

matically resort to deception involves war-time military operations. A part of most major battles is an effort to deceive the enemy as to where one intends to strike. Where the stakes were really high, as they were in the World War II Allied landings in Europe, elaborate exercises were conducted to deceive the Axis powers as to the likely invasion target. These efforts were sometimes successful, saved the lives of many Allied soldiers, and probably shortened the war. Deception and dishonesty were clearly involved, but if killing is permissible in war-time, is it immoral to lie in order to make less killing necessary?

Indeed, some serious students of international affairs would claim that in the above two situations the government has not only the right but the obligation to lie in view of its responsibilities to its people (and to those of some other nations) to be successful — provided its general goals are just.

A final case is that cited by Arthur Sylvester, where our government deliberately tried to deceive the Soviets as well as hide certain actions from them because it feared the danger of nuclear war would

increase if it acted otherwise. Our political leaders recognized that this involved deceiving the American people as well, but believed the stakes justified what they did.

It would be possible to construct a few other scenarios similar to these, but not very many. Moreover, they are happily not situations that arise with great regularity. Thus the most important lessons to be drawn seem to me to be practical ones: If a government is going to lie, it can rarely do so for more than a short period before charges will fill the air accusing it of deceiving the public. In such circumstances the government normally should candidly admit what it did and give the reason why. For it is continual exaggeration and distortion rather than the individual lie that is really damaging to a society. Thus if one is convinced he must lie on rare occasions — not as a matter of right but as the lesser of two evils — he may be justified in doing so in a specific situation, but he should be wary of sustained distortion and exaggeration. And if this rule is less than ideal, so is the world in which we live.

VIOLENCE AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT: THE RELEVANCE OF CAMUS

Robert Pickus

Only he who has measured the dominion of [violence] and knows how not to respect it, is capable of love and justice.

Simone Weil, "The Iliad"

We can count on injustice in human affairs; on the presence of privilege, exploitation and violence. Violence, which in its ability to turn a human being into a thing, a corpse, offers the final unalterable injustice.

But we can count, too, on men and on social movements to challenge, and by challenging to limit, this grim reality. In one time a revived religious or poli-

Mr. Pickus, who makes his first contribution to *worldview* with this article, has long been active in peace organizations. This essay will appear as the introduction to a new edition of Albert Camus' "Neither Victims Nor Executioners," to be published by the World Without War Council.

tical tradition, in another a movement of the oppressed, but in every time, men affirming dignity and brotherhood and the superiority of the human person over all the political, economic and social mechanisms which oppress him.

There is a special tragic moment in history when such men and such movements lose their bearings; when the spirit and goal that characterized them fundamentally alters; when an accurate statement of their spiritual health would be Nietzsche's: "I have forgotten why ever I began."

Something like that has happened to the anti-war movement in America.

In the shadow of Hiroshima there was, in America, a clear goal and a moral commitment to sustain it. The goal was an end to war. The moral commitment was the refusal to legitimize murder. "Not," as Camus put it, "a world in which murder no longer exists (we are not so crazy as that), but rather one in which it is no longer legitimate." We had passed, it seemed,

a time in which political abstractions could erase the person opposite us, submerge that *man* in some abstraction, and thereby open the way for mass violence. We knew, it appeared, that once we abandoned responsibility to that individual human being in the name of Freedom, Justice, or Patriotism, it was just an accident of history whether we dropped the bomb or were hit; whether we became the victim or the executioner.

We added to this moral commitment a political task: the construction of world institutions capable of containing the threat of war. In that day, the Tennessee State Legislature opposed all war and passed resolutions on World Federalism.

Today, it is not just the mainstream of American politics that has learned Dr. Strangelove's lesson of how to stop worrying and love—or at least ignore—the bomb. The peace movement itself has become one of the prime carriers of new justifications for violence.

Dominated by passionate opposition to U.S. policy in Vietnam, the present anti-war movement contains an incredible admixture of good and evil. For the first time since the period just after World War II, (with the possible exception of the campaign against nuclear tests in the early '60's), millions of Americans are questioning or challenging the use of national military power. But many are doing so in a context that will make it more, not less, difficult to build the institutions and understandings essential to end war.

At best the anti-Vietnam war movement has forced our government to limit its reliance on military power and to turn in the direction of and take some of the risks involved in achieving a negotiated settlement; at its worst, it has substituted for a genuine anti-war movement a movement to withdraw American power from world politics. While opposition to American military power can be a part of an anti-war movement, it cannot be a substitute for such a movement, for by definition an anti-war movement is concerned with the use of military power by all states and political forces.

At its best the Vietnam anti-war movement has been an impressive and heartening demonstration of moral opposition to war; at its worst it has corrupted this commitment to human brotherhood into its opposite: justifications of hatred and violence against America, replacing official justifications of violence by America.

At its best the anti-Vietnam war movement has torn to shreds a self-righteous and ignorant anti-communism that so damaged the possibilities of American leadership toward a world without war; at its worst, present currents simply replace the Communist villain with a one-eyed castigation of the American polity

and American violence. Such an approach accepts no responsibility for developing the policies that meet the threat of mass violence from sources other than America and demonstrates no appreciation for human values most hopefully expressed in our governmental tradition.

At its best the present anti-war movement has opened fully the channels of public discussion and has asserted the responsibility of the citizen to refuse to cooperate with policies he feels to be fundamentally immoral. It has exposed the half-truths and untruths of official propaganda. At its worst, the anti-war movement has simply substituted its own half-truths and untruths and has seriously threatened the basic framework of law and representative institutions that make non-violent change possible.

The currents moving in today's anti-war movement are complex. But it is clear that despite the generous and humane values that launched the profound opposition to the war in Vietnam, key leadership and many of the major themes of that opposition are now obstacles that must, themselves, be overcome if the morality and politics that justify war are to be replaced.

“... all I ask is that, in the midst of a murderous world, we agree to reflect on murder and to make a choice. After that, we can distinguish those who accept the consequences of being murderers themselves or the accomplices of murderers, and those who refuse to do so with all their force and being. Since this terrible dividing line does actually exist, it will be a gain if it be clearly marked.”

Camus

No close observer of the peace movement is any longer shocked that a target superimposed on a picture of Hubert Humphrey was featured in the newspaper for “peace” protesters at the Chicago Democratic Convention, or that Americans described in the press as “anti-war” leaders, shout “We are all Viet Cong!” at a meeting with N.L.F. representatives in Bratislava, or sign “victory!” letters to military leaders in Hanoi. One can understand why many, especially the young, taking counsel only of their own anguish over the actions of their government in Vietnam, follow such leadership.

But we must count the cost. What was set in motion by our powers of love and indignation now carries that which we set out to resist. New just war theories bulwark old rationales for violence. When

the Vietnam war ends, it will become apparent that in a world still dominated by the threat and fact of war, we have, in fact, no peace movement.

As in the peace movement, so in the civil rights movement. What rested originally on a fundamental assertion of the dignity of the human person has become transformed into its opposite by familiar justifications for abandoning such a moral commitment to the exigencies of the struggle for power. Far from challenging American society, some Black Power leaders parody it. Determined to challenge the most shameful evil in American history, they repeat it in a new form. They refuse to see the human being. There is only "whitey." "Violence is as American as cherry pie," say these contemporary exemplars of that ominous truth. Caught in the rhetoric and fact of violence, as pitiless in its demands on those that use it as it is on those that suffer under it, they take their parts in a familiar play, simply demanding changed roles.

One cannot equate the fifteen injured policemen and fifty injured demonstrators in the latest "confrontation" with the bombing and mortaring in Vietnam. The violence is not equal. But in one sense, violence in the cause movement is worse. The enormity that is governmental violence, the violence of the status quo, is the disease. When the very movements designed to challenge this status quo adapt the same values, the instruments for gaining sanity and health are themselves corrupted. There is then "no foundation, all the way down the line."

The failure to recognize the values which undergird opposition to war makes the anti-war movement vulnerable to confusion, and worse, corruption. We are living such a failure. Its consequences now blight the promise of American politics. At a time of heightened and broadly based political concern among the young, the intellectuals, the religious community, we are experiencing the growth of a military, nationalist and repressive Right, incapable, in its straightened human concern, of meeting the rising and hopeful demand for change. The movements which could challenge such developments instead help strengthen them; and the original idealism of the anti-war movement takes on a fundamentally different character. Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon are its heroes and Revolution becomes another word for war.

It is appropriate in such a time to republish *Neither Victims Nor Executioners*; appropriate too for the publisher to be an organization devoted to work for an end to war, through all the seasons of crisis and unconcern that will lead to that end — or to a nuclear holocaust.

The essay first appeared in the fall of 1946, in

Combat, the newspaper of the French Resistance which Camus helped edit during the Nazi occupation and for a short time after the war. Reprinting it now, twenty-two years later, is a political act. For in it Camus does more than eloquently state a value position. He also demonstrates a method by which agreement on values may be achieved. He appeals to intelligence. "Sincerity is not in itself," he says, "a virtue: some kinds are so confused, they are worse than lies." One has only to live in Berkeley, California, read the underground press, or watch passion and ignorance combine to turn an anti-war innocent into a draft board bomber to appreciate the importance of Camus' commitment to reason. In a time when norms of reason and intelligence are abandoned, not simply in the cause movement but in the University, such a demonstration is the first step to reconstituting the foundations of a sound anti-war politics.

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I have always resented those standard English Department texts that treat Camus as the modern who "needs to believe and cannot," whose courage lies in his refusal to sink back into older forms of belief or to give up the search for meaning. "Neither Victim Nor Executioner" is not a statement of predicament; it is a statement of faith. In it Camus addressed directly the rationale for revolutionary violence that moved in his time, and set against it understandings that armor a man against the invitation to outrage that lives at the center of most contemporary politics. Camus was not part of that strand in the pacifist tradition that counsels a withdrawal from politics in the interest of a personal purity. His was a political statement. One addressed precisely to the political tragedy that unrolls as elements in the present anti-war movement ally themselves with and are absorbed in currents committed to a politics of revolutionary violence.

The currents justifying violence have grown apace. There has been no significant challenge to such currents which drew on the root values from which the anti-war movement has grown. Now, when much of even the pacifist movement has signed up in the revolutionary battalions, Camus' statement is of extraordinary importance.

In *Neither Victims Nor Executioners*, Camus charts, with utmost simplicity, the ground on which a genuinely anti-war movement must stand. It is ground which much of the leadership of the current "peace" movement has abandoned. Until it is re-established, we can only choose among opposing armies, either frankly murderous, or claiming, with varying degrees of fraud, to be for peace.