

## in the magazines

"The problem of nuclear disarmament overshadows every other aspect of the Cold War," writes Reinhold Niebuhr in the June 8 *New Leader*; "but its importance does not guarantee a solution." Dr. Niebuhr reviews the record of fruitless East-West attempts to come to terms over the matter of inspection, and concludes that Russian intransigence is not entirely to blame. We must admit that "many of our proposals were not meant to be accepted by the Russians. Indeed, we would have been embarrassed if the proposals had been accepted . . . A fool-proof inspection system is a very dubious possibility, even if ordinary good faith is presupposed." Further, history shows that disarmament "is not the prelude but the consequence of relaxed international tensions." The distribution of power among nations, Dr. Niebuhr suggests, is the real concern of a disarmament conference: "If the Western governments hold firm, and Moscow abandons its hope for an agreement on easy terms, then a ban may be achieved, provided it is felt to serve the interests of the existing weapons balance." Dr. Niebuhr does not believe this will happen, but he does think there are "small consolations . . . in this dark hour of history," not least among them the fact that we are beginning to compete in terms of guided missiles, rather than nuclear warheads, which at least removes the threat to unborn generations.

The *New York Times* finds itself charged with violating the "old high standards of fearless, independent journalism." The charge, made by *Liberation* in its June issue, centered about the *Times*' admission on March 19 of having withheld advance information on Project Argus because "scientists associated with the government said they feared that prior announcements of the experiment might lead to protests that would enforce its cancellation." *Liberation* accused the *Times* of concealing information from the people "for the precise purpose of keeping them from expressing their opinions on a political question." In the face of denials and counter-accusations from *Times* editors, *Liberation* insists that "it is clear that . . . they concealed this information from the public apparently because they favored the continuation and extension of nuclear test explosions."

The unsolved problem of civil defense, according to several recent articles on the subject, is an increasingly crucial aspect of our nuclear policy. Norma Krause Herzfeld, writing in *America* for June 13, draws together data that reveal the confusion, ignorance and apathy surrounding the matter. Ap-

parently taking a cue from our official policy, which continues to rely solely on the nuclear deterrent to all-out attack, the prevailing sentiment of the civil population is an "all-or-nothing fatalism." The public remains unaware, Mrs. Herzfeld writes, that "alternatives do exist between the placid assumption that war is just too horrible to happen, and the fear that if it just *should* happen everybody will be wiped out." She cites the RAND Corporation's recent *Study of Non-military Defense*, which stated that adequate civil defense would itself be a deterrent to enemy attack.

Mrs. Herzfeld notes further that, despite the Gaither and Rockefeller Reports (which called for the mass-scale construction of civilian shelters) and despite the widespread recognition that evacuation plans are now obsolete, the Government has failed to initiate protective measures for the civilian population—either by building public blast shelters or by distributing information to individual citizens who wished to build their own.

The "do-it-yourself" method of home defense, which may be our resort if, as Mrs. Herzfeld's article implies, there is to be no Federal program of civilian protection, is outlined by Ralph E. Lapp in the May issue of *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. Mr. Lapp presents a good amount of technical information on what we can expect ("megaton assumptions" is the term) in the event of enemy attack. Mr. Lapp agrees with the results of a public survey quoted by Mrs. Herzfeld when he remarks that "only the *rara avis* will go to the trouble and expense of building a blast shelter." Therefore he limits himself to the steps the average citizen can take to protect himself and his family against the fallout that occurs after the primary impact of megaton weapons: "A tunnel dug in the cellar wall would provide excellent protection. Stacking up bags of coal, sand, or containers of water in a corner of the basement would also reduce the radiation dose."

According to Mr. Lapp's estimates, it would be two or three days before survivors could "emerge from cramped quarters and enjoy more freedom in the basement"; one month before basement living could be abandoned. But not until the second year after attack would "return to ordinary life" be possible. And what about the consumption of food grown on contaminated land? "Crop contamination," Mr. Lapp admits, "poses a serious long-term problem and it is not clear whether a post-attack economy could support the kind of agriculture which could minimize the uptake of strontium-90 from the food supply."

PAMPHILUS