sympathy for Mr. Dulles. Surely it is no help to say that we should “work up some program” for dealing with our troubles. Or to say that “wise policies” will help us. We should and they will, but Mr. Finletter too often stops with the exhortation.

For the Middle East he recommends that we make the Arabs settle with Israel, that we assist in organizing a regional economic development program and attempt, through the UN, to place an embargo on arms shipped to the area. Mr. Finletter wrote this book long before July and August of 1958, and he makes it plain that he is offering suggestions, not drafting comprehensive policies, but even within these limits his comments are not really pertinent to the basic political conflict. And his diagnosis of the Middle East's troubles is not impressive.

He calls Syria "close to being a Soviet satellite," contending that Syria and Egypt "ceased to be free agents ... the moment they took the MIG jet fighter planes, the IL 28 Russian bombers, and the Russian technicians who went with them." (A risky line of argument for an American to make.) He blames the Arab-Israel conflict exclusively upon the Arabs and describes the Arab refugee situation as "blown up out of all proportion." This is superficial (and as far as the refugees are concerned, uncomfortably complacent) for a man of Mr. Finletter's stature and for a book published for the Council on Foreign Relations.

The author's general recommendations are that we attempt to reinvigorate NATO, that we be less intolerant of neutralism and less indifferent to the feelings and opinions of those (especially in Asia) who inevitably are affected by what we do, that we put less emphasis on military pacts and "work up some program by which the initiative for the defense of Asia against war and lesser forms of violence comes from the Asian countries, with the West taking only such share as shall be agreed upon with Asia."

So Mr. Finletter is not very specific. His proposals largely are modifications of present policy, changes in style and approach. But he does not question the presuppositions of our policy: the assumption that the Soviet threat today is substantially the same as it was in Stalin's day; the assumption that to encourage political polarization, the "two camps," is useful; the very strong reliance on economic assistance for political results.

The strength of Mr. Finletter's book is in the chapters dealing with air-atomic power and disarmament. The author is at home here, and he makes a detailed and telling argument against our present military policies, our sacrifice of research and development to economy, and against the economic argument itself. Using National Planning Association figures, he argues that our military spending could almost be doubled (to 75 billion dollars) without putting serious pressures on the civilian economy. His picture of the missile situation, the disparity between Soviet and American development, fortifies the argument that has also been made by Senators Symington and Jackson, Joseph Alsop, and the other air-oriented critics of the Administration.

His disarmament argument is an equally capable presentation of a specific argument—that disarmament is technically feasible and that the United States should try much harder to win a comprehensive agreement. This again is a field in which Mr. Finletter has had professional experience and he provides a very able discussion of supervision and of the need for leadership and flexibility in renewing our disarmament
efforts. He deals only implicitly with the underlying problem of the political will to disarm. But it is possible that he is right and that the weapons crisis is grave enough to induce nations to deal with the symptom despite the cause.

Mr. Louis Halle, however, is concerned with that cause—with the politics of war. His book is more limited, but more ambitious and more successful than Mr. Finletter’s. He is making a fundamental appraisal of nuclear military force as an instrument of political affairs. He deals with general ideas, analyzing them rather than surveying them. The result is an exceptionally fine book, written with great style and grace.

The progress of the argument is simple. First Mr. Halle speaks of nuclear—weapons in the perspective of those other weapons which have either revolutionized tactics (the crossbow) or offered potentially unrestrained destruction (gas and bacteriological agents). Each, he contends, disrupted the “laws” of conflict; but each eventually was accommodated in a new system of law—a new order by which society accepted the weapon but preserved itself against its extreme consequences.

His book is an investigation of how nuclear weapons might be assimilated by our society. And he argues that not the least of the problems is that nuclear weapons have, by their apocalyptic potentialities, vastly strengthened what might be called the apocalyptic school of political thought: those, like Bertrand Russell, who offer a utopian course of action as the sole alternative to catastrophe; those who exclude any middle way from the argument. The whole of Mr. Halle’s book is an attempt to find a middle course, one which excludes catastrophe but does not require wholesale reform of the race.

To hope to place an arbitrary limit on weapons is to edge into utopianism because the thing which determines a nation’s choice of weapons is the issue at stake. If the issue is survival, there are no weapons barred. If the issue is South Korea, Dien-bienphu, Berlin or Quemoy, limitation is possible. The game is not worth the possible consequences of the larger weapons.

The problem, Mr. Halle argues, is to avoid confrontations on the issues of survival. In war today there must be an alternative to victory. When matters begin to be phrased in terms of ultimate victories and defeats, men reach for ultimate weapons.

How limited are the weapons Mr. Halle discusses? Nuclear weapons surely (he accepts the argument for their use which is based on the manpower situation, an argument which is very difficult to counter) but small ones, smaller in most cases than the Hiroshima bomb.

But here is the great problem of this argument. Even small nuclear weapons are terribly destructive if they are used in the quantities which now seem likely. According to newspaper reports of the Army-Air Force exercises which have been held in this country and in NATO, the destruction which results from tactical nuclear war approaches the unacceptable. (After all, what is a minor action to a nation is an issue of survival to a battalion commander. And it is the battalion commander who is likely to have the appalling responsibility for ordering up the nuclear artillery or the atomic air strike.)

Unacceptable or not, the destruction still does not begin to approach that of strategic nuclear war; there is some reason to think that the destructiveness of tactical war has been exaggerated—that the effect will be no greater than that of the conventional high explosive used in past wars, the difference lying in the (military) economy and effectiveness with which the nuclear weapon can be used.

This, surely, is a technical argument which can be given a technical answer. So can the profoundly disturbing question of radioactivity. How “clean” our tactical weapons are remains unclear, but the effort to develop “clean” weapons has been a serious one which may have a great effect in this crisis.

The underlying issue is whether the United States and the Western democracies would be able to conduct a policy with the kind of political limits that would make weapons limitation even possible. Democracies are slow to arouse, but aroused they seem to tend precipitously toward defining their cause in absolute terms, toward what Raymond Aron calls hyperbolic war. Dictatorships, ironically enough, may frame absolutist ideologies but are more able to conduct united actions. And there is some consolation which Mr. Halle sees in the fact that Communism appears more conservative in action than was Nazi Germany.

Mr. Halle’s essential recommendation is that we buy time. Generations pass, ideologies become compromised, issues are dulled. We can take some hope from history that time will ease the Cold War; our problem is to keep the present from exploding, to restrain the Soviets by limited war for limited goals, if it comes to that extremity, to prevent either the Soviets or our own people from giving a specific conflict ultimate value. But we Americans have an old belief that eventually the sheriff must take his pistols and begin that long walk down the sunny center of the street to have it out with the badmen.

It no longer can be done that way. To find—and act upon—an alternative is an extraordinary challenge, and one cannot feel altogether optimistic about the response this nation now is making to that challenge. But if we prove successful we ought to acknowledge a rather large debt to the kind of political discussion provided and provoked by Mr. Halle.
The Idea of Freedom
by Mortimer J. Adler. Doubleday. 689 pp. $7.50.
A work of encyclopedic scholarship encompassing two thousand years of thought and controversy about the concept of freedom, this volume is the contribution of the Institute for Philosophical Research, whose Director is the author, and whose job it is to "take stock of Western thought on subjects . . . of continuing philosophical interest."

This is the Challenge
The extent of the "vast technocratic Sparta that is burgeoning in the U.S.S.R." and how to combat it on the several fronts of education, science and technology are the subjects of former Senator Benton's book, which is based on his visit to the Soviet Union in 1955.

Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy
by William Barrett. Doubleday. 278 pp. $5.00.
The twin hazards of a layman's introduction to existentialism—popularization and oversimplification—are for the most part avoided in this patient study. Mr. Barrett has his audience as well as his subject firmly in hand, and his book is triumphantly accessible.

The Road to Wigan Pier
by George Orwell. Harcourt, Brace. 265 pp. $4.60.
Time has dispelled much of the urgency, but none of the passion, of this twenty-year-old Orwell classic, now appearing in its first American edition. A first-hand report on economic miseries in England's industrial north, its enduring value remains Orwell's moral vision, which transcended not only contemporary evils but also the brand of socialist optimism that sought to cure them.

A Time to Speak
by Michael Scott. Doubleday. 358 pp. $4.50.
An autobiography of a spiritual pilgrimage, from the slums of London to the outrages of apartheid in South Africa, Michael Scott's story is a moving account of social cause merged with personal vocation.

War and Peace in the Space Age
by James M. Gavin. Harper. 304 pp. $5.00.
General Gavin attacks the Pentagon policies under former Defense Secretary Wilson that have prevented the Armed Forces from realizing an adequate defense establishment built around the concept of limited war. "If we cannot afford to fight limited wars," he writes, "then we cannot afford to survive."

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