

## Religion, Peace And The Realists

*Foreign Policy in Christian Perspective* by John C. Bennett. Scribner's. 160 pages, \$3.50 \$1.25.

*Religion and Peace* edited by Homer A. Jack. Bobbs-Merrill, 137 pages, \$4.95 \$1.50.

by **Samuel H. Magill**

The publication during 1966 of two volumes on foreign policy viewed from a religious perspective deserves the serious attention of those concerned to explore the ethical dimensions of international affairs. The first, *Foreign Policy in Christian Perspective*, is by John C. Bennett, President of Union Theological Seminary. Aside from my admiration for an administrator who can continue to provoke our intellects and challenge our moral sensitivities, I am continually impressed with the lengths to which Dr. Bennett has gone to do his homework on the technical aspects of current policy. A careful student of foreign affairs over the years, he makes an impressive contribution to the literature seeking to wed serious policy analysis with profound ethical reflection.

The second volume, entitled, *Religion and Peace*, is a collection of papers from the National Inter-Religious Conference on Peace held March 15-17, 1966, in Washington, D. C. Organized by a group of clergymen (e.g., Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, Bishop John Wesley Lord, Bishop John J. Wright, Bishop Daniel J. Corrigan, et al) and attended by almost five hundred clergymen and laymen, the conference produced an official declaration and three position papers ("Living with the Changing Communist World," "China and the Conflicts in Asia," and "Intervention: Moral-

Samuel H. Magill is Dean of Dickinson College and Associate Professor of Religion.

ity and Limits") addressed to "organized religion everywhere, as well as to the general community and to the U. S. Government." I am not convinced that the general community or the U. S. government will give much heed to it, but organized religion, at least those of us committed to a continuing dialogue on foreign policy, should listen and read with care.

The intriguing thing about these two little volumes is the remarkable manner in which they seem to continue the tradition of responsible criticism of American foreign policy which began to make itself felt in this country about two decades ago. The writings of George F. Kennan, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Reinhold Niebuhr made a tremendous impact on American intellectuals in general and the foreign policy establishment in particular.

Yet some of those influenced by the pragmatism and realism of these men, many of whom are closely associated with government, have lost the critical distance of their teachers and have, all too frequently, become apologists for the policies of the current administration. Realism, as a general perspective on the behavior of men and nations, has appeared to harden into a crusading and self-righteous stance toward those parts of the world which are at odds with the United States, whether they are Communist or antagonists within the Western Alliance.

The dominant motif of the Inter-Religious Conference on Peace stresses the necessity to "press for peaceful solutions of conflicts between the United States and Communist governments which will respect the legitimate national interests of all parties." In addition, it encourages efforts to reduce tensions between the U. S. and China without endangering the "legiti-

mate interests of the United States or the security of those nations and peoples who rely on the United States." Finally, it challenges the assumptions behind the forms of intervention which the United States has used and raises "the possibility of substituting for unilateral intervention United Nations or other international action."

The tone of the documents is responsible, and there appears to exist at least lip service to considerations of national interest. The same concern and expressions of understanding of the place of national power and interest appear in Dr. Bennett's book. It is this responsible criticism from a realist perspective which provides the continuity between the post-World War II era and the era of diminishing hostility between the United States and Russia.

When one digs a bit below the surface of the Bennett book and the first position paper of the Inter-Religious Conference it is evident that one of the principal architects and theoreticians of political realism continues to exert a tremendous influence among leading churchmen and religious peace groups of the sixties. It is ironic that a decade or more ago the position espoused by Hans Morgenthau was suspect in most religious circles. Yet today, with the same principles of analysis and prescription, he is drawn to the bosom of the peace-makers. This interesting development should cause some of us to examine the religious community's assumptions more carefully and perhaps to take another, more sympathetic look, at Morgenthau's fundamental position.

Five and a half years ago, at a colloquium held in honor of Reinhold Niebuhr at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, Morgenthau was still misunderstood and regarded with sus-

picion by the liberal friends of Niebuhr. Eduard Heiman, for example, criticized both Niebuhr and Morgenthau for their pragmatic approach to politics and found their approach wanting in the new revolutionary world. Despite this criticism, both men have been more consistently aware of the structural problems in the emerging nations than have many idealistic liberals and, at the same time, more sensitive to the peculiar urgencies of revolutionary movement than have the strategists in Washington.

Morgenthau's warnings of the folly of "instant nationhood" in the late 50's and early 60's while many liberals were calling for immediate African independence parallels his opposition to current U. S. policy in Vietnam, for both are predicated on the assumption that national viability rests on a strong network of common interests and loyalties, characteristics which are clearly lacking both in Africa and South Vietnam.

Political realism is a sword that cuts two ways since it rests on assumptions about the nature and destiny of man which prevent an uncritical alliance with national messianism, on the one hand, and a naive utopianism, inspired by an optimistic view of man, on the other. It is not surprising, therefore, that our policy in Vietnam, which is a mixture of national messianism and unjustified optimism about the political viability of South Vietnam as a national state, should be criticized both by realists such as Kennan and Morgenthau and idealists from the traditional peace movements.

One of the striking similarities between Bennett's book and the Inter-Religious Conference paper cited above (though John Bennett's participation in the Conference may explain some of the agreement) is the heavy stress upon peace as a value of higher priority at this stage in the history of the world than the value of free government. For example, both

regard the great violence and destruction committed on behalf of freedom which we are witnessing in Vietnam as a greater evil than peace under some form of totalitarian regime. Said the conference paper:

"While no such Jew or Christian would consider the ideology of either totalitarianism or *laissez-faire* an adequate formulation of the responsibilities of modern government, he would allow that, in particular situations, *even inadequate forms of government may for a time be the only alternative to all-destructive civil or international violence.*" (Italics mine.)

John Bennett cites as an error of American policy the "anti-Communist axiom that still controls American policy in Asia and Latin America," namely "the assumption that the worst fate that can come to any country is a Communist regime, worse than any rightest tyranny, worse than many years of civil war and destructive disorder, worse than decades or generations of neglect of the country's social and economic problems" (pp. 98f.).



As one reflects upon the meaning of this emphasis upon peace in the thinking of some religious leaders, it becomes apparent that while as a long-term goal for foreign policy it is unsurpassed, it has serious inadequacies if not supplemented by more critical conceptual apparatus. What is obscured by Administration apologists who regard men like Kennan as misguided, on the one hand, and by those who make common cause today with realists such as Morgenthau, on the other, is that for realism the concept of national interest is the most reliable guide for national policy in all historical periods and under

all circumstances. The danger is that the peace movements may fail to take sufficient continuing note of the complexity of that reality. Combined with a sense of humility about the place of one's own nation in the cosmic scheme of things, the concept of national interest, in this writer's estimation, provides the best conceptual tool for the guidance and evaluation of general policies and particular strategies. Without a fitting sense of humility, however, a nation with sufficient power is tempted to be self-righteous in its pursuit of the national interest and may disregard both the legitimate interests of other nations and the historic expressions of those interests in particular policies such as "balance of power," "sphere of influence," and "containment."

It is this temptation against which Senator Fulbright has warned in his recent speeches on the "arrogance of power." But those who denounce U. S. policy in Asia on the grounds of legitimate interests of China and North Vietnam do not use the same yardstick in their criticism of U. S. policy in the Caribbean. And, by the same token, U. S. policy makers who act in the Caribbean and Latin America on the basis of our vital interests there should have the intellectual honesty to recognize some legitimate concern of the Chinese for the friendliness, or at the least, neutrality, of its small neighboring states.

It is heartening to see critics of our foreign policies developing their position with the aid of such men as Morgenthau, Bennett, and others, but it is to be hoped that the enduring insights of realism will not be obscured by the temptation to seek moral purity at the expense of political action which is successful. Politics is the "slow boring of hard boards," said Max Weber; the dilemmas of foreign policy cannot be easily resolved by the moralism of peace slogans nor the messianism of political crusades.

**Central American Regional Integration**

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 66 pp. 50 cents

What hope for a Latin American common market when economic integration has met with little success in the less developed world? The author of this issue of *International Conciliation* sets about identifying the factors responsible for the success of one regional association, the Central American Common Market, regarded by the Hemispheric chiefs of state at the April meeting in Punta del Este as a base for the new wider economic union.

**NATO and Europe**

André Beaufre. Knopf. 170 pp. \$3.95

"I am an old friend of yours," Gen. Beaufre writes in the preface to the American edition of this French work, reflecting an association beginning in W.W.I and continued during a period as chief of the General Staff of SHAPE and head of the French delegation to the Permanent Group of NATO in Washington. Asking U. S. readers to "trust [his] objectivity," he discusses the "essential characteristics" of NATO today and the reforms he envisions if the organization is "to lay the politico-military foundations" of European Union — a "prerequisite to union with the United States."

**Nuclear War, Deterrence and Morality**

William V. O'Brien. Newman. 120 pp. \$3.75

Dr. O'Brien, well-known for his work in international law, Christian ethics and the problems of nuclear warfare, addresses himself here "to that part of the task of 'working for peace' which is concerned with the limitation of war." He has "questioned the authority, relevance and adequacy of some of the moral principles" laid down by the Catholic Church in the area of nuclear war and deterrence and then applies Catholic teaching "to the specific problems that keep men working late" in the governmental departments and agencies.

**Neither Liberty Nor Safety**

Nathan F. Twining. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 320 pp. \$5.95

General Twining (USAF Ret.), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1957-60, takes "A Hard Look at U. S. Military Policy and Strategy" under four Presidents. His own views on national security planning, he writes, are easily summarized: "The leaders of an organized conspiracy have sworn to destroy America and the Free World by one means or another, and there is no real evidence available at this time to indicate that their objective has been changed. Therefore, we had better be prepared to fight to maintain our liberty."

*By special arrangement with the Foreign Policy Association, readers of worldview may obtain any book published in the United States (except paperbacks) from the FPA's World Affairs Book Center, at the publisher's list price. Post free for domestic orders only. Send orders with check or money order to Desk WV, World Affairs Book Center, 345 East 46th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017.*

# worldview

volume 10, no. 5 / May 1967

WORLDVIEW is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the Council on Religion and International Affairs. Subscription: \$4.00 per year.

Address: 170 East 64th Street, New York, New York 10021

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

James Finn, Editor

A. William Loos

John R. Inman

William J. Cook

Editorial Assistant, Susan Woolfson

worldview  
170 East 64th Street  
New York, N. Y. 10021

Return requested

## CONTENTS

Poets and Politics	1
<i>Editorial</i>	
In the Magazines	2
Christian Responsibility in Vietnam	4
<i>Charles West</i>	
"Wars Will Cease When. . ."	9
<i>James V. Schall</i>	
"The Nuclear Obsession"	12
<i>Correspondence</i>	
<b>BOOKS</b>	
Religion, Peace, and the Realists	14
<i>Samuel H. Magill</i>	
Current Reading	16

Opinions expressed in WORLDVIEW are those of the authors, and not necessarily of the Council on Religion and International Affairs. Copyright © 1967 Council on Religion and International Affairs.

*Readers are reminded that worldview welcomes correspondence. Letters may be specific comments on articles in recent issues or general discussion, but readers are requested to limit their letters to 500 words.*