

## Policy for a Time of Negotiations

**Dream and Reality: Aspects of American Foreign Policy** by Louis J. Halle. Harper. 327 pp. \$5.00.

**The Tragedy of American Diplomacy** by William Appleman Williams. World. 219 pp. \$4.75.

by **Michael Harrington**

The death of John Foster Dulles, it now seems, marked the end of an era as well as the passing of a man. Within a few months, a cardinal principle of Dulles' policy, that of opposition to summit meetings, was dramatically abandoned in the invitation to Premier Khrushchev. But one can go beyond the symbol of Mr. Dulles and argue that the "new diplomacy" is the expression of a trend that has been building up for some time.

Shocked by the debacle in the Middle East, frightened by Soviet technological achievements, many Americans have begun to question the wisdom of our "negotiate from positions of strength" policy, with its emphasis upon military alliances. In Congress, some senators have seriously demanded a minor, but significant, reversal of the proportions between military and economic aid. Most important of all, debate over the major lines of our foreign policy has once again become possible.

In short, we appear to have entered the period of negotiations. The Cold War will continue, to be sure, but in a different form. The days of a sharpening intensification of military conflict, culminating in the Korean War, may be over. The time of visits and propaganda speeches before the United Nations has dramatically begun. In this con-

---

Mr. Harrington, a previous contributor to *Worldview*, writes on political questions for a number of American journals.

text, America is faced with a serious problem, one which was evaded when the central issue seemed to many to be one of organizing military alliances: how to mount a political policy capable of moving toward peace.

On one side, this amounts to a rejection of the old clichés of NATO and SEATO; on the other, it requires that negotiations be conducted without capitulation. The line between the bellicose response of the past decade and the possible surrenders of the future is a delicate one. Two recent books, *Dream and Reality* by Louis J. Halle and *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* by William Appleman Williams, are an aid in this task of reassessment.

One of Mr. Halle's major points is psychological: that a conflict situation tends to develop a simple, polar view of the world as divided into good and bad. Certainly there are a thousand examples of this tendency in the recent past and Halle's plea for a more thoughtful, critical approach is a welcome one.

Above all, American policy (and the popular press) defined the Cold War in military terms. For the architects of NATO, the central problem was that of organizing for the armed defense of Western Europe and ultimately forcing Russia to bow to the superior might of the West. The more sophisticated version of this theory (say that of Mr. George Kennan) added an analysis in which Russia would eventually be transformed from within. Once this strategy was adopted in Europe under the Truman administration, it was mechanically applied by John Foster Dulles to the Middle East and to South East Asia in the Baghdad Pact and SEATO.

This vision of reality failed to assess both Communism's strength and its weakness. On

the one hand, the ability to manipulate the democratic and revolutionary slogans of the Western socialist tradition allowed the Kremlin to win millions of volunteers to its banner. This is particularly true of the underdeveloped nations where the Communist planners substituted the peasant masses of the colonial revolution for the advanced working classes as the driving force of modern history. The result was the appearance of mass Communist movements in the old colonial world—and the Baghdad Pact was hardly worth the paper it was written on because it offered no real alternative to the appeal of Communism as a social movement.

Yet, if Communism derived an enormous power from its anti-capitalism and anti-Western imperialism, it was menaced by its own success. For here was a ruling class which daily educated its people in the classics of revolution, a totalitarian and exploitative regime which taught the theory of democracy and freedom. The spectacle of governments being hoisted on their own traditional documents is a familiar one in history; but Communism represented the most extreme form of the contradiction between official ideology and the apparent reality.

This became most obvious during the first stage of the thaw period following Stalin's death: the East German general strike, the Polish October, the Hungarian Revolution. In each case, there were massive defections from the regime and elements inside the Communist Party appeared as the leaders of the anti-Communist revolution. Given its military emphasis, the United States was unable to do anything about these events. Had, for example, there been a dramatic offer to withdraw American

troops from Germany in October, 1956, the Hungarian Revolution might at least have had some chance. As it was, the Communists were able to consolidate their position by arguing that the only alternative to their rule was NATO and American domination.

In all of this, the fact which American policy missed was the strength and weakness of Communism as a social movement. If Mr. Halle's plea leads toward a re-evaluation of this fact, it will be well worthwhile. In the meantime, the reality itself is pushing toward a change in American thinking. The technological conquests of Soviet science have such an obvious political bearing that it has shocked a good section of the American public into thinking about the non-military dimension of the Cold War. It is this change, coupled with a Russian re-orientation, which makes the current period one of flux, of danger and of possibility.

At this juncture, William Appleman Williams' study becomes quite important. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* approaches the problem of foreign policy by means of a scholarly, historical analysis, but it is extremely relevant to the immediate issues of the time of negotiations.

Briefly put, Mr. Williams' thesis is that modern American policy has been characterized by an "open door" approach to organizing the world. Coming late upon the international scene as a major power, America developed an anti-colonial form of imperialism which rested upon the proposition that the superior economic might of the United States would be decisive if only it had a fair chance to compete. The key to American policy, as Williams develops his theory, is thus the idea of the "open door," of free access to the world for all advanced nations; that is, for the supremacy of an America which was guaranteed to win under such conditions. In this perspec-

tive, the traditional counterposition of isolationism and interventionism appears as somewhat unreal, for both lines of policy were essentially directed toward the same goal. Wilson and his opponents, Williams argues, fought over the question of method, of tactic, but shared basic assumptions on the goal of policy.

More recently, Mr. Williams feels that the United States refused to negotiate realistically with Russia at the end of the war. He feels that Stalin, as a conservative in the Kremlin factional line-up, would have accepted an arrangement anchored in an American willingness to finance the reconstruction of Russia. Today, this missed chance can be revitalized through a policy of detente and rapprochement, coupled with a commitment to aid underdeveloped countries through the United Nations. This, Williams feels, would help those tendencies toward reform in the Communist bloc, and would also provide a way for the democratic industrialization of the underdeveloped countries. It would be a decisive rejection of the "open door" approach, a final sacrifice of the dream of America as the organizer of the world.

To a considerable extent it is impossible to disagree with Mr. Williams' proposals. Massive aid, realism in negotiations, a policy which might aid the development of heretical and revolutionary movements within Communism, these are all obvious goods. But the problem is, I think, in Mr. Williams' essentially passive attitude toward Communism. He calls upon America to give up its imperialism, which is fine; but the alternative, the idea of *modus vivendi*, strongly implies substituting bi-lateral Russo-American imperialism for the dream of the "open door." Therefore, I would put the question much more positively: how can the United States act so as to roll back the Rus-

sians and simultaneously move away from the brink of World War III?

The crucial point here is the idea of disengagement. It has been officially proposed by the Poles, it has a grudging endorsement from the Kremlin, and it is advocated by important political parties in Europe, most notably the Social Democrats of Germany and England. As a first step, it calls for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, to be followed by the removal of all foreign troops. If this disengagement would work out, it could mean enormous hope for the people of East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Finally, a word about practicality. The current situation indicates that American policymakers have not yet conceived of the middle ground, that they swerve from the stance of aggressive military opposition to one of excessive politeness. This is not a function of the Eisenhower personality. It is, rather, a result of a decade in which there has been no foreign policy debate. (Mr. Stevenson, to my mind, differed only in emphasis and rhetoric from Mr. Dulles.) The issue has already been joined on an intellectual level, but it has not yet become political. For that to happen, the log-jam of American politics, above all the issue-deadening structure of our political parties, must change.

These are some of the problems of this new period, this time of negotiations. Mr. Halle raises questions in the form of an impressionistic historical essay, and his great merit is the call to move away from the simple polarities of the cold warriors. Mr. Williams is more theoretical and has written a provocative and more substantial work. Both studies point to the imperative need for a fundamental rethinking of the basic assumptions of American foreign policy.

**How to Serve God in a Marxist Land**

by Karl Barth and Johannes Hamel. Association Press. 126 pp. \$2.50.

The first English translation of Karl Barth's controversial letter of counsel to a German pastor brings into sharper focus the problems that beset Christians in countries dominated by Marxist dogmas. Barth's proposals for solving these problems and Pastor Hamel's "Proclamation of the Gospel in the Marxist World," also published in this volume, provide Americans with an unfamiliar and provocative approach to the role of religion in the contemporary political situation.

**Massive Retaliation**

by Paul Peeters. Regnery. 304 pp. \$5.00.

By way of defending the concept of massive retaliation and the policies of John Foster Dulles, the author provides a step-by-step, minutely detailed account of the direction taken by American foreign policy under the Eisenhower administration.

**Defense in the Nuclear Age**

by Stephen King-Hall. Fellowship Publications. 234 pp. \$2.75.

As the only means of dissolving the nuclear stalemate and "reversing the trend of history," a British military defense expert advocates a policy of unilateral disarmament and non-violent resistance.

**What's Happening in China?**

by Lord Boyd Orr and Peter Townsend. Doubleday. 159 pp. \$3.75.

A first-hand report on the industrial, economic and social progress of mainland China, this book evaluates the changes of the last ten years in the historic context of an ancient civilization, and suggests a factual and realistic basis for revising our policy toward the country which "presents the Western world with a bigger problem than Russia."

**The Voyage of the Golden Rule**

by Albert Bigelow. Doubleday. 286 pp. \$3.95.

A report by the skipper of the 30-foot ketch which sailed to Eniwetok in protest against the testing of nuclear weapons, this book reflects the struggle of the pacifist conscience with the issues of our time.

**Organizing Peace in the Nuclear Age**

New York University Press. 245 pp. \$3.75.

The Eleventh Report of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace is concerned with the problem of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to legislate international control of nuclear power. The Commission considers both the general theory and the practical application of international lawmaking and offers a number of concrete suggestions for increasing the methods and scope of the UN.

*worldview*

A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
 volume 2, no. 10 / October 1959

WORLDVIEW is published monthly by The Church Peace Union.  
 Subscription: \$2.00 per year.  
 Address: 170 East 64th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

EDITORIAL BOARD

*William Clancy, Editor*  
 A. William Loos      John R. Inman      William J. Cook

Editorial Assistant, *Arlene Croce*

Worldview  
 170 East 64th Street  
 New York 21, N. Y.

CONTENTS

Editorial Comment..... 1  
 In the Magazines..... 2  
 Religion and Responsibility..... 3  
     *William Lee Miller*  
 The Ethics of Calculation..... 6  
     *Ernest W. Lefever*  
 Other Voices..... 9

BOOKS

The Time of Negotiations by *Michael Harrington*.. 10  
 Current Reading..... 12

Opinions expressed in WORLDVIEW are those of the authors, and not necessarily of The Church Peace Union.