

the peace, order, and justice achieved within the domestic life of nations simply puts into practice the criteria of justice in the ends and means of proper political conduct that define the justice of civilized military conduct. These are *limited* means and ends, and are our unavoidable responsibility for seeking and defending the justice to be dispensed between contending parties.

In the way a police force performs when choice must be made between one life and another, it can be seen that domestic political enforcement discriminates between the bearer of hostile force who must be stopped and the "innocent" bystander (or non-combatant). It is never just to "enlarge the target" and deliberately and directly kill any number in a crowd of people as a means of preventing some criminal from injurious action. The police fire with discrimination. They make a modest and limited defense. We do not allow them the right to get a criminal's children into their power as hostages and to threaten to kill them in order to "deter" him.

Yet the source of the justice of this limited use of force is evidently to be found in "social charity." This is clear from the fact that a man, who legitimately could even be killed if that were the only way to save life, would himself be saved at grave risk to the lives of firemen and police, if he alone is in need of rescue because he has gone off his rocker and is threatening to jump from the ledge of a building twenty stories up.

What is missing from international relations are simply the ways domestic society defines the just cause among men. The justice of, and limitations upon, human conduct or upon the legitimate means to be used, are the same. It is always disheartening to hear Christian people say that the norms governing the domestic use of force do not apply between nations. International relations are a moral jungle, it seems to them; and, *non sequitur par excellence*, only "peace and non-violence" can be applied there. The truth is simply that within nations the moral control of the use of armed force has attained *legal* definition, just as *human* rights are also *legal* rights in civil society. Our multi-national world is characterized only by the absence of legal status for the guarantee of human rights, the absence of judicial resolution of conflict, and the absence of legal institutionalization of the moral distinction between legitimate and illegitimate use of force to be found in the proper objectives of restraint and repression in the conduct of war.

Whoever agrees that this is the problem agrees also that there must take place a turn toward "just war" in the political relations of nations. For there can be no hope that our multi-national world can move toward international justice upon the premise that, unless and until the rule of positive world-law defines and produces justice, there is no distinction to be made between the just use of armed force and an unjust resort to purposeless and wholly indiscriminate violence.

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## books

# When Christians Confront Nuclear War

*Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience* by John C. Bennett, Charles Scribner's Sons, \$3.95.

by John K. Moriarty

*Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience* is a symposium by seven well-known American Protestant scholars and theologians on the subject of the moral dilemmas posed by nuclear warfare. In general approach it parallels a similar symposium by

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American Catholics published almost two years ago under the title of *Morality and Modern Warfare*. Like the earlier Catholic volume, this book opens with a chapter assessing the international political situation (by John H. Herz), it proceeds then to the scientific, technological and strategic background (David R. Inglis and Kenneth Thompson), and then devotes most of the remainder of the discussion to the moral and social aspects of the problem (by Dr. Bennett, Erich Fromm, Paul Ramsey, and Roger Shinn).

The current book appears to this reviewer to represent a significant step forward beyond the pioneering Catholic effort—though

the intervening two years of additional debate on nuclear strategy have undoubtedly assisted the later writers in both the quality of their information and the conceptual clarity of their arguments. Where the Catholic symposium contained a rather wide spectrum of views, with little real consensus, the Protestant volume manages to attain somewhat greater unity. This is not to say, of course, that Dr. Bennett's contributors all agree (they frankly argue with each other, in some cases), but merely that the range of disagreement is narrower, the positive thrust of the argument a little more pronounced, and the explicit recognition of military

and technical realities more clearly evident.

There are other differences between the two books, however, which have no relation to time of publication, and which invite conjecture regarding the fundamental religious orientation of the two sets of authors. For example, most of the contributors to the Catholic symposium appeared (at least to this reviewer) to be perhaps unduly sanguine regarding both the morality and the feasibility of "rational" nuclear warfare, without having specifically explored the realities of the problem. On the other hand, some of the Protestant writers (notably David Inglis and Erich Fromm) display a similarly unsupported optimism regarding the benefits to be expected from unilateral Western disarmament initiatives. One is tempted to find some further significance in the fact that, where the Catholic symposium concluded with a predominantly legal discussion of the question of "military necessity," the Protestant volume ends with Roger Shinn's deeply religious and historically confident chapter on the spiritual role of Christianity in giving meaning and inspiration to the life of men on this earth. Admittedly, neither editor purported to summarize his volume in the last chapter; yet, speaking as a Catholic, I cannot help but feel concerned at what appears to be the lack of spiritual vitality in American Catholicism. Apparently the pacifists and the "haters of atheistic Communism" have garnered the support of most of those with a deep feeling of commitment on the subject of war and foreign policy.

Possibly the two most impressive articles in Dr. Bennett's book are those by the editor himself and by Paul Ramsey. (Many of the ideas of the latter, of course, have already been made familiar to us in his recent and noteworthy book, *War and the Christian Conscience*.) These two articles ad-

dress themselves directly to the problem of the extent to which modern nuclear war can be morally engaged in. The approach of both writers is philosophical and deductive, rather than military-technical and empirical, but even from this standpoint they pose some questions, and some suggested answers, which cannot be ignored by any American who is motivated not only by love of country but by concern for moral principle. Dr. Bennett and Dr. Ramsey recognize that the free world faces a deadly threat in Soviet Communism, and yet they demand that in Christian justice some differentiation in U.S. strategy be made regarding both the character of the threat and the varying degrees of "guilt" of different elements of the enemy population. Dr. Bennett, in fact, in the book's most provocative chapter makes the flat statement: "We must not deceive ourselves into believing that we could ever justify the use of megaton bombs for massive attacks on the centers of population of another country no matter what the provocation."

Such a statement is particularly interesting when one realizes the degree of consensus which has developed among military writers advocating "survivable deterrents," targeted frankly for cities, with limited war forces defending Western military objectives under the implicit threat of, first, limited nuclear war, and then general nuclear war. Many of the former critics of the Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation appear to be able to subscribe fully to this concept.

Yet the Eisenhower policy was at least grounded principally on "counterforce"—or the objective of attempting first to destroy the enemy's strategic forces. The advocates of the new form of deterrence, on the other hand, seem to conclude that, since counterforce may be impractical, pure population destruction must be threatened—with the justification that, of course, "we will, never have to put it into effect." But

the threat, and the capability, must be real or they are worth nothing. The American Christian now faces the problem of squaring military strategy with Dr. Bennett's conclusions.

A similar problem exists for the Sword and Shield strategy in NATO and for the entire question of fighting a nuclear war, however limited or tactical, in Europe. While Dr. Bennett does not specifically develop these points, any attempt to reconcile current nuclear weapons capabilities and the NATO posture in Europe with the moral imperatives as Dr. Bennett has enunciated them will undoubtedly entail some agonizing problems for the Christian conscience.

Still, one cannot help but wonder how many Christian consciences today are truly concerned with the substance of Christianity. Problems of "social significance," of form, of organization, of authority, of inter-group relationships, appear increasingly to dominate the lives even of religious men in modern society, with deadly effect upon the world of the spirit. In fact, it is somewhat frightening to observe how in both the Soviet Union and in the United States social goals appear increasingly oriented toward the standards of an elite of technicians — technicians whose achievements are based largely on education, "contacts," and effectiveness in group situations. Meanwhile, the earlier social criteria of family, inherited wealth, and individual intellectual creativity slip slowly into the mounting discard.

The deeply interior problem of making "nuclear weapons and the conflict of conscience" meaningful to members of "other-directed" societies, who tend to look for guidance not from conscience but from group acceptance, will constitute a major task for modern Christianity. Dr. Bennett's book is an important step in furthering one aspect of that task.