A WORLD MANIFESTO

by Gordon Harper

Sire, it is not a revolt,—it is a revolution."
—Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt
To Louis XVI, 1789

On American college campuses a few years ago it became a
custom for disgruntled students to mutter threateningly in their best
proletarian accent, "Comes the Revolution!" In their own humorous
way these students seem to have accurately forecast the present. I
would suggest we are today witnessing a world revolution which few
of these same Americans know much about or understand. And it
is imperative that we understand it if for no other reason than that
our enlightened self-interest and welfare demand it. Alongside this
revolution even the clash between Russian communism and demo-
cratic capitalism—which seems of such significance to us—becomes
of lesser import.

Permit me to sharpen and focus on this revolution a bit. What
lies behind the Peron—empowering revolt of the descamisados, "the
shirtless ones" of Argentina? Consider the Chinese, who, under the
Communists, have regained human dignity and pride in their cul-
tural heritage for the first time in many years. Observe Algeria and
South Africa, the first already involved in a violent uprising, the
second awaiting but a spark to explore the entire social and political
structure. These are not isolated happenings. A definite unity of
purposes binds them in a single fabric. To understand what this uni-
fying purpose is, we must think back for a moment over the history
of the past two centuries.

No one with a knowledge of history can be unaware of the in-
justices, exploitation and oppression practiced upon subject peoples
by Western powers during the past generations. That great wrongs
have been committed few would deny. But of the extent and of the
contemporaneousness of the oppression, we are largely ignorant.

Is it entirely without significance that two-thirds of the world’s
citizens will go to bed hungry tonight? And that of this number,
one-third will die within a year unless they receive more food in the
future than they had today? What kind of conditions are they in
which a Persian can say, if only he could have one can of American
dog food a week for his starving family he would be happy? Against
this backdrop, hear the statement of one South American industrial-
ist, "In this city we expect at least 50 per cent yearly net income on
our investment, but will not be surprised if we get up to 200 per
cent."

How difficult it is for us of the United States to envision the
unbelievably bad conditions under which so large a number of our
fellows live. We pay but token acknowledgement to the fact that
such conditions even exist, feeling vaguely that somehow "things
like that, you know, must be." Though very unfortunate, fate, divine
will or nature apparently ordains them. And, happily for our secur-
ity, until only recently this feeling of fatalism was shared by most of
the peoples doing the suffering. There has been more or less ac-
ceptance of their lot for two reasons: an ignorance of any other type
of life and a sense of the complete futility of trying to change ex-
tant structures.

This is no longer the case. Something has happened to the man
with the hoe. He has become aware of his condition in comparison
with the fortunate of mankind. As a result, he has come to believe
his position is unbearable and that something can be done about it.
It is this which makes the present situation completely unique. There
have been such conditions before; never before has there been such
determination that such conditions shall not continue. We are
facing a full-blown revolution, one with far-reaching political, social
and economic implications. The land reforms of Vinoba Bhave and
Mao Tse-tung in India and China, the pan-Islamism radiating from
Cairo, the aloof Neutralism of Nehru and other Asian leaders, the
enosis movement in Cyprus, and the pervading drive for industrial-
ization and an increasing trade are only a few manifestations of
this revolution in its many aspects. The reasons for this awaken-
ing change of attitude are several, and it is not my intention to speak
of them here. I am trying only to say that the revolution is taking
place and urge that at least we should recognize it and refrain from
trying to block it.
But where stands the United States while this spirit of revolution is expanding across the earth? While the South African government puts into practice apartheid, complete segregation, and places total power in the hands of the few European whites the United States government promises to supply it with arms and military equipment. In the United Nations we are lined up with our "allies," trying to help them keep their colonies. We vote against consideration of the Algerian demand for independence because France does not want U. N. intervention, and thus we allow the French Republic the freedom to do whatever it will with eight million Algerians. Worst of all, the American public shows concern only for Communism and agrees with the simple TIME declaration that the "world is going either in America's or Russia's way." It would seem that now might be the time for the administration and for the American people to make what Mr. Dulles has called an "agonizing reappraisal" of the world and our place within it.