



Fritz Hofmann MP (left), President of the Schweizerische Volkspartei, talks to Swiss and American participants in the symposium.

## EUROPEAN-AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM FOR COMMON AIMS AND LARGER CONCERNS'

'THE REAL ACTION of human reconciliation and understanding may not be done between Washington and Bonn, or Washington and Moscow, or Bonn and Paris, but by people who are actively involved on a human level, because that is where the understanding has to take place,' said a senior US State Department official at a European-American Symposium held last month in the Moral Re-Armament centre, Caux, Switzerland.

The official was speaking to several hundred Europeans and North Americans who had decided to accept this personal involvement. Few had influential positions. All came hoping that misunderstandings would be reduced, prejudices dispelled and common aims pinpointed. Above all, they came because they recognised that it takes work to build any relationship, especially a close one.

Opening the symposium, Richard Ruffin of Washington, DC, spoke of the great tasks yet to be accomplished in the world—'to end poverty, secure justice, promote peace and to create free societies where the dignity of every person is respected'. But these goals could only be realised, he said, 'as we create a new partnership, not only between Europe and North America, but between all peoples who share these goals'.

'I hope,' Mr Ruffin went on, 'that we at this conference will make a small contribution to building mutual trust, without which we tend to act independently, to the detriment of the world. Secondly, I hope we will go away with fewer opinions, that we might even abolish the labels which we so casually put on each other. I hope we will learn what it is we do that irritates the other, and learn to do it less. I hope we will begin to discover that our differences are our strengths.'

'Finally, I hope that we will each go away determined to battle for that moral and spiritual re-armament without which there can be no safe nuclear disarmament.'

Pierre Spoerri of Bonn, Germany, spoke of the twin evils of ignorance and arrogance which so often undercut Euro-American co-operation. He also pointed out that Europe and North America have worked constructively together in foreign policy, giving as examples the settlement in Zimbabwe, and recent developments in Namibia.

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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US Ambassador Faith Ryan Whittlesey is welcomed to the symposium by one of its organisers, Steve Dickinson of Minnesota.

Symposium Report by  
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and Mary Lean,  
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John Gardner, Hanno Krieg

Ambassador Edouard Brunner, head of the division of international organisations in the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, continued this theme, deploring the lack of unity in response to the clampdown in Poland in December, 1981. 'It was a reaction which came out of confusion and achieved nothing,' he said. 'The confusion continues today. I think we need to try and learn from our past failures.'

An American speaker cited North-South relations as another area of foreign policy where 'the interests and *enthusiasm* of Europe and the USA could be inspired to greater collective action'. 'It strikes me,' he went on, 'that we have a common responsibility not to try and do things for the people themselves, but to work with them to help generate the effort needed to undertake the awesome task of development.'

The misuse of freedom was a common denominator between West Germany and the USA, said Heinz Krieg, a *teacher from West Berlin*. 'The eyes of the East Germans are upon us to see if we have the self-discipline to make democracy work effectively. We must work together with our American friends to live the quality of life which is essential for the functioning of a free society.'

## In every home

The US Ambassador to Switzerland, Faith Ryan Whittlesey, took part as the official representative of the United States Department of State. She was accompanied by Robert Hormats, US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. 'There is no question,' Mrs Whittlesey said, 'that a group such as this can make tremendous strides over the years in reducing the tensions and the conflicts which exist between people, and building the friendship and trust which is the cornerstone of a secure and free world.'

Responding to a question about what could be done to strengthen the loyalty and respect of the younger generation towards their society, Mrs Whittlesey spoke of the breakdown in family life. As a result of the lessening of the *communication within families*, children did not have the opportunity to discuss and learn from their parents, some of whom had experienced totalitarianism. 'Part of our job,' the Ambassador went on, 'is to emphasise our commitment to human rights and human freedom. We have to discuss these things more than we discuss missiles and rockets. But we as diplomats cannot do it alone. These issues are vitally important to the future of our society and they must be discussed at the dinner table in every home if our young people are going to be alert, and eternally vigilant to protect their freedom.'

On the first afternoon, the symposium was thrown open to discussion, with Americans and Europeans getting up all over the meeting hall to answer each others' questions about their countries and policies. Did Europe want leadership from the United States? Was the US putting too much stress on the danger of communism at the expense of human rights? Did the peace movement indicate an unwillingness in Europe to defend herself? Why did Europeans get fed up when America didn't agree with them, when they couldn't agree among themselves? Questions and answers exposed misconceptions on both sides, and illuminated honest differences. The process continued as participants met over meals and in smaller groups.

Several speakers in the final session discussed the causes and effects of anti-Americanism, drawing the distinction between the sort of friendship which makes it possible to



Madame Irene Laure from France meets young people from Europe and the Middle East

speak the truth and the sterile prejudice which causes people to withdraw. Speaking of the latter, Michael Henderson, an Englishman living in Oregon, said, 'It's important for us foreigners to recognise what anti-Americanism does to Americans. It makes a generous people less generous. It makes people who are thinking for the world less inclined to do so. It gives an uphill task to those who are trying to help Americans realise how interdependent the world is. Above all, Americans lose confidence in democracy itself. They become far more aware of the gaffes in their foreign policy and their shortcomings at home, than they are of the tremendous strengths of American democracy.'

## Stereotypes

Hubert Eggemann, a retired foreman from the Ruhr mines, compared prejudice in Europe today to that in Germany in the Thirties. 'There was a mood of "anti" in our relationships with countries around us and in our own nation against particular groups,' he said. 'I am still sorry for the wounds we inflicted then. And today at times I see this development coming upon us again in another form. This anti-mood was strong in my family—my father was unemployed for 7 years, and as the oldest of five children, I had to earn money when I was very young. A wall grew in our family, and later it was translated beyond the family into an idea which became a bitter experience for the whole world.'

Mr Eggemann's words brought an Englishwoman who had lived in Germany for eight years to her feet. 'For over 20 years I have been part of the anti-American feeling in Britain and Europe,' she said. 'I've realised now where my anti-American feelings could be leading. To all you Americans here I want to apologise.'

'I am deeply touched by that apology,' responded Arthur Wilmarth, a lawyer from Washington, DC. 'The biggest cause of disillusionment with America among people of other nations is that we claim to be a country of high ideals and moral standards, and all the world can see we don't live up to them. For me personally, and for my nation, it is time to say "No" to the half-truth and the white lie, which are prevalent institutions in the United States. Too often I am tempted to tell people what I want them to hear or what I think they want to hear. Could our European friends in



Mountain House, Caux, 3000 feet above Lake Geneva

other countries help us Americans find the will, strength and commitment to God to live up to the moral standards which we profess?

Two students attending the symposium, Matthias Freitag and John Gardner, had had to work out international understanding at close quarters. 'I went into sharing a room with Matthias with my stereotyped view of the anti-American, pro-Russian, pacifist German,' said John Gardner, who comes from Alabama. 'That's when the war began. We fought over everything from the peace movement to when to turn the light out at night. Things got really out of hand. When I finally decided to go to God about it, the first thought I had was to make an unconditional apology to Matthias. Next I realised that I shouldn't just swallow my pride but give it to God. I was only widening the gap by arguing. Through this I've come to see that the topic of armaments on the material level of bombs and missiles can't be resolved until, on the spiritual level, attitudes are disarmed.'

'John and I have to choose whether we work together or against each other,' added Matthias Freitag, from Berlin. 'On one occasion I made a not very sensitive remark to John about America. I noticed immediately that it was wrong. But it was only when the conflict intensified that I was ready to ask John for forgiveness. A lot of damage could have been prevented if I had given up my pride earlier.'

Theri Grandy, a Swiss living in Cyprus, spoke of the Third World's disillusionment with America and the West. She compared such feelings to a 'disappointed love'. 'There is a disappointment that we in the West employ double standards.' She described how the 'unmeasurable greatheartedness' of people in Cyprus helped her to realise that 'nothing could separate me from other peoples, other traditions, even other religions, except my own pride. Pride is what stops us from getting to know others, from loving and appreciating them. I have learnt that pride can only be overcome through total honesty about myself and my country.'

### Freedom from past

A Frenchman spoke of guilt from the colonial past, which, he said, made it difficult for Europeans to be objective about other nations. This had once led him to apologise to an African 'for France's oppressive policies on the African continent'. The African, sensing that the apology had not come from his heart, replied, 'You don't really mean what you are saying. Your sentimentality and paternalism towards me are even worse than your country's past attitude of domination.'

'I blushed,' the Frenchman recalled. 'Such an attitude comes on my part from a refusal to recognise my true



**Professor Fadhel Jamali of the University of Tunis with Leo Ellis, Vice-President of Bethune-Cookman College, Florida.**

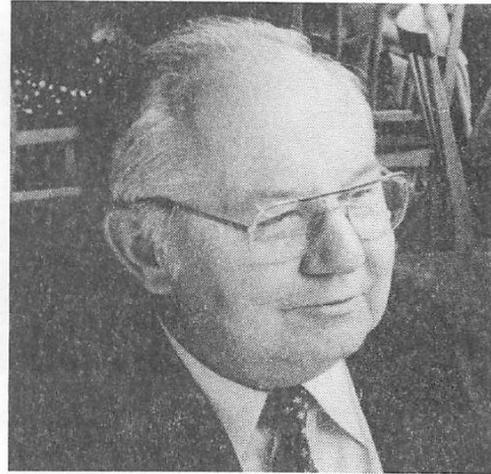
nature. It prevents all of us from moving from a collective guilt complex, which lays us open to blackmail, to the true repentance which can free us. What we believe to be humility and defence of human rights, is too often small-mindedness and partiality. Freedom from our past allows us to see what is right and to reject the unacceptable, whatever race is involved.'

People from Lebanon and Iran, as well as other Arabs and Jews, provided perspective which could only add urgency to the discussions. Fadhel Jamali from Iraq, now Professor at the University of Tunis, appealed particularly to the Americans to find the moral and spiritual development to match their great material achievements. 'I pray to God for peace and brotherhood in the Middle East. Arabs and Jews all believe in the unity of God of which our Father Abraham wrote.' He went on to emphasise the deeper message of the *symposium*—the individual change of heart needed in every person and every country before peace is possible. 'We can all stop to think, meditate and ask for God's guidance. As a specialist in education, I know that the real self-education is when people change individually. That is what we find happening in MRA.'

Evaluating the symposium, one delegate commented, 'This conference has been completely different from what I expected. We may not have addressed the issues on a political level. But there is something about the atmosphere here which goes very deep.'

'This has been the greatest experience of my life spiritually,' said Leo Ellis, Vice-President of Bethune-Cookman College, Florida. 'I have been deeply and profoundly moved by the spirit of God in all the people I have met here. For the first and final time I have learned that God is real.'

'This symposium is one step in a continuing process,' commented Steve Dickinson, one of the American organisers. 'It is a process that produces honesty, understanding, trust and common aims in a relevant world perspective.' Other steps, he said, included this spring's three months' visit to the US and Canada by 60 Europeans, Africans, Latin Americans and Asians, and the invitation of American participants in the symposium to visit Germans in their homes in Bonn, Berlin and other cities. 'Each of us can be shown, by taking time to reflect, what steps will keep this process alive in us and for our countries,' he concluded. ■



**FRITZ HOFMANN MP** (above), President of the Schweizerische Volkspartei, emphasised the links between Europe and America in his talk to the symposium. While the peace movement showed an understandable rejection of the gigantic arms build-up in the world, he said, it tended to be one-sided in its attacks on America. Europe owed a debt to the United States for her help during and after World War II and the majority of Europeans wanted the American presence in Europe to continue.

Irene Laure, a veteran French Socialist and a leader of the Resistance during World War II, also expressed gratitude to America. 'Twice during my life you have come to the help of Europe,' she said. 'You lost millions of young men, full of life, full of fire. Because we did not know how to get along with each other in Europe, you paid a terrible price. Thankyou with all my heart. I will not forget those who died or all the mothers who lost their sons and husbands on our fields of battle.'

'We must never forget what we have learnt here about forgiveness,' Mme Laure continued. 'Now the future belongs to the young. You have great tasks and responsibilities. Seize the future with both hands.' ■



**GERARD AND VERONIQUE GIGAND** from France told the symposium how a two months' stay in America had brought them face to face with a nation suffering from inner contradictions. 'This great nation of faith is often perceived as a land of religious sentimentality,' said M Gigand. 'This nation of freedom is often perceived as one which wants to impose its own will; this generous country is seen as one which has no needs. America seems powerful, superficial and insensitive; but when you look more closely it's just the opposite.'

'We met a nation which was suffering from being misunderstood and unloved, from being unable to discern her calling in the world,' he continued. 'A farmer's wife asked us why American generosity is repaid with criticism and ingratitude. We replied with the words St Vincent de Paul said at the end of his life to one of his young postulants, "You must pray to God to love the poor, who depend upon you, so much that they forgive you for helping them." Tears came to her eyes.'

Mme Gigand spoke of Americans who were turning away from materialism—'We were invited to spend a Sunday afternoon with a family. Our hostess told us, "It was only after 15 years of marriage that I decided that divorce was no longer an option for me, that this was an unbreakable commitment on my part. Since then I have no longer wanted to buy everything I see to make me happy."'

'World harmony is not just a choice for those generously disposed—it is a question of survival if we want to avoid a storming of the Bastille on a planetary scale,' M Gigand concluded. ■

**WILBUR WRIGHT** (below), First Secretary at the United States Embassy to the Netherlands, attended the symposium in his private capacity.

Mr Wright cited increasing concern about suffering and the abuse of human rights in other parts of the world as evidence of an 'evolution towards the concept of one world, of a family of man'. This was a sign, he believed, that the world was changing for the better.

Democracy could not be preserved by structures alone, Mr Wright went on. 'Democracy, human rights, all of these values that we hold so dear, repose in the minds and hearts of the people. If people are not willing to fight for them, to sacrifice for them, to suffer torture in order to defend these great ideals then it is fruitless to write constitutions. It is not the parties, the parliaments, the governments, but the people. And it is Moral Re-Armament, and institutions allied with it and like unto it, that build the commitment, the inner resources, the human resources that will make it possible for human rights to grow, for the horrors that are visited on man to be relieved and for us to build the kind of world we hope for.' ■



**MARGARET SMITH, FROM WASHINGTON, DC**, outlined some of the issues facing the USA—grave economic hardship, which challenges communities to find a deeper level of care; deterioration of family life; racial barriers, which can only be dissolved by altering the deepest motivations and prejudices; and the need to help Americans listen to the views and aspirations of other countries. 'We need to learn how to take responsibility without controlling.'

'Although we Americans speak often and with pride about our freedom, we are a nation of people who desperately need liberating,' she went on. 'We need help to find that personal liberation which allows the Holy Spirit total control.'

'When I am hurt I need the freedom of forgiveness—to be willing to forgive repeatedly and without looking back. I need the freedom from reactions to other people so that, even if I disagree with them, I can appreciate them and aim to bring out the best in them.'

'As my awareness of God's presence and power in my life has grown, I have begun to discover that a heart freed from self-concern has room to care genuinely about others and to be responsible for the needs around me.' ■



Left to right: Wilbur Wright, Robert Corcoran of Richmond, Virginia, and Richard Ruffin from Washington, DC.

**CLEILAND DONNAN LIVES IN** Richmond, Virginia, where she runs a dancing school for teenagers.

'Recently a black friend invited me to dinner in her home to meet two men from Africa,' she told the symposium. 'We were each seeking how to create understanding between different races. One of the Africans asked if I had always lived in Richmond, which was capital of the South during the Civil War. It was a moment of truth for me.'

'That winter I had sung a hymn in church which asked God's forgiveness for the sins of our forefathers. Instantly I thought, "I am responsible for the sins of my fathers—and for my nation." But what to do about it?'

'A few weeks later I had been present when a black man who had known poverty, colonialism, success and humiliations, said that it was impossible to forget the past, for we were each our past. He told how when a white man had hurt his feelings, he had felt his spirit sink as if for his ancestors, slaves being whipped by the plantation owners.'

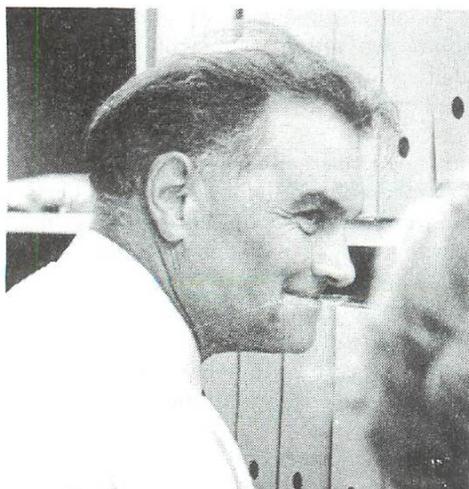
'As I had sat there I felt deep in my heart that it was my ancestors—plantation owners in Virginia—who had given those lashes. Suddenly my own arrogance, my pride in my ancestors and most of all my own hurtful little ways and



manner towards black people had stood out.

'A few weeks later the dinner party took place. I had to do my best to say, "I have been arrogant, hating and self-righteous." I asked forgiveness of them. Tears came to my friend's eyes and to mine. Later I wrote to her, "Yes, I am my heritage and my past. Yes, I promise to do all I can to bring healing. Will you help me?"'

## LONG-TERM VIEW



**Professor Henri Rieben, founder and director of the Jean Monnet Institute, Lausanne.**

DURING THEIR five days together, Americans and Europeans explored some of the factors which had contributed to European unity. They learned of the visits to Caux in the late Forties and early Fifties of such personalities as Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of Germany and Foreign Minister Robert Schuman of France. They heard about the courageous steps taken by Irene Laure, her husband and other French and Germans, which healed wounds and built trust between the two countries.

The delegates saw another angle on these events when they visited the Jean Monnet Institute in Lausanne. There Professor Henri Rieben described the character and mentality of the Frenchman, Jean Monnet, whose conception the EEC was.

Opening his remarks, the professor referred to Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, and the

welcome given at Caux to Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer. 'The spirit of Frank Buchman made things possible,' said Professor Rieben. 'While Monnet was acting for the unification of Europe on the political level, Buchman was operating on the spiritual level. Things are born in the spirit before they are born in the intellect and in action.'

Professor Rieben explained that already in 1943, Jean Monnet had written to General de Gaulle of his vision for an association of all the European nations. 'He was wrestling with the question of how to prevent the inevitability of war, how to create lasting peace and preserve civilisation.'

Right after the war, Monnet formed an 'Action Committee for the United States of Europe,' and together this group put forward the concept of the **Schuman Plan**, the co-operation of the German coal and French steel industries, which ultimately developed into the EEC.

Not having had a university education, Monnet gathered people around him who had more knowledge than he had. 'His motivation was to get people to act together, in a situation cleansed from the spirit of domination, helping them to find common aims.'

'He saw his own task as one of helping men climb to the top of the mountain so they could see the total view. He was not searching for personal gain.'

'Also, he saw that statesmen live a terrible life,' Professor Rieben continued. 'In the running of daily affairs, Monnet chose to think for the long term and, when he arrived at conclusions, to present them to the statesmen, leaving to them the glory of the action, and going on to the next task himself.' He had concentrated on one idea at a time, always looking for the apt phrase to convey his thought.

'Is the concept of a United States of Europe still as valid today?' asked one of the party.

'The beginning of the European community was a sort of miracle,' Professor Rieben replied. Because the European nations were so old and well established, it was difficult to go beyond the idea of the nation and get countries to work together. Because of the hardships of the immediate post-war years, it had been necessary to co-operate beyond national boundaries. Now, with prosperity, there was less sense of urgency. ▶

Now a phase was beginning, Professor Rieben went on, when new difficulties were going to focus the need for European co-operation. Poland, and the development of pacificism in East Germany were just the beginning. The day was coming when a united Western Europe would be as vital as it was in 1950, but in this case to respond to the problems in Eastern Europe. 'If we have a strong US and a divided Europe, there will be trouble,' cautioned the professor. 'But my belief is that necessity will force us to become united. Who will be the interpreter of the necessity, I cannot answer.'

Professor Rieben emphasised that Jean Monnet had been convinced that the division of Germany could not last. It was important to create the stability in Western Europe so that when upheavals came in the East, there would be something to look to in the West. Monnet did not believe those in the West should try and destabilise Eastern Europe, or threaten Russia, but rather felt Western Europe should give the Russians a way forward when problems arose.

The professor outlined his own concept of the importance of Europe: if Europeans understood the significance of the rare mixture of civilisations from which they come—Jewish, Christian, Greek, Roman—remarkable things would happen for their own and other peoples' good, because of this diversity. 'That is where Europe's great wealth lies.

'We are moving towards a twenty-first century which will either see disaster or a phenomenal cultural and spiritual renewal. My generation came from hard times. The younger people I see are more fraternal, more generous. Our memory is longer than theirs, but their vision of the future is longer than ours, and this is the fascinating thing, that together we can put things in their right perspective.' ■

*The following article is taken from a talk given on KBOO Radio in Portland, Oregon, by MICHAEL HENDERSON:*

## SEEING IT LIKE IT COULD BE

I MEET PEOPLE who swear by Reagan. They hang on his every word. They underline his speeches. They see him through rose-tinted spectacles. They rejoice at the discomfiture of his opponents.

Then I meet others, who swear at Reagan, who haven't a good word for him, who see red at his policies, whose conversation seems like one long moan of blame.

I don't find either approach particularly helpful or uplifting. Modern government is so huge and the issues facing our leaders so complex that they need alongside them those who will speak the truth with compassion rather than sycophants or gravediggers.

I was talking with a professional actor in London one day. He was understudying a main role on the West End stage, a role that was being extraordinarily well played. I said to him, 'You must be very torn between wanting the success of the play and wanting the actor to drop dead.'

'I'm not torn at all,' he replied. 'I wish he'd drop dead.'

Sometimes our approach to government seems to be along these lines. We have little compassion or under-

standing for those who are entrusted with authority. Our point of view, sometimes our advancement, is all that matters to us. Like my actor friend we are consumed by the belief that we will do it better, and sometimes forget that more is at stake than our political ambitions or our chips on the shoulder.

Of course, I am not just talking about presidential and national affairs. The same weaknesses are apparent at a humbler level. We tend to see people as they are. We like or we dislike them. We approve or disapprove of their policies. Seldom does it cross our mind that we could live in a way, and even speak in a way that helps them to be different.

A Greek friend of mine whose husband was British—they didn't always find it the easiest thing to get along—once gave me a good recipe for family life: 'I think I am meant to love Peter as he is,' she said, 'but fight for him to be what he is meant to be.' We are sometimes so busy scheming to replace people or frustrate their plans that we don't work to help them be what they are meant to be, or help them to formulate better plans—let alone love them.

## Party lines

I was present more than 30 years ago when a wise American, Frank Buchman, spoke these words: 'Party lines don't hold the way they used to. Democrats and Republicans, it doesn't seem to make much difference. Some are good and some—not so good. But what is so hard to find is the leadership, the type of man to be in Washington, the universal type of man that really meets people's deepest needs. There are so few in whom the people place their full confidence. It used to be a fairly easy job to be in Washington, wrought with honour. But now with the divergent views it is beginning to be a considerable nuisance, unless a man has the art of giving something everybody wants.'

If we're going to help create that universal type of man or woman for Washington, we may have to become more the universal type of people ourselves here at home. What does that mean?

First, I believe it means being willing sometimes to listen before we put forward our views. I remember an Australian Bishop in Papua New Guinea telling me how he used to have to be ready to sit in a meeting with Papuans for an hour with nobody saying anything. All the while he wanted to jump in and break the silence, yet he kept quiet until the Papuans spoke first—otherwise they would never speak. It may also mean being willing to listen after we have spoken. I heard this week of a US ambassador who was intending to present Reagan's views at an international conference and then leave. It was suggested that it would do more for America if the ambassador stayed on to listen to what other nations had to say.

Secondly, it means that we are not so set in our opinions that we cannot keep our links of friendship with everyone. In all conflict areas people are needed who can see the situation 'from the other side of the hill' and, if they have views, can put them forward firmly but humbly without belligerence.

Finally, we need to have the expectation that people can change their views, that time or age, mood or maturity, rational discussion or moral and spiritual experience can change the furniture of a person's mind, and temper attitudes of a lifetime. So never assume that someone else is any less open to new ideas than we are. Or are we? ■

# THEY SPEAK THE LANGUAGES OF SUFFERING

by Bror Jonzon

THE NORTH MINNEAPOLIS home of Carl and Lela Jackson is not large, and every last corner is fully used. Upstairs are two small bedrooms, in one of which Carl and Lela sleep. The Jacksons' daughter, Karen, vacated the other for me for the several weeks I spent there this spring, and slept on the sitting-cum-dining room couch. Down in the cellar another bedroom had been created for two Canadian guests.

The doors to the Jackson home are always open. The Catholic Bishop comes in to meet workers from Rio; American Indians, working to preserve and develop their own culture, find friends and fellow-workers at the Jacksons'; Lela Jackson's grandchildren come one evening to celebrate her 70th birthday; a young woman proudly shows off her five-day-old boy—Lela's first great-grandchild.

'To have suffered much is like speaking many languages—one can understand them all,' reads a plaque in the Jackson home. Indeed, the family has suffered much. Some years ago Carl Jackson suffered a stroke which paralysed his right side, though it did not impair his clear mind, his excellent sight or his singing voice.

One of the Jacksons' daughters, Heidi, died of brain cancer when she was 19. Another daughter who had been deeply attached to Heidi became so desperate that she started on drugs. For three years the family suffered with her till, miraculously, she became free. Karen, the eldest Jackson daughter, lost her husband after only 25 days of marriage.

Lela Jackson, too, has known suffering. In her youth she lived through the hell which many American workers' families endured in the early decades of the century.

'My mother died when I was two,' she recalls. 'My father became a hobo, and we kids were billeted with different families. We were often close to starving. One Easter I was so hungry that I stole some Easter eggs. I was thrashed. I ran away, got caught, and was thrashed again. Sometimes my father turned up and took us with him to another state. I loved him even though he came and went.

'From my earliest days I always had to work. It was all right when the job was picking strawberries, or even better cherries. Then we could hide in the tree and eat the cherries. Sometimes we slept in a barn, sometimes out in the woods. Between whiles I went to school and read everything I could lay hands on. For two years I moved round with migratory farmworkers who drank and swapped husbands and wives. I learned to ride, and to fight.

'Then one of my brothers, who had become a teacher, tried to make a lady of me. He put me in school but I ran away. When I was caught I was put into an institution for



Carl and Lela Jackson

incorrigible delinquents.

'One day, when I had slipped out, I met Carl. He was the first person who truly cared about me. He was the opposite of me—warm-hearted, and with a gleam in his eye. His family was Swedish and mine was Irish. He had 11 brothers and sisters and they lived in a tiny house. Both he and his father worked on the railway. The whole family sang and played various instruments.

'We got married and had two children but then we began to drift apart—we were far too different. I thought I would clear off. At that moment a friend asked me to a meeting for moral and spiritual re-arming. There, workers and other Christians spoke. I did not believe in God—such Christians as I had met had beaten and exploited me. But here were honest Christians. Some days later Carl also came to a meeting. Next day we both had the same idea, unknown to each other, to be quiet and try listening to God. A clear thought struck me, like a flash of lightning—I must ask Carl to forgive me for never having given a thought to how difficult it must have been for him to live with such a totally selfish person as me.'

Now they have shared the ups and downs of life for 50 years. Lela finds it easy to express herself both in speech and writing. She and Carl and the rest of the family love to tell others their experience of how a 'hopeless' marriage between incompatible people can not only be remade but become a source of inspiration for others. Not that Carl and Lela have ever been saints. People come to their home because the Jacksons have suffered greatly, and understand those who suffer, be it from handicap, unemployment, drugs, anxiety, broken relationships, or lack of any aim and meaning in life.

Sometimes Mr Jackson and his daughter Karen accept invitations to sing in hospitals and churches. They sing Swedish immigrant songs and spirituals in English and Swedish. Karen plays the dulcimer, a typically American instrument, which Carl made with his one good hand. Between the songs Carl speaks to the sick and handicapped people. 'When I had my stroke I wanted to die. I prayed to God to take me home. But He had prepared something else for me, to care for others in distress. I pray a lot as I sit in my wheel-chair. The spirit knows no handicaps.'

**NEW  
WORLD  
NEWS**

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