

the level of arms, while at the same time doing everything possible to build up the UN Police Force so that it might gradually replace the reduced national arms.

These steps closely resemble the five points proclaimed last year by twelve Bishops and leading Churchmen (some of them pacifists) as minimum first steps on which they could all agree, without prejudice to their ultimate positions.

Could such first steps form a rallying point—at least as a basis for discussion—for the less extreme unilateralists and massive retaliators? Could they begin to bridge the gap of disunity which at present splits the country, the Church and the Western world in two?

In making up our minds on this matter we must ensure that we do not put too much emphasis on feeling, rather than doing, good—that we do not concentrate more on salving our consciences than solving the problem.

We must ensure, too, that we really do consider the moral, as well as the strategic and political, aspects of the problem, and do not pursue defense and disarmament as two separate exercises.

At all events we must all urgently study, discuss and pray over these matters, keeping our minds open to each other's views, and to God's will. Time is not on our side. And it only requires good men and women to do nothing, for the powers of evil to prevail.

other voices

FOREIGN AID: PRINCIPLE AND POLICY

Report, *a new journal which strives to present "the news of the month in perspective," devoted one large section of its November issue to problems of foreign aid. One of the problems it grappled with was that of relating decisions of policy to principles of morality. What follows is an excerpt from that presentation.*

Why do men disagree on such matters as foreign aid? Is their disagreement legitimate? What are the bases of disagreement of this kind?

The present debates on foreign aid and international relations have readily brought to the surface questions of morality and policy, often with a great deal of confusion. . . .

The advocates of each policy find moral grounds for their distinct positions; but this does not mean that each can claim absolute and exclusive morality for himself. The morality in one position does not automatically make the opposite position immoral. They are debating practical policy within a moral framework; they are not debating the relative validity of different moral principles. Men of principle have freedom in determining their practical policies, not because they are free to pick and choose their moral

standards, but because they must act responsibly according to these standards.

When a policy is formulated within the moral framework it remains moral regardless of alternatives, so long as it stays by those standards and does not go against some distinct moral principle. The American policy of giving aid to Yugoslavia, for instance, was originated to exploit the differences that arose between that country and the Soviet Union. It was done with the full knowledge that Tito is a Communist, but it was nevertheless felt that the division in the Communist camp could have a hobbling effect on Russian aggression. The aim was not the quixotic one of trying to turn a Communist into a friend, but rather to seize upon a weakness in the heretofore united Communist bloc. In the recent visit of Khrushchev to Yugoslavia we have had a reminder that the effort to woo Tito away from the Soviet Union has in fact failed. But success or failure in a policy is not the way to judge its morality. Furthermore, it appears that the renewed ties between Belgrade and Moscow go hand in hand with the policy battle between Soviet Russia and Red China, and that the original small division between Tito's communism and that of the

Soviet Union has developed into the more significant one between Moscow and Peking.

It may well be that this U.S. policy reflects an inadequate grasp of the real threat of communism. As a policy it may well have its risks and distasteful aspects. But the point here is that if this is so, then it is to be criticized as misguided, quixotic, fruitless, but not as immoral.

Does this mean then that once a policy is decided upon according to some general moral principle it is henceforth saved from becoming immoral? Not at all. It can indeed become immoral if in carrying out that policy a nation or group is led into specifically immoral positions. Certainly aiding a Communist nation is a type of policy which involves this kind of risk. But any policy is capable of being vitiated. A clear example is to be found in the case of using foreign aid as an instrument for spreading the practice of birth control. Here a good policy would be turned into an evil one by being given an explicitly immoral direction.

In large numbers of cases, when men disagree on what policies to follow, their differences are political or practical. They have to do with the means of carrying out objectives which are agreed upon, or they have to do with distinct objectives within a generally accepted moral framework.

Even when only one principle is involved, there is still possibility for distinct approaches and mu-

tually exclusive solutions to practical problems. All may readily agree that a worker deserves a fair wage. But it may be difficult to get agreement on what that wage should be in a specific instance. And even if agreement is reached on the amount of the wage, it could happen that there was disagreement on the methods used to arrive at a solution. It frequently happens, then, that the choice between one means and another is morally neutral. In most instances there is more than one legitimate way to reach a legitimate goal.

Differences of this kind arise because individual men find themselves in very distinct circumstances. It is a myth to think that if all men were morally perfect, and all moral principles perfectly well known and applied, there would be no disagreement. Even when they are viewing the same circumstances, different men bring to bear a variety of experience, education and talent, distinctive outlooks and approaches, differing appraisals of the practical possibilities. They will necessarily weigh different aspects of the problems they face in different ways. Moral standards provide a guide and rule of action; and they demand that this action be responsible. But they do not dictate policy in specific details, even if they can draw the limits between morality and immorality in details. The area of freedom in proceeding from principle to practical programs is very large.

Individual Excellence and Public Happiness

Excellence by John W. Gardner. Colophon Books, 171 pp., \$1.35. *The Public Happiness* by August Heckscher. Atheneum, 320 pp., \$5.75.

by Michael Harrington

Since the end of World War II, a kind of genteel and middle-class radicalism has gained ground in America. It criticizes the society from the point of view of beauty, thoughtfulness, mental

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health and personal peace rather than from that of economics or legislation. In part it is a product of almost two decades of relative domestic tranquility (the obvious exception of the Negro revolution did not generally burst upon contented whites until the sixties) and a time in which the readers and writers of books were enjoying a higher standard of living than ever before.

There were, to be sure, traditional radicals who participated in this mood (Erich Fromm and Henry Miller come to mind) and

liberals (one thinks of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s 1960 policy memo for the Democratic Party). But most of the other thinkers in this tendency shared a major premise of separating economic issues, which they presumed the mixed economies of the West were solving, from the spiritual uneasiness. In a context of dealing with two books, *Excellence* by John W. Gardner and *The Public Happiness* by August Heckscher, I want to suggest that this latter assumption is one-sided and quite dangerous. Or, to