

s of Peace

ourselves able to interfere in the environment on a planetary scale, able to destroy it wholesale as with nuclear weapons.

By giving us such far-reaching powers to affect one another's lives and the life of the planet, technology has utterly revolutionized the conditions of our existence. Today we truly are our "brother's keeper", as he is ours, and together we have become keepers of the earth and of the whole future of the evolutionary process. We have acquired the power of life and death over the world, and with it a whole new set of responsibilities on a planetary scale for which nothing in our history prepares...

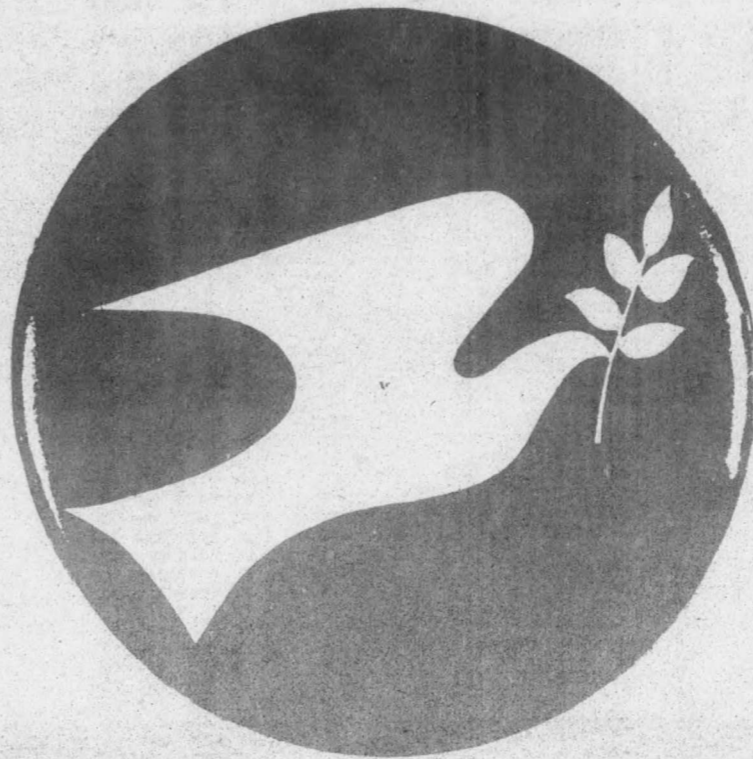
The problem, as Einstein observed, is not with technology, but with our thinking - with our inability to change our thinking, and hence our ways of doing things, quickly enough to take account of new realities. This is the twentieth century predicament. We are technically quick and politically slow, with the result that our technical capabilities have run far out ahead of our social and spiritual development. We have acquired powerful instruments, but have yet to cultivate the wisdom to use them well or the maturity to use them with restraint. The result, as we are seeing, is global chaos and unspeakable suffering.

Our biggest problem is this: while the world has become an integrated whole, we continue to think that all political power should be kept at the level of the nation. Nations, in their interdependence, have become fundamentally joined, like so many parts of a larger organism. But we have not allowed the creature to sprout a proper head. Each limb thinks for itself, cursing the others as it tries to run off in its own direction. And so we flounder...Our thinking can change, and indeed there are encouraging signs that a change of thinking has started.

The now familiar terms "global village" and "Spaceship Earth", coined to describe a new view of an interdependent planet, have had an effect on public consciousness...Planetary awareness has recently been given another boost by the international peace movement of the 80's, which has made global politics a grassroots issue. But so far this emerging awareness has had little effect on the way in which we actually govern the planet. Global politics are still dominated by a view of the world that prevailed before technology made us interdependent. In this view, the world is an aggregate of sovereign nations having neither rights nor legal obligations toward each other. In using the part rather than the whole as its frame of reference, this sovereign-nation world view implicitly emphasizes division over unity - and this is its obsolescence.

Sovereign-nation thinking divides the world into "us" and "them". People are seen to be citizens first of all of a country to which they owe their highest loyalty. There arise two standards of humanity - we look after the welfare of our own citizens, but largely disclaim political, even ethical, responsibility for the plight of people in other countries... It is a me-first mentality... and the result is predictable: a sustained and pointless anarchy that causes humanity to waste \$600 billion a year defending itself from itself.

Half a lifetime ago, this unserviceable system led to world war and the deaths of 55 million human beings. Today it keeps the world in a constant state of terror and agony. This is the final, intolerable irony: with each nation trying to put its immediate interests ahead of the overall interests of the world, our global crises get worse and no one's interests are truly served. The situation begs for change. It begs us to rethink our assumptions - to go beyond the sovereign-nation system to conceive a new world order based on the primacy of the whole. This is the intellectual, moral and political challenge of our age."



Co-Existence Or No Existence

