inarticulate and vague. They needed canalization. To produce maximum fighting efficiency these vague and inarticulate beliefs had to be given shape and expression. This had to be part and parcel of the training of every soldier.

Thus the Union Defence Force Army Education Services were originated, which later extended from the camps at the Cape to the mountains of Florence and from Tripolitania to Syria—wherever South African forces were to be found—even in England during the prisoner of war repatriation period.

Many an officer of the Union Defence Force remembers how, in the early days of the war, Professor Hoernlé lectured to them at the Military College and gave them first-hand information as to what Nazism entailed and what they had to face. Many who heard those eloquent and incisive lectures of his commented later on the accuracy of Professor Hoernlé's forecasts as to how the collapse of Germany would come and what chaos would result from the collapse of an ideology based on brute force and the negation of Christian and democratic principles. Incidentally, for doing this Army Education work, Professor Hoernlé and I shared the distinction of being roundly cursed by Zeesen in their nightly broadcasts in Afrikaans to South Africa.

Of course, in fighting for the "democratic way of life" the men in the lectures and discussion groups learnt to analyse fairly closely what was meant by democracy and the principles underlying it. It is here that the men began to realize how far South Africa itself fell short of those ideals for which they were supposed to be fighting, particularly when it came to applying them to the under-privileged races in our midst. This realization had the most interesting and curious effects, particularly where it came into conflict with the rather deeply ingrained race prejudices which constitute such a powerful part of the South African's social heritage. This mental conflict became more and more apparent towards the end of the war when the South Africans had finished their fighting and were waiting to come home. It was particularly evident in the prisoner of war camps where our men had lots of time to think. The men had acquired a passion for factual information. For moralizing and theorizing they had very little time. If any lecturer indulged in that direction, they labelled it with a very impolite two-syllabled army name beginning with a B! Emotionalism was frowned upon and stereotypes that may have thrilled them before the war, such as one hears from political platforms or at Dingaan's Day gatherings, were openly challenged.

Now these broadening experiences are drawing to a close. The men are coming back. They know they have changed in many of their attitudes. They rather dread the clash of these changed attitudes with the prejudices which they know still obtain at home. The minds of many are confused owing to the many logical inconsistencies and anomalies of fact with which they are now confronted. This

particularly applies to South Africa's racial questions. Socrates would have regarded such a state of mind, filled with uncertainty and misgiving, as a very salutary one—the necessary preliminary birth pains before he, in the role of an intellectual midwife, can succeed in bringing forth clarity and truth. In the absence, however, of a Socrates to reconcile on the one hand what these men believe to be true and right, with, on the other hand, the stubborn realities of the racial situation concerning which the men want to see action, one cannot but view the future with concern. Frustrated idealism will bring dire disillusionment. Disillusionment in the young is a serious matter and likely to breed trouble to the government that is blamed for the disillusionment.

Mr. Hofmeyr devoted his first Memorial Lecture last year to a discussion of the bearing of the Christian principles on race problems. He showed how the central truth of the Fatherhood of God carried with it “the implication of the brotherhood of man, irrespective of race or creed or colour and the concept of a world-wide family, all the members of which stand in the same relationship to its Head.” He also showed how “this family association is independent of the physical origin and the racial characteristics of those who make it up.”

The serviceman's reaction to such enunciations of this fundamental doctrine of our Christian religion usually is: “So what?” “What are you going to *do* about it?” He wants action.

Beyond exhorting us to apply these principles in our dealings with Natives, Jews and Indians, Mr. Hofmeyr did not indicate any line of action. I do not think that was his purpose. He warned us, however, and very rightly too, “that the reformer in the field of race relations often fails through not paying sufficient attention to the hard facts of public opinion, and to the necessity of securing a modification of these facts as a condition of progress.” But Mr. Hofmeyr did not tell us how we should set about modifying “these hard facts of public opinion.”

The public opinion on racial matters to which he refers consists of attitudes and valuations which are sometimes crystallized into rather intractable stereotypes, but mostly are very plastic—more modifiable than is generally believed, as my experience in army education has proved to me.

The object of this address, therefore, is to stress the

dynamic role of these attitudes and valuations and to indicate in general terms the way in which education (in the broadest sense) can accelerate in such attitudes the change which may lead to progress. In other words, I want to go on from where Mr. Hofmeyr left off. I do so not without misgiving and hesitation, for I realise how vast the subject is and that in one short hour one cannot go very far into it.

How I wish now that my old friend Professor Hoernlé had been here instead of me to tackle this very formidable task which I have perhaps too presumptuously set myself! How his analytical mind would have revelled in analysing the results which we achieved in the army! How ardently he would have planned the ways and means for capitalizing what has been done there, and developing it on a larger scale amongst the rest of the people!

The task is an urgent one for, unless we capitalize whatever progressive attitudes the South African soldier brings back with him into civilian life, unless we strengthen them and build on them, I am sure they will evaporate.

Of course, the South African soldier is not unique in having undergone a change in his attitudes in regard to race and in being worried as to how these changed attitudes are going to fit in when he gets home. Let me read to you a couple of letters from young American fighting men which appeared in *Life* about a month ago.

First I quote you part of a letter by a young sailor whose home is in Mississippi.

“In the Navy there were a great many Negroes and it was not easy at first to eat, sleep and wash by them. I brushed off those thoughts with ‘The Navy is run by a gang of damn Yankees.’ But when I became very seasick and couldn’t eat, it was a big colored guy named Lewis from Florida who fixed me something that would stay on my stomach. When I was broke in Hawaii it was a colored guy who lent me money.

At night when there was not much to do on the ship, we used to sit out on the rail and talk till all hours of the night . . . and it was not too long before I realized that they wanted the same out of life as I did, had the same dreams as I. They were fighting for a democracy they had hardly shared, one that had given them only poverty. Yet they had been willing to give their lives for that. I, too, was willing to fight for a democracy, one in which

I had shared every benefit. Who was a better American ? I'm sure it was not I . . .”

Then, after going on to tell of deeds of heroism by Negroes he witnessed at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, he continues :—

“ The Negro in this war has proven himself entitled to the benefits of democracy above and beyond the call of expectation. If this be denied then we are frauds.

In what I have written I by no means wish to condemn the state of Mississippi but only some of the people of Mississippi for their selfishness and narrow-mindedness.

JAMES P. O'BRYAN.”

In the correspondence column of a subsequent issue of *Life* the following two letters appeared :—

“ Sirs,—

I don't know whether Navy man James P. O'Bryan, of Mississippi, your correspondent of the October 29 issue of *Life*, holds any medals for valor, but whether he does or not, he surely deserves one for his brave and just attitude toward the Negro. I say brave because, coming from Mississippi, he must know how unpopular it is to hold such views. None but the most courageous would publicly admit that the Negro has any rights.

If we of the South would stop ranting about inter-marriage and social equality and help the Negro to better his living and working conditions, I think we would find that in a few years most of our racial problems would disappear.

J. R. GURIM.”

Culpeper, Va.

(There is a profound truth in the concluding paragraph which South Africans can well take to heart.)

“ Sirs,—

If Mr. O'Bryan's ' new outlook ' on the racial question is an example of a majority of other servicemen's it is to be hoped that it is sufficiently sincere to overcome the unchanged attitude of many of those who stayed on the home front.

If the vehement outbursts by the prejudiced of North and South alike, to which I have been a witness during ' discussions ' on the subject of the equality and rights of the Negro, are representative of opinions throughout the country, the returning servicemen with their revised beliefs are headed for trouble.

HELEN M. PASANEN.”

Fitchburg, Mass.

As Director of Military Intelligence I was responsible for the censorship of all troop mail in the South African Army. In the course of the last four years I had to read hundreds of soldiers' letters and the censorship summaries of hundreds of thousands. Letters of the kind I have just read were not uncommon. Many of them showed evidence of a change of attitude in the direction of greater tolerance towards the Non-European. In numbers of cases this change of attitude was accompanied by an increased appreciation of the Native as a person and as a very valuable part of South Africa's human resources. This was particularly the case with our troops who had experience with other Africans and particularly the Abyssinians. In comparison with the latter our Native was regarded as a far superior creature—in fact "a prince of a fellow," as one put it. He is commonly regarded as superior also to the "Gypos" (Egyptian fellahin).

When I speak of this change of attitude amongst our troops from one of blind prejudice to one of understanding and tolerance I am not referring to exceptional cases, but to an average tendency. Obviously there are always some extreme cases which deviate from the central tendency.

Strangely enough, with this increase of toleration towards the South African Native, one did not find a similar decrease in race prejudice against the Jews. In fact, anti-Semitism became more and more in evidence as the war progressed. One notices that as frequently amongst the English-speaking members of our forces as amongst the Afrikaans-speaking. Sometimes even more so. This seems to bear out the tragic truth referred to by Mr. Hofmeyr in his lecture that though our soldiers beat Hitler's armies on the battlefield they succumbed to the cumulative effect of his powerful anti-Semitic propaganda on the home front. The effect was atmospheric and still persists. Also there were always enough isolated instances of Jews wangling base jobs to give the soldier just that grain of evidence gleaned from his own experience to lead him to accept the whole or most of Hitler's indictment of the Jewish race. Of course, it never occurred to him to consider whether there were not relatively as many non-Jews who craved funkholes instead of the fighting line, which probably was the case, judging from a study which analysed the relative incidence of casualties amongst Jews and non-Jews. This fallacy of generalizing from a particular or of mistaking the exceptional for the

significant, is the one to which men are most prone, even though they may otherwise be perfectly capable of logical thinking. And it is this tendency, of course, which the propagandist exploits.

It is an undoubted fact that the Jews loom as a menace much larger in the South African's consciousness than their numbers would warrant. In a Public Service Entrance Examination in which I was examiner, in the General Knowledge paper, I put the question—"Underline the percentage which you think the Jews constitute on the whole population in South Africa : 1 per cent, 5 per cent, 10 per cent, 15 per cent, 20 per cent, 25 per cent, 30 per cent." When I tabulated the results I found that the percentages underlined most frequently grouped themselves round 20 per cent. In actual fact, the percentage of Jews in South Africa is just a little over 1 per cent. Of course, the anti-Semites contend that the Jews exercise far too much power in proportion to their numbers.

So what do we have here : a country where there is on the one hand a tendency to oppress the Jews because they are so few and so clever, and on the other hand a tendency, equally strong, to deny democratic privileges to the Natives because they are so many and so ignorant !

Strangely enough this palpable lack of logical consistency does not worry those who hold these views, because reason does not seem to be the impelling force in this field. Racial prejudices operate on the emotional plane and often spring from fear and a curious set of inferiority complexes.

Reason is regarded as man's prerogative. All too rarely is it a guiding hand. In the majority of cases it is engaged on finding reasons—more or less rational excuses, if you like—for the actions to which we feel ourselves impelled by feeling and prejudice. This accounts for a great deal of our curious behaviour as individuals and as groups.

While I make this observation regarding the seeming impotence of reason, I must inform you that I have found that the careful and objective presentation of facts and allowing men to draw their own conclusions does bring them to revise their prejudices on the race question. At any rate, it makes them realise that they *are* prejudices, which is already an important step forward.

When I shall presently speak of the methods of influencing race attitudes, I shall indicate why, in my opinion, some of the methods of combating anti-Semitism have not been

successful, and why, comparatively speaking, there has been more of a favourable change of attitude to the Native than to the Jew.

As regards the Indian a slightly more favourable attitude was noticed amongst South African soldiers, probably engendered by an appreciation of the splendid fighting done by Indian units in various theatres of war. This may be totally evaporated by the strong anti-Indian feeling which has originated recently on the home front and particularly in Natal. These anti-Indian feelings do not stand much chance of being lessened because of the even stronger anti-European attitudes recently expressed with great vehemence in the Indian press of Natal.

English-Afrikaans relationships have improved considerably amongst the men in the army. We have strong proof that as a result of playing, working, fighting, suffering and dying together, a mutual appreciation and in many cases genuine affection has sprung up. They feel themselves as one group—South Africans—bearers of the Red Tab, a mark of distinction as well as of distinctiveness amongst the Allied fighting forces. I shall presently give some statistical evidence of a fairly objective nature on this point.

I mention this point here not because I regard the attitudes on English and Afrikaans relationships as *racial*. I do not, and I think it is incorrect to call what is purely an inter-cultural difference within the same race, a racial difference. I refer to it only because common parlance has called it racial and also because we have to do here with attitudes which can be and have been conditioned by education—as I showed beyond a question of a doubt in my study on the *Bilingual School* (1943).

Before I present these data, I want to make one important point of a general nature. The reorientation which soldiers of the allied nations underwent in regard to their attitudes to other racial and national groups as a result of their varied contacts and extreme mobility over the face of the globe is something unparalleled in the world's history and merits the closest study.

If one could discover how such modifications in racial attitude have actually taken place and what combination of factors conditioned such changes, I am sure that one would be afforded valuable clues as to how to bring about such changes deliberately. I admit that it will be no easy task to tackle scientifically because the situations are so

complex and vary from race to race.¹ Still, an objective analysis of thousands of individual cases in whom such changes in attitude have taken place, should be undertaken by competent psychologists and sociologists while these experiences are still fairly fresh in the minds of the troops. And if some pattern can be discovered amongst these factors which are operative on a big scale, or even on a small scale between only two racial groups who tend to get on each other's nerves and excite antagonisms, it should be a most valuable contribution to the peace of the world. In fact, I cannot think of anything which will help more in implementing the lofty ideals of tolerance and goodwill among men contained in the Preamble of the San Francisco Charter of the United Nations.

It may be argued that it is useless to try and change attitudes when the whole economic system is wrong. This argument contains a fallacy. As the late Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw told us when he visited South Africa about 12 years ago, "When we speak of a social order, an economic system, or a form of government, we are apt to think of them as things, objects, which can be changed outside of man. This is where the Marxists went wrong. Yet if all human beings suddenly disappeared from this earth, there would not be anything left of all these social forms. There would be nature, there would be empty cities and factories, there would be books but no one to read them, meaningless, inanimate objects in the midst of nature. The "social order," the "economic system," the "form of government," would have disappeared with man, in whom and by whom they exist. They are but living relations from man to man; created by man, they live in him and disappear with him. Therefore man, individual, living man, is primary in all social changes, in him they begin and end, on his attitude and understanding they depend. It is to living man that the power has been given to deal with the ultimate reality of human existence.

We must ask ourselves what we, as educators, can do in this world crisis. The general feeling is that the educator is powerless, that he can do nothing, and that action in such

¹The best book on the psychological aspects of race attitudes in South Africa is Prof. I. D. MacCrone's study: *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, Historical, Experimental and Psychological studies. 1937. Oxford University Press. Strangely enough, though psychologists have developed several techniques for measuring attitudes, they have given the educator relatively small help as to methods of actually modifying attitudes in a certain direction which is deemed desirable.

a crisis must come from those who, along legislative or revolutionary ways, can effect a change.

Yet, neither legislation nor revolution is creative ; man alone is creative. Laws only confirm, they do not create. Revolutions do but remove obstacles, they too do not create. In law a man may say what he *intends* to do, by a revolution he may gain the *power* of acting, but it is always man who has to do the creative work ; behind all political changes, all economic reconstruction, stands living man.

Here lies the tremendous power of the educator. It is exactly with these living human beings that he deals, not with the humanity of the present but with the living human beings of the future, who carry that future in themselves, without whom it cannot be.”¹

What is required is a change of heart. When that takes place in man, then social orders, economic systems alter automatically.

¹*Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society*, p. 12 (1934 New Education Fellowship Conference Report). E. G. Malherbe, Editor. Juta & Co., Cape Town. 1936.

II

Let me give you now some of the results of the *Army Education Services Attitude Test* in order to show you what an important influence the educational attainment of a group has on its attitudes towards the Native.

In May 1944 the Army Education Services (A.E.S.) carried out a survey of opinions of the Union Defence Force by means of an Attitude Test called "What do you Think?—*Wat dink Jy?*"

As it was not possible to give the test to every single member of the Union Defence Force, a representative sample of the whole Union Defence Force had to be selected. This sample consisted of about 7,000 members of the Union Defence Force, and was selected from officers and other ranks, men and women, army and air force, men in the Union and men outside the Union. The number selected from each of these groups was, as far as possible, proportionate to their numbers in the whole Union Defence Force.

Personnel from more than 200 different units were tested. Within each unit the selection of the actual persons to be tested was made by individual Information Officers. As far as possible, the persons actually selected for the test were chosen at random from the various sub-groups. Thus, for example, every fourth man on an alphabetical nominal roll was chosen to carry out the test.

It was hoped that by these means the opinions of this sample would closely represent the opinion of over 100,000 members of the Union Defence Force.

The test was confined to European personnel in the Union Defence Force.

It is believed that the answers given were genuine answers in the sense that the men expressed what they really thought and not what they supposed the Commanding Officer or the Information Officer or the Government would like them to say. In order to ensure this, the following was printed at the beginning of the test:—

"In giving your answer say what you really believe, not what you suppose your Commanding Officer, or the Government would like you to say. You will be perfectly safe in saying what you really believe, because you are not asked to put your name on your answer, and no

one will try to find out who said what. Thousands of soldiers are answering these questions. You will hear later what answers the army and air force as a whole have given."

The main purpose of the survey was to find out what members of the Union Defence Force are really thinking about the various problems dealt with in the test. In South Africa we have no way of knowing what public opinion is on most questions.

The other purpose was to stimulate troops to think more about the questions asked. Many men who had never bothered to consider seriously what opinions they had on some of these questions might begin to think about them when faced with a definite choice. In this way it was hoped that discussion of the questions might help to make South Africans into more active citizens.

The specific directions for the attitude test were as follows :—

" A large number of problems of our society are named here. Four or five possible answers are offered for each. There is a little square next to each possible answer. Put a cross in the square next to the answer that seems best to you. Please mark one and only one answer to each problem. You don't have to write any words ; every question is answered by a cross."

The test contained a large number of topics. I am giving here only the results which reflect the soldiers' attitudes on the "*Native Question.*"

What kinds of Jobs for Natives?

The following are the percentages of soldiers favouring the different answers which were offered for them to choose from :—

1.	Natives ought to have the same chances as white men in competing for any kind of job ; a man ought not to be kept out of any job just because of his colour	5%
2.	Natives ought to be given more chances, of getting better jobs and earning more money, but this ought only to develop slowly	47%
3.	As things are now, Natives get a fair chance to do whatever work they are fit for	24%
4.	This is a white man's country ; Natives should not be allowed to do any jobs except unskilled jobs	20%
5.	Don't know or no answer	4%
			<hr/> 100%

The majority opinion is cautiously liberal. There is a marked difference between officers and other ranks. If we combine (1) and (2) and disregard "Don't knows," we find that 80 per cent of officers and 50 per cent of other ranks favour more opportunities for Natives. The effect of education is equally striking. Omitting "Don't knows," the analysis in terms of education is as follows :—

	Univer- sity.	Matricu- lation.	J.C.	Std. VI and under.
(1) and (2): Favouring more opportunities for Natives ..	84%	73%	49%	30%
(3) and (4): Not favouring opportunities for Natives ..	16%	27%	51%	70%

Native Education.

The following are the percentages of soldiers favouring the different answers which were offered for them to choose from :—

1. Natives ought to be given the same chances of education as Europeans	11%
2. Natives ought to be given education of the same kind as Europeans, but we can only expect to extend educational opportunities to them very slowly	45%
3. Natives ought to be taught mainly how to work with their hands ; they do not need book-learning	27%
4. Natives do not need more education, and are better left alone	11%
5. Don't know or no answer	6%
	<hr/> 100% <hr/>

The same differences are found according to military rank and education as in the previous question. Combining (1) and (2) and omitting "Don't knows," we find that 81 per cent of officers and 55 per cent of other ranks favour more opportunities for Natives to acquire book-learning.

The analysis of those in favour in terms of home language is as follows : English, 72 per cent ; Bilingual, 56 per cent ; Afrikaans, 38 per cent.

The analysis in terms of education is as follows (omitting "Don't knows") :—

	Univer- sity.	Matricu- lation.	J.C.	Std. VI and under.
(1) and (2): Favouring more book-learning for Natives ..	85%	75%	55%	39%

The answers to this question are in general more favour-

able to Natives' opportunities than they are in the previous question (employment), or the following question (political rights). This suggests that an important reason why many people oppose opportunities for Natives is the fear of economic competition. Education is a less direct threat than jobs or political power, and soldiers were willing to be liberal about it. It is also plain that those who have economic security find it easier to be liberal than those who are anxious about their status.

Political Rights of Natives.

The following are the percentages of soldiers favouring the different answers which were offered for them to choose from:—

1. There is no reason why Natives should have a say in the government of the country	16%
2. It is fair that Natives should be represented in parliament, but I think that what they have now is quite enough	33%
3. Natives should be given more political rights than they have now, but only slowly, as they become civilised.	42%
4. Natives should have exactly the same political rights as white men	2%
5. Don't know or no answer	7%
	100%

The same differences are found according to military rank and education as in the previous two questions. Grouping together (3) and (4), and disregarding "Don't know," we find that 71 per cent of officers and 43 per cent of other ranks favour some extension of Natives' political rights.

The analysis in terms of education is as follows (disregarding "Don't know") :—

	Univer- sity.	Matricu- lation.	J.C.	Std. VI and under.
(1) and (2): Not favouring more political rights for Natives	23%	37%	59%	73%
(3) and (4): Favouring more political rights for Natives	77%	63%	41%	27%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

English-Afrikaans Relationships?

As I have already mentioned soldiers' attitudes on English-Afrikaans relationships, I shall give the voting without comment, as it is too big a subject also to include as well now.

The following are the percentages of soldiers favouring

the different answers which were offered for them to choose from :—

1.	We ought to aim at making South Africa mainly Afrikaans-speaking and dominated by Afrikaner traditions	3%
2.	We ought to aim at making South Africa mainly English-speaking and dominated by British tradition	3%
3.	English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking groups ought to have equality, and keep their traditions separate and distinct..	9%
4.	English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking groups ought to be joined into one South African nation, so that neither group will remain separate and distinct	82%
5.	Don't know or no answer	3%
			100%

On schools the voting was as follows :—

1.	We shall have more national unity if English and Afrikaans children go to the same schools	93%
2.	It is much better for English and Afrikaans children to go to separate schools	6%
3.	Don't know or no answer	1%
			100%

The percentages of those who *favour separate schools* for English and Afrikaans children decreases with the level of education of the soldiers voting. For example, it is twice as big amongst those who have had only a Standard VI or lower education than amongst those who had passed matriculation. The percentage is lowest (3.5) amongst those who had had a university education.

Speaking generally it would seem from the above data that education has a liberalizing effect on the individual. The lower his education is, the more he is inclined to harbour fears and to cling to his prejudices. Education for mere literacy is not enough. In fact, that stage of education is in many respects a dangerous one, because it is too inadequate. It makes him an easy prey of propaganda through press headlines which is all he usually reads in a newspaper. He has not had enough education to make him propaganda-proof. One of the functions of education is to develop in men defence mechanisms against having their critical sense blurred or their consciences violated. A man should at least know when he is being propagandized. If a person's schooling is insufficient to provide this armour, he should be taken care of by means of a system of adult education. In fact, I am convinced that in matters of social and political education the late adolescent and adult period is far more important than the ordinary school age period. A boy or girl at school lacks the life experience to give meaning and

content to citizenship training and to try and give it to a child at that stage is largely a waste of time. My experience in the army has convinced me of the importance of adult education in attitude building, particularly in the field of citizenship.

The Army Education Services used to run short courses for troops of a week, two weeks, or even four weeks at a time, where men listened daily to well-informed lecturers on social, economic and political questions. These lectures were not dogmatic but mainly factual. They encouraged free discussion by the men irrespective of rank. At the beginning of the course they were usually like fish out of water. In the first place, they were not being lectured in the customary way from a military manual, the *verba ipsissima* of which they had to swallow willy nilly. In the second place, they were allowed to express their own views which were sympathetically listened to by the lecturer. This was an unusual experience. Gradually after the second or third day they would thaw and the discussions became more lively. The more vocal ones amongst them would, of course, be the first to air their views which, when it came to a subject like the Native question, consisted generally of opinions in the form of clichés and stereotypes. Soon, however, the men got tired of hearing these repeated. The group would then show its displeasure in no uncertain terms if a fellow kept on riding that kind of a horse. They found that what interested them more were facts and more facts and particularly the rather vigorous examination of popular beliefs in the light of factual evidence. For example, when the Native question was discussed it was usually tackled from the purely economic point of view. That is, we considered it from the point of view of what would be best for the development of South Africa into a prosperous country. Gradually it dawns upon them, for example, that Native labour is not cheap labour, that a disease-ridden and impoverished Native population comprising four-fifths of South Africa's human resources is a burden which will weigh the whole country down. At no stage did we try to discuss the matter on a moral plane—for instance, by asking: Is it right or wrong for the white man to do this or that to the Native? The somewhat emotional approach which characterized the men's utterances during the first few days had disappeared. The fellow who at the start vehemently expressed himself against any form of European amenities

for the Native.: "What I say is, when I see a Native all toffed up, my first impulse is to kick him in the pants!"—or the one who dramatically challenged the audience: "Would you allow a Native to marry your daughter?" . . . these have become somewhat subdued. The group had "had" them and was moving away from such irrelevancies on to much more serious discussion, for example, of what the effects on housing costs in South Africa would be if Natives were also allowed to build houses (a) for themselves, (b) for white people at wages considerably lower than the rates paid today to white artisans. As a result of the high cost of skilled building labour the average South African family has to spend 25 per cent of its income on rent or on merely keeping a roof over its head compared with only 16 per cent in other European countries. This would lead to a discussion of trade unions, of competition by South Africa on world markets in industrial products, and so on.

Every day brought with it a different set of problems to be discussed. There was not a dull moment, for the men had become quite keen and had been asking for books in which they could read up more about a question on which they had sat up in their bungalow arguing till late in the night. At the end of the course the men are asked to complete voluntarily and anonymously a sort of "quiz" which, *inter alia*, allows them to say what part of the course they liked least, liked most; in what matters they received new insights and changed their attitudes, etc., etc. What is most interesting is the frequency with which men admit a change of attitude or confess that prejudices previously held were not justified in the light of the facts. What was almost touching at times was the testimony given privately to the course captain or sometimes even before the group of a change of heart, a process which, in the field of religion, would be called conversion.

Of course, I do not know how permanent such conversions will be. I am afraid that many, unless followed up and strengthened, may lapse back under the impact of the taboos and *mores* of their old surroundings in civilian life.

The main point I wish to make, however, is that our method of approach in modifying attitudes was the *indirect* one. They must be stalked. To charge upon them with a frontal attack would be useless. It would then resolve itself merely into moralizing or hectoring. One must out-flank them. By keeping on neutral ground one avoids the

rousing of contrary emotions which cloud the argument and prevent a clear vision of the fundamental issues. This indirect attack is a most important point to keep in mind if we want to secure progress in our attitudes on racial questions. A disregard of this fundamental point is, in my opinion, one of the main causes of the failure (to which I referred to above) of much of the propaganda to combat anti-Semitism. One has just to read the headlines of the publications, journals and pamphlets carrying this propaganda to see how crude their methods are. This, however, by the way.

Largely as a result of this kind of work of the Information Officers in the Army Education Services up North, the proposal had come from the troops that South Africa's national memorial of this war should be in the form of a national health service which would tackle primarily the improvement of the health of the Non-Europeans. The Government has, I believe, accepted this proposal towards which the troops have already contributed thousands of pounds. What is to come of it will depend on the extent to which the Government will implement it. What is particularly significant is that the soldiers' discussions have developed amongst them a collective attitude of responsibility for the under-privileged section of South Africa's population and, what is more, it has led to definite action.

III

Psychologists have long recognized the dynamic role of a mental attitude. It may be defined as an enduring, persisting tendency outside consciousness that nevertheless controls and shapes the events in consciousness. Attitudes therefore guide and control through anticipation of future behaviour.¹ Attitudes are far more flexible and plastic and far more variable as a means of dealing with changing and changeable situations than either instincts or habits. *Instincts* as determining dispositions are blind. *Habits* are automatic in their operation. But *attitudes* are intelligent since they involve a certain amount of foresight.

A great deal of mischief has come from confusing an attitude with an instinct. As J. H. Oldham says in his *Christianity and the Race Problem* (p. 44), "Whenever tension becomes acute there is a tendency on both sides to regard racial antipathy as something inexplicable and sinister, a deeply implanted instinct, against which it is vain to struggle.

¹MacCrone, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

Men feel themselves to be in the grip of a mysterious fate. It is of no small consequence if it can be shown that this is not the case." After examining the evidence in a most interesting chapter he concludes that racial dislike is something that is cultivated. The causes are similar to those which give rise to a dislike and hostility within communities of the same race. An adequate explanation of racial antagonism can be found in impulses and motives that are independent of race. In short, no child is by nature intolerant. Intolerance is one of the few forms of ignorance which has to be cultivated. There is plenty of evidence of this where our European children on the farms in the Transvaal and Natal play with little Native children without any feelings of racial antipathy.

These feelings of racial antipathy develop out of the social heritage of his environment. One by one he is infected with the fears which lead him to believe that he is doing the right thing if he keeps the Native apart and down. The most important fears are concerned with three things:—

(a) The franchise ; (b) miscegenation ; (c) displacement in employment.

The common point of view of the European South African is that if Natives are given votes in anything like proportion to their numbers, white supremacy will be at an end, and this will become a black man's country. It is with this fear in mind that many oppose even a small extension of Native political rights. Thin ends of wedges constantly hover before South African eyes. If a Native has a pair of shoes or can write his name, we immediately think he wants to marry our sister. The facts in South Africa, however, show that miscegenation, when it does take place, occurs far more often among the lowest levels of white and black as regard educational development, than amongst those who have been educated. Education tends to develop pride of race, and to frown on miscegenation, rather than the opposite.

In employment it is fallacious to think that there are just so many jobs and if the Native gets some a white man will be displaced. This is not likely to happen in a young country like South Africa which has vast resources to develop. Skill begets skill and creates more skilled jobs.

Even though these attitudes fraught with fear are largely based on a fallacious interpretation of the facts they are nevertheless real and must be reckoned with. I have already

indicated how they might be tackled by subjecting them in democratic discussion to rigorous examination in the light of factual evidence.

At the same time I do not wish to minimize the complexity of the moral situation we have to deal with. Every individual, both as a private person and as a responsible citizen finds himself more or less entangled in a web of conflicting valuations.

People have ideas about how reality actually is. These we call *beliefs*. Or people have ideas about how it ought to be, or ought to have been. These we call *valuations*.

As Gunnar Myrdal points out in his monumental study of the American Negro question, *The American Dilemma* (p. xlv), the problem would be simpler to handle scientifically "if the moral conflict raged only between valuations held by different persons and groups of persons. The essence of the moral situation is, however, that the conflicting valuations are also held by the same person. The moral struggle goes on within the people and not only between them. As people's valuations are conflicting, behaviour normally becomes a moral compromise. There are no homogeneous 'attitudes' behind human behaviour but a mesh of struggling inclinations, interests, and ideals, some held conscious and some suppressed for long intervals but all active in bending behaviour in their direction.

The unity of a culture consists in the fact that all valuations are mutually shared in some degrees. We shall find that even a poor and uneducated white person in some isolated and backward rural region in the Deep South, who is violently prejudiced against the Negro and intent upon depriving him of civic rights and human independence, has also a whole compartment in his valuation sphere housing the entire American Creed of liberty, equality, justice and fair opportunity for everybody. He is actually also a good Christian and honestly devoted to the ideals of human brotherhood and the Golden Rule. And these more general valuations—more general in the sense that they refer to all human beings—are, to some extent, effective in shaping his behaviour."

The dilemma which Gunnar Myrdal refers to in the title of his book is to be found in "the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the 'American Creed,' where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the

influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook" (p. xliii).

And then he goes on to quote John Dewey from his recent book *Freedom and Culture*.

"Anything that obscures the fundamentally moral nature of the social problem is harmful, no matter whether it proceeds from the side of physical or of psychological theory. Any doctrine that eliminates or even obscures the function of choice of values and enlistment of desires and emotions in behalf of those chosen weakens personal responsibility for judgment and for action. It thus helps create the attitudes that welcome and support the totalitarian state."

These last words are of profound significance for us in South Africa since the school of thought which is most repressive in its attitudes to the Native is also one that is most impressed by the totalitarian ideology.

This conflict between valuations is to be found also in the mind of the South African in regard to the Native. Occasionally he may recognize, even if only for a moment, the incongruity of his state of mind and find it so intolerable that the whole organization of his moral precepts is shaken. This was the state of mind to which I referred above in which many a soldier found himself after participating in one of our courses, or in consequence of the broadening experiences which this war brought to many. But most people, most of the time, "suppress such threats to their moral integrity together with all the confusion, the ambiguity and inconsistency which lurks in the basement of man's soul. This, however, is rarely accomplished without mental strain." (Gunnar Myrdal, *op. cit.*, p. xli.)

I mention this point because I want it to be clearly understood that there is no such thing as one homogeneous attitude towards the South African Native in any South African group or community or even in the mind of any single individual. Whatever we may be accused of, there is, for example, a mixture of very lofty ideals of humanity in the way that the average South African treats his Native

servant. In fact, the much maligned Voortrekker had a rather fine and humane relationship with his Non-European servants as individuals, even though the ideas embodied in his legislation may be regarded as repressive on the Non-Europeans as a group. Indeed, it is for the uninitiated stranger to South Africa sometimes difficult to understand why the South African Native does not fare worse, if he does not realize that the South African's behaviour is a result of compromise between valuations, and that he is fundamentally Christian in his background and not a cold-blooded tyrant and oppressor. Professor Edgar Brookes realized this when he so succinctly summed up the South African's attitude to Native Education as "too humane to prohibit it, but too human to encourage it."

In this respect the South African is not as moralistic or "moral conscious" in his *general* valuations as the American. Most of the American Creed's high Christian precepts are embodied in his national legislation. In South Africa our general valuations, i.e., those which carry the sanction of religion and national legislation are not morally as high as what the Christian principles which we as a people accept, would constrain us to form. I refer to our colour bar legislation denying opportunity for development. Even the fine idea of trusteeship is not without its shortcomings in practice. According to this the Natives stand in relation to Europeans as wards to a guardian who accepts as "a sacred trust of civilization" the task of helping his immature wards on to those advantages of civilization which they are unable to attain for themselves. I sometimes wonder whether those who carry out this concept have considered, at least in the Union, the possibility that the wards should or will ever grow up. There is no Master of a Supreme Court to ensure that this trusteeship does not become stepmothering!

Where people live in small isolated communities the need for logical consistency within the hierarchy of moral valuations is not so keenly felt. With less mobility, less intellectual communication and less public discussion there is less exposure of one another's valuation conflicts. With the increase in geographical mobility and intellectual communication which the war has brought about the sphere of our valuations on racial matters has been greatly enlarged. As a result of the United Nations' Charter to which we have subscribed officially, we in South Africa shall feel the impact of the general valuations of the larger group as to the rights

of people of different creeds and colours. Those South Africans who attended the San Francisco conference told me that that was the matter that impressed and worried them most. They sense the impending conflict and the dilemma with which we white South Africans will be faced in our relationships, for example, with the Indian and the Native. I feel we should prepare the minds of South Africans to receive the impact of these wider valuations (i.e., ideas as to what *ought* to be) on our narrower group valuations.

Of course, being a professional educator, I naturally put all my hopes into the educational basket. The home, the school, the university and the press all should co-operate in this education. It avails but little, however, for us carefully to "vet" our school textbooks to see that they contain nothing that would give offence to racial or sectional groups in our midst, when the children, their parents and their homes are exposed to the most racially inflammatory statements current in some of our daily and weekly newspapers.

On the press rests a grave responsibility in this respect. In these days of hurry and rush in our towns and cities the masses read little more than the headlines. It is interesting to notice how during recent years the attitudes of one nation to another—England *vs.* America, these two *vs.* Russian and so on, are described in the headlines of the press with no other object than mere sensationalism but with dire consequences for the peace of the world.

Plato said that the man who wrote the nation's songs wielded a greater influence than the man who made the nation's laws. I would say that the men who write the headlines of our newspapers wield a far greater power than our legislators. In their enthusiasm for putting out hot news and for telling the world what so and so said about such and such a people or nation, newspapers tend to become gossip-mongers on an international scale and thereby often tend to create attitudes of suspicion and mistrust amongst the masses towards other racial or national groups. The responsibility of these headline writers is tremendous and none but the most highly trained and *wisest* journalists should be used for that job. But alas, they often only carry out what they are told by powerful interests which control them in the background!

In America a study was made recently of the relative potency of the home and the school in forming the social

and political opinions of high school students. A correlation of .12 was found between the views of the students and those of their teachers compared with a correlation of .61 with the views held at home by their parents, etc., i.e., the home's influence would seem to be roughly five times as potent as that of the school.

The press exerts its influence on the youth *via* the home—where mother and father and grandma and others express freely the predigested opinions they assimilate from the press.

Here the influence of the mother, of the woman in the home, is a force which must be reckoned with when it comes to attitude building amongst the youth. That is the reason why I cannot stress enough the sound political education of our women (I use *political* in its original sense). In their hands more than ever before lies the key to the attitude-forming influences of the home.

If I am asked to give a practical suggestion I cannot do better than reiterate the proposal I made to the Minister of Education, when I relinquished my army service as Director of Military Intelligence and Army Education, that the experience we gained in adult education in the army be carried forward into civilian life. I feel that every large factory, every community should have its adult education discussion group. And just as the government today subsidizes physical education by grants to various clubs and communities, so the government should subsidize adult education groups in order to enable them to finance the employment of efficient organizers. Through delay and vacillation practically all of the two hundred Army Education Officers (many of whom offered their services to such a scheme of adult education) have unfortunately already gone into other well-paid permanent civilian jobs and a great opportunity has been missed. These were men trained and experienced in the techniques of adult education and it will not be easy to recruit that type of objective-minded and well-informed officer again. I very much fear that if an attempt is now made to start, the whole movement might be becalmed in the haven of mediocrity. The idealism, the enthusiasm as well as the intellectual capacity will not be there to buy.

However that may be, I want to reiterate here my conviction that enlightenment is an essential condition of democracy. Without it democracy becomes a farce. I

believe, moreover, that democracy is the sharing of action and responsibility for the sake of individual development. By the democratic process of open discussion referred to above one constantly forces a larger and larger part of the valuation sphere into conscious attention. More is made conscious than any single person or group would on his own initiative find it advantageous to bring forward at the particular moment. Public discussion is purifying and democracy itself provides a moral education of the people.¹

In all this the *indirect approach* is the one that brings the best rewards. Increase a man's general sensitivity to social injustices around him, increase his general comprehension of the factors and conditions which bring prosperity and happiness to people and you will find him more tolerantly disposed to the underdog. This is probably one of the reasons why in the results of our attitude test in the army those on a higher educational level showed a greater degree of tolerance to the development of the Native. Undoubtedly selection plays a part here, probably more than any specific training the school could have given him in this direction. Being of a higher intelligence to start with, the man with the higher educational background profited more by what army education could give him, when he was exposed to it. Not all of them were.

However that may be, the fact remains that the better educated a person is, the more he is capable of *seeing the whole social picture*. Seeing a partial picture only is the root cause of many of our racial and other prejudices. Prejudices are due to partiality, or rather partialness and incompleteness. Tolerance is the outcome of understanding and is bred from an objective study of all the facts.

It is interesting to note also how with the growth of departments for social anthropology and Bantu studies, there has come about a greater objectivemindedness on

¹Gunnar Myrdal: *The American Dilemma*. p. 1029. cf. also Lyman Bryson: *The New Prometheus*, p. 10.

"If the individual is the end in a democratic way of life and all things else are means, a political democracy is a political system in which the wisdom of any decision taken is secondary to the educational value, the growth value, of the process of deciding. We govern ourselves, not primarily in order to get a good government, although that seems to be a very good way of getting it, but to grow into better human beings by making up our minds, by acting, and taking the consequences. What we do with our government is instrumental. The end in view is the effect of the experience on ourselves. Educators know that we learn and grow by making decisions for ourselves, not by having them made for us, no matter how wise the imposed decisions might be."

racial questions amongst university students, particularly amongst those who take such courses.

Thus far we have been concerned only with the conditioning of the white man's attitudes to the Native. What about the Native's attitudes to the white man? Here I confess I am not so sure of my ground. I cannot help feeling, however, that if it is true that the general level of a white man's education is a factor in predisposing him to a more sympathetic and tolerant attitude towards the Native's development it is not unlikely that an advance in the general educational level of the Non-European will enable him to see in better perspective what the white man's civilization means. Even though it may admittedly make him initially discontented and bitter, I feel that the more Non-Europeans we can educate so that they can see the whole picture and can lead their people also to see the white man's problems, the better will be the attitudes engendered in the minds of the Non-Europeans. The increase during the last few years in the numbers of Non-Europeans receiving high school and university education has been phenomenal. We have today over 17,000 Non-Europeans in the four upper classes of the high school and over 700 are studying at our university institutions.

Education for leaders should be our first objective amongst the Non-European. To spread mere literacy thinly amongst the masses is dangerous, unless it is accompanied by the training of truly educated leaders who can guide the masses and who will see to it that their little education is not exploited in cultivating more bitterness.

Here, too, objectivity will be reached if the Native can be brought to interrelate the so-called Native problem with the total economic, social, political, judicial and broadly cultural life of the nation. He, too, must be brought to see the whole picture. When a crime wave of murder, rape and robbery by Natives such as we are now experiencing, comes along and white men begin to talk of lynching, they and we must see this aberration as a passing phase—one of those dangerous transition stages through which societies pass as they grow up. And just as an insult and a humiliation perpetrated on a Native by, say, a European bus conductor or an employer, rankles more in the mind of the Native than the pass laws, so today many Europeans' hearts are filled with fear and hatred of the Native as a result of brutalities committed by Natives in innocent European homes. The

mark of a good education is to see such things in their right perspective and not to mistake the exceptional (however serious and annoying) for the significant. The wonder is that, taking into account the way in which Non-Europeans are brought up on the fringes of our big cities, there are not more crimes of violence.

South Africa has been called the happy hunting ground of many racial prejudices. We have the contacts of English and Afrikaans speaking people, of Jews and Gentiles, of European and Non-European, of Bantu and Coloured, of European and Indian. The permutations and combinations of these contacts can produce an endless variety of attitudes on racial and cultural relationship. As a field for the study of such attitudes South Africa is unsurpassed in richness and variety.

In a sense our race-ridden country is a microcosm of the world in which the statesmen of all the nations are grappling with the carrying out of the principles adopted at Sar Francisco as to how the various races of the world shall live together in amity and prosperity.

In other words, South Africa should be regarded as a laboratory for carrying out tests in human relationships which, if successful, may offer a clue to the way in which similar problems may be tackled in the macrocosm. If this is true, and I believe it is, has not there been given to South African people, to us as Trustees of younger races and in particular to an institution like the South African Institute of Race Relations a unique opportunity of contributing in a real way to the peace of the world?

It is our duty to seize this opportunity. We must seize it quickly because we have now at least the backing of the idealism of the youth of our country who fought for what they believed to be freedom and democracy. This idealism will, I am afraid, soon evaporate in the back-to-normalcy movement which is already afoot.

The generation of youth that followed the first World War has been called the lost generation. Youth is always lost if it is robbed of its idealism.

As the late John M. Fletcher pointed out in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, Summer 1944, "the chief reason why one war has always followed another throughout history seems to me to be in large measure due to the fact that the self-sacrificing idealism, without which battles cannot even be fought, much less won, and with which youth is so gener-

ously endowed, is featured in times of war and discounted in times of peace. When youth are faced with the necessity to undergo hardships, sufferings, and death in order to save their countries from disaster, they are implored to become idealists. Even the most crass-minded realist knows that no other philosophy can sustain men's minds in moments of crisis. Once the crisis is over, the order of the day to youth is that they all put away their idealism as they do their outmoded weapons of combat. He who sacrifices his personal interest in the cause of the common good in war is called a hero. He who imagines that such principles of behaviour should be put into practice in times of peace is apt to be thought of as an unrealistic, starry-eyed idealist. The one has a crown as the reward of his labours, and the other a cross."

Let us not have another lost generation after this war. Let us, to serve the ends of peace, capitalize with all our resources of propaganda and education the idealism of the youth that served us so well in war. This is the one point.

The other point is that we should be less dogmatic in our uncritical acceptance of the dogma of biological determinism which fails to differentiate between the raw materials and the manufactured products of human nature. We really do not know what human nature is, but only what it has shown itself to be under specific conditions. What we do know, as contemporary psychology, psychiatry and social science have proved, is that human nature is enormously plastic. If we accepted any other premise it would be dishonest to talk about idealism to young people. What human nature would look like, and what race attitudes will prevail under the four freedoms we can scarcely imagine, for there has been no time in the past history of man's existence on earth when even one of these freedoms has been guaranteed to him except in very isolated spots.

The real truth about man's nature seems to be that it is statable only in terms of potentialities. These potentialities may and do manifest themselves in opposite ways according to the circumstances. Man can hate; he can also love. Man can kill his fellow man; he can with equally authoritative sanction of his nature risk life to save him. Hobbes saw only the wolf, never the Good Samaritan, in human nature, and so his disciples have always done, whether or not they have been aware of their discipleship.

As I pointed out above, there is, like with the so-called

fighting instinct, a good deal of false psychological theory behind the immutability of race prejudices, as if they also were ingrained in man's biological inheritance. But the fact that it is part of man's social inheritance is a challenge to us all to deeper study and research into this field.

The potentialities of human nature, like the hidden energies of the atom, afford a challenging field of discovery. Man has gone far, almost frighteningly far, in exploring the latter. As regard his own spiritual potentialities, which must govern and control this fateful flood of material power, he is still woefully ignorant. What is worse, he bases his policies and actions on theories regarding his own psychological make-up which are little better than superstitions. That is the point I wish to stress.

Let us hope that man will be forced, under the threat of being wiped out by his own material inventions, to get down to discovering how this "human nature," which he is always blaming for all his moral lapses, is really constituted and can be modified and controlled. In order to solve these problems he will have to throw himself into the task with as much determination and resourcefulness as he did in connection with the splitting of the atom. And he must do it quickly too, for it is now a race between discovery and catastrophe.

I am afraid that the quest will be a long and hard one. But I have sufficient faith in man's spiritual resources, which must include the continuous drawing on Power from Above, to believe that better relationships between man and man can be built up and that ultimately the forces of Good will triumph.