

Britain and the Bomb

The Devil's Repertoire by Victor Gollancz. Doubleday, 192 pp. \$2.50.

The Fearful Choice: A Debate on Nuclear Policy conducted by Philip Toynbee. Wayne State University Press. 112 pp. \$2.50.

Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare by Bertrand Russell. Simon and Schuster. 92 pp. \$2.50.

by Daniel M. Friedenberg

Three books have recently appeared dealing with the possible ultimate consequences of nuclear warfare. All three are written by distinguished Englishmen who have been identified with left or liberal movements for most of their adult life and profess a united disdain for Communist ideology. The three authors are strongly affected by the knowledge that England, a small and heavily populated island, would suffer frightful damage in atomic warfare and the three again tend to equate the fate of their island with the fate of all civilized mankind. As a consequence, though the authors have widely differing intellectual and religious attitudes, the books are united in a desire to negotiate disarmament to a much greater degree than any American writer of non-Communist sympathies would express.

Starting with the book of least worth, *The Devil's Repertoire* by Victor Gollancz, we are confronted with a badly-written but passionate plea for pacifism, a pacifism induced by the brooding over what nuclear warfare would mean. The basis of Mr. Gollancz's pacifism is theologic and, as such, beyond the scope of this review. In the practice of his convictions, the author suggests that England (and he hopes for the United

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States as well) should give up its H-bombs and reject their use under any circumstances. He makes this suggestion with the full knowledge that Russia may take over the world as a result. Mr. Gollancz feels that life under Russia would be better than a nuclear war which he considers inevitable, thus rejecting the thesis that war can be avoided. "Under a Soviet occupation there would be *life*: a nuclear war would mean death; and the man who chooses death rather than life is a blasphemer."

Indeed, Mr. Gollancz goes so far as to indicate a justification for the occupation, since the Russian gauleiters would learn Christian brotherhood from the English. "But under an occupation, which would require a large personnel, we should be at personal grips with them; and, if we used the spiritual weapons of patience and courage and harmlessness and forgiveness and even love, we might find the enemy becoming a neighbor." Presumably Mr. Gollancz draws his information from some slave camps in Siberia the rest of us are not familiar with.

It is to the credit of Victor Gollancz that he follows to its ultimate conclusion the internal logic of his own position. For he affirms that any tyranny in peace is better than nuclear war. Going beyond that, he even questions whether the war against Hitler was justifiable, a war he defines solely as "six years of unspeakable devastation that brought death, mutilation, agony, madness, hatred, and corruption to million upon million in a despairing world." It is hard to believe that a man who escaped Belsen by accident of family emigration could thus and merely sum up World War II. It is equally difficult to believe that Hitler could have been won over to the Sermon on the Mount any more than Genghis Khan. For

readers interested in an analysis of present world tensions, *The Devil's Repertoire* is worthless other than as an outstanding example of how the modern situation can make a sensitive man renounce everything worthwhile in the face of a possible overwhelming danger.

The Fearful Choice consists of a thesis raised by Philip Toynbee followed by the comments of well-known Englishmen. Although Mr. Toynbee rejects the absolute pacifism of Victor Gollancz, his position in the practical sense is barely distinguishable.

The debate is centered on Mr. Toynbee's conviction that it is a "statistical certainty" that a mistake will be made, if the present situation continues, and that mutual fear must lead to an accidental war in the near future. "It would be wicked and pointless to launch a nuclear attack on Russia before we have been attacked; it would also be wicked and pointless to reciprocate after attack because only childish revenge would make millions of innocent Russians suffer the agony which Englishmen have already suffered." We must therefore yield to the Russians.

The logic employed by Philip Toynbee is similar to the old adage that heads I win and tails you lose. Russia is stronger in technical development and will remain stronger, we are informed *ex cathedra*. But if by the "miraculous" the West becomes stronger, this would be worse since the Russians are most intransigent when weak. Compounding this curious argument, we are informed that if we negotiate on their terms the Russians will not try to take advantage of us. If they do, he continues, better Soviet domination than inevitable nuclear warfare.

That wisest and slyest of mortals, Bertrand Russell, has written the most intelligent analysis. In

Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare, Lord Russell attempts to find grounds of appeal to all sides, "on the analogy of sanitary measures against epidemics." Illustrating the tremendous destruction bound to occur by means of testimony in the United States, he searches for motives appealing to the common interests of the rival parties.

From this, he projects a program that may safely initiate moves toward concrete peace in "a number of stages." The cessation of mutual vituperation has already begun in his opinion; and, though not quoted, the present exchange of ballet companies and symphonic orchestras is indeed a hopeful sign. The abolition of nuclear testing would be the next step since both sides share equal concern in the poisoning of the earth's atmosphere. As Bertrand Russell points out, this would have collateral benefits, since "any agreement between East and West about anything is to the good", the problem being to a large extent psychological. Following this, every endeavor would be made to agree that no nuclear weapons should be manufactured, a measure which could be enforced by inspection without very great difficulty.

Up to this stage, Lord Russell feels agreement might well lie within the reach of possibility. The next giant step, destruction of the existing stocks of H-bombs, would then tell the story, because there could be no mutual agreement without an accompanying reduction of conventional forces. For, as the author states, "I doubt whether an agreement to this effect will be concluded until there is a genuine readiness on both sides to renounce war as an instrument of policy." The ultimate thereafter, of course, would be an International Authority with the military power to enforce its decisions.

To the American reviewer, sharing the American illusion of

safety accorded by distance, much of the discussion in these books seems to border on hysteria. But Englishmen, only three hours from Moscow by jet, undoubtedly sense an urgency which makes this reading salutary if only because it brings an awareness of Europe's mood. Certain omissions and confusions, however, should be corrected in order to bring the discussion into clearer focus.

One cannot escape notice of the strong parochial feeling existing throughout the three books. It is accepted almost without exception that England is the center of the universe and that Western society is identical with all civilization. Only Joseph Grimond, M. P. avoids this egocentrism when stating in wry words: "The present situation is only thought 'unique' because it is 'God's children', the British, that are threatened . . . Nuclear war *might* finish mankind but it might just finish the British, Americans, and half the Russians. The Indians, Chinese, Africans, South Americans might be left—and left freed from Western madness."

This in turn involves another curious oversight, the place of China in the modern world. Lord Russell alone approaches this momentous issue. It is implicit in any agreement to suspend nuclear testing that China should be a party. Not only could China develop her own bomb, free of all control, but Russia could use Chinese territory for testing. This seemingly obvious fact has been bypassed in all discussion in the same way American officials juridically ignore the actual physical existence of China.

The salient point is that the technical information to make nuclear bombs is now known to the entire world. The United States had them in 1945, Russia in 1950, England in 1952, and France and China are rushing to join the Nuclear Club. Within twenty years, countries like Egypt and Argentina will likewise manufacture

them. Furthermore, countries going through the first virulent stages of nationalism will be less inclined to weigh consequences to the same extent as more mature nations. It is an axiom of power politics that only equality produces respect, a condition reached by the United States and Russia. It may still be that Russia could restrain China, as America might France; but once the many little nations possess nuclear weapons, the task of serious negotiation will be very much more difficult.

Insofar as the immediate future is concerned, it seems to me that Messrs. Gollancz and Toynbee share a degree of intellectual abstraction akin to that state of insanity known as disassociation. We should never lose sight of the fact that the Russians exhibit our same anxieties and, due to their recent war experiences, probably to a larger extent. A principal reason why we have not yet had war, and it is unlikely we will, is that Russia and America, because of their mutual anxieties, understand and respect each other's paramount zones of influence. Our action in Guatemala, our lack of action in Hungary and Suez clarified the world situation to a large extent. In effect, we chalked off East Europe in not supporting the Hungarian revolt and the Middle East in rejecting the Suez invasion. The Russians likewise know that we will not tolerate their action in West Europe and the Americas. If we can clarify the remaining twilight zones by patient negotiation (leaving both Germany and Formosa independent—the American aim; but incapable of offensive warfare—the Russian aim), there is sound reason to believe nuclear disarmament would very soon result. Patient, ever-careful patient negotiation, not abstract appeals to morality, religion and pacifism, is the only realistic road to that success which every moral, religious and pacific man so ardently desires.

Dream and Reality: Aspects of American Foreign Policy

by Louis J. Halle. Harper. 327 pp. \$5.00.

A foremost interpreter of American foreign policy here takes the long view that American policy is inseparable from American history, both as it reflects the structure of our national experience and as it illustrates the common historical fate of mankind—the eternal conflict between illusory hope and factual reality.

The Prerequisites for Peace

by Norman Thomas. W. W. Norton. 189 pp. \$2.95.

Disengagement, disarmament, and the establishment of world order through the UN are not only necessary but possible, Mr. Thomas believes, and he presents a detailed outline of how we may achieve these ends on the basis of a "mutuality of interests" among the great powers.

Protracted Conflict

by Robert Strausz-Hupé, William R. Kintner, James E. Dougherty, Alvin J. Cottrell. Harper, 203 pp. \$3.95.

"The significance of Communism as a doctrine and a technique of conflict" is revealed and explained by four members of the Foreign Policy Research Institute. The authors analyze the purposes and principles that lie behind Communist strategy, its chief targets in the Cold War, and its methods of operation.

The West in Crisis

by James P. Warburg. Doubleday. 192 pp. \$3.50.

The crisis of the Western world, as Mr. Warburg sees it, derives not from the external threat of Communist imperialism but from the failures and weaknesses of Western policy which have rendered us so vulnerable to that threat: "not the enemy without, but the enemy within."

The Ecumenical Era in Church and Society

Edited by Edward J. Jurji. Macmillan. 238 pp. \$5.00.

A symposium in honor of Dr. John A. Mackay, pioneer in the ecumenical movement, this volume brings together a number of essays by distinguished spokesmen of world Christianity on aspects of ecumenics in relation to contemporary issues.

Foundations of the Responsible Society

by Walter G. Muelder. Abingdon Press. 304 pp. \$6.00.

In the course of this investigation of Christian social ethics in the various spheres of the law, the state, economic life, work and vocation, the family, social welfare, and the world community, Dr. Muelder analyzes some of the most profound problems and tensions of modern society.

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