

be watching. A lit-up television screen is the ju-ju of our day. It is not to be wondered at then that at five p.m. on Sunday, a barren part of the week-end, five million viewers are tuned in to 'Sunday Break', and a smaller number to the BBC equivalent.

But popular music and religion have been coupled on many occasions in the past. The negro spiritual served both as an integral part of the church service and as popular music, and with the widespread vogue of the Victorian sacred song we have the perfect example of something that in its time seemed to be adequate in all contexts, religious and secular. In some of the pop songs of today destined for the wide unreligious public there can be found a smug religiosity that makes the Victorian sacred song appear a model of refined and delicate sensibility.

In general, the present trend of religious music, as played before Princess Margaret and visiting dignitaries when churches are consecrated, etcetera, is not overtly offensive. There are two basic types of music, the pepped-up hymn (the words of Watts and Cowper syncopated), and the skiffle-type melody with quite blameless lyrics. At least these two varieties of music are honest, but whether they will convert anybody, or even uplift anyone, is doubtful.

Whether it was wise of the Church of England to bring its music down into the market place is a matter on which it would be impertinent to sit. Perhaps the music qua music is no worse than the endless incompetent voluntaries of the village organist, voluntaries hallowed, if not sanctified, by the traditions of a century or more. Perhaps the new style sacred pop song will achieve the same niche?

RONALD PEARSALL

Continuous Mediation: the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Peace on earth—the passionate longing of mankind everywhere. Peace is a word which is on everyone's lips, and the desire for it in everyone's heart—statesman and layman alike. The achievement of total and universal disarmament, the biggest step on the road to peace, is, as President Kennedy said only last year, no longer a pipe-dream of a few idealists: it is a stark matter of whether mankind is to survive on this earth or not.

Women, by their very nature, have always had the privilege and responsibility of feeding and nurturing the human family—hers the joy of bringing children into the world and hers the main responsibility for them till they are

of an age to fend for themselves. She has a unique opportunity of moulding these children into the kind of beings with the kind of outlook she desires. Her power for good or evil is enormous. It is therefore of the utmost importance that women should be fully alive to the problems of the world in which these children have to live. Nowadays in the complicated state in which the human family lives, each nation and indeed each individual so interdependent on other nations and individuals, relying as everyone does on at least some of the produce of other countries for their very existence, women have a very special duty to extend their sphere of influence and their activities from their own immediate family to the family of the whole world. These are at least some of the reasons why women have a special interest in the achievement of a true and lasting peace, more than ever necessary today when the effects of artificially induced radiation, e.g. by the explosion of atomic weapons, are exceedingly grave, not only to the living, but also to the unborn, maybe for generations to come.

The organisation known as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom came into being under rather exciting and difficult circumstances during the First World War in 1915. Its founders were mainly women who for years had been working to establish the idea that women had the same rights and responsibilities as men; that they were citizens as men are; that they were prepared to accept the full responsibilities of citizenship and that they should be granted the same rights and privileges. As we all know, this struggle was nearly over then, and somewhat naturally these women, trained and able as they were, and not being called on to take an active part in the war machine other than as nurses, turned their attention to the cause of peace. They saw in war the destruction of so much of what is their vital sphere—the destruction of human beings which they had at such cost brought into existence. In February 1915 a Committee of well-known and able women was formed to work for permanent peace. This was by no means merely a protest group, but one taking immediate and exciting action. The group joined with women from the Continent and the United States, and in spite of immense difficulties met in neutral Holland and agreed then and there to call together a Women's International Congress at The Hague in eight weeks' time. By some miracle, this Congress, attended by more than 1,100 women from twelve countries took place. It urged *immediate and continuous negotiation* by the neutral countries to try to end the conflict; and also nominated a number of delegates to proceed to both neutral and belligerent countries to obtain interviews with various Governments and urge this plan of mediation upon them. Many interviews took place—we know with what little success—but one particular incident is of interest. Miss Jane Addams—later to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace—was the leader of one delegation and said to the official concerned that she supposed he thought her proposal for continuous mediation foolish, and his reply was 'Madam, it is the wisest suggestion I have received since the outbreak of the war'. This idea of continuous mediation is still suggested today.

This work has gone on ever since. The next Congress was at Zurich after the war was over in 1919 and was a wonderful occasion when representatives of the warring nations met as friends, united in their desire to work for peace, reconciliation and goodwill. At this Congress—followed as it has been by congresses held all over the world every three years—aims, resolutions and policies were laid down, and these have remained the basis of our work for peace. Our main aims are: to work for peace through total and universal disarmament; to study and remove the injustices and inequalities existing in the world—fruitful sources of war and discontent; to act as reconcilers, to foster friendship and understanding between peoples of whatever race or creed; to persuade people to abandon war as an instrument of national policy; to substitute the rule of law for the rule of war. Many of the resolutions passed at this Zurich Congress bore a very close resemblance to President Wilson's Fourteen Points, as he himself pointed out to Jane Addams.

These are long-term aims—not readily accepted, as we know so well, after nearly fifty years of patient struggle. Yet another war has come and gone and people still accept the philosophy of peace through military strength—the greater our neighbours' armaments, the greater must ours be. And now we have the detestable doctrine of prevention of war through fear—fear of total extinction by the atom bomb. But as Pope John pointed out in his encyclical letter of 1963, peace cannot come through fear, superiority in arms, etc. Real peace can only come when nations learn to trust one another, and to recognise that all men have human dignity and human rights and that no nation is justified in controlling the lives and destinies of other races against their will.

These are the aims for which we have been working for nearly fifty years—long-term, not readily or easily accepted. Men do not easily change their long-established concepts that, in the end, a fight will always happen; but we are sure that the state of society envisaged by Pope John is slowly coming into being. Whether we can persuade humanity *and* our statesmen to adopt these ideas before we are obliterated in a third and atomic war, we do not know; but we do know that our stand against violence and oppression of any kind must go on. We know that if human dignity and decency are violated in one part of the globe, these mainstays of human civilisation will be subject to violation everywhere. Freedom extinct in one area means the extinction of the light of freedom in the remaining places. Peace without these freedoms is a sham. Today we are in the midst of a cold war, and our freedom is continually threatened on the grounds of security. Fear is the ruling factor in national relationships. We have the power to alter this state of affairs, to substitute right for might, love and trust and mutual respect for hatred and greed and oppression.

AGNES SHACKLETON