

Policy, and it has been repeated steadily by "realists," including Ernest Lefever, ever since. That Mr. Marshall should find it necessary to belabor this principle once again in his letter is thus surprising. Who would quarrel with it? Evidently his devotion to Goethe's injunction to repeat old truths applies whether they are at issue or not.

Goethe's advice is, as usual, excellent; but it does contain certain pitfalls. The repetition of a single, limited truth unaccompanied by its counterbalancing truth or truths leads to distortion of reality. The counterbalancing old truth, that no man or nation-state is an island, that peace and freedom are morally indivisible, is what our ethically autistic age (and the present debate, apparently) must likewise and emphatically keep repeating, if civilization is to survive.

Secondly, old truths must be related to new contexts or their repetition is meaningless. The *possible limits* of foreign policy in today's world of inescapable interdependence and planetary consciousness are radically different from what they were in the days of Vattel (that other eighteenth-century notable in this debate), whose insular advice on our topic Dr. Lefever quoted with admiring approbation. The number of areas in which foreign policy, moral or immoral, does not effectively penetrate other jurisdictions has shrunk dramatically—even since 1954, for that matter. Let us, then, opt for the *moral* effect. If we do not, our "unbridled goodwill"

in attempting to recognize outmoded jurisdictions will indeed "perpetuate turmoil."

It is not a question of intentional bellicosity or of "excessive humanity" threatening a life of civilized conventions. The Gospel commandment of fraternal correction is a very civilized doctrine, rooted in concern for the other, his possible victims, and society as a whole. It is not without its specific analogy in international politics, though here some would undoubtedly reject the teaching as reform intervention, just as others, after twenty centuries, still misconceive its fulfillment between persons as a kind of unjust coercion—even when it is perfectly logical, desirable, and feasible.

Perhaps the question is rather one of two basic attitudes toward that central issue of our time: *community*; of who had the *better* insight into the nature of social life—the old New England farmer who blindly repeated the adage that "good fences make good neighbors," or his countryman, the poet, who finally realized that "something there is that doesn't love a wall."

Actually, the walls have already crumbled. Their individual stones, Vattelian building blocks of absolute sovereignties and exclusive jurisdictions, lie strewn about the field of world politics like the ruins of an ancient temple to a jealous god: the morally inverted nation-state. We can let them lie there as stumbling blocks to mankind's longed-for unity, or we can join them together with the mortar of moral solidarity and use them to build bridges.

John Alanson Lucal, S. J.

Of Power and Its Defense

books

Militarism, U.S.A., by Col. James A. Donovan. Scribner's. \$6.95. 265 pp.

by Guy C. Davis

When General David M. Shoup, "in collaboration with" Colonel Donovan, published an article in the April, 1969 issue of *The Atlantic*, detailing not only their

Guy Davis, a CRIA staff member, is at work on a book which examines the changing relationships between the individual and social institutions.

joint opposition to the Vietnam war but also their severe criticism of the defense policies then being pursued by the U.S. Government, many in the peace movement and on the political left in general were heartened and elated. Excerpts from the *Atlantic* article blossomed forth in left-liberal publications and mushroomed forth in the underground press. Quotes from Donovan and Shoup peppered the speeches of peace movement spokesmen in rallies across the country.

Now Colonel Donovan has written a book, an "expansion"

of the *Atlantic* essay, with a foreword by General Shoup. While most of the sting of their highly authoritative and perceptive criticism remains, a careful reading of the text offers little in the way of substantial solace for adherents of the peace movement or for many of those whose political habitat is very far left of center:

Disarmament. "Yet to contemplate hasty and drastic reductions in U.S. armed power is neither wise nor feasible in the foreseeable future. The realities of power in the nuclear age may be

unattractive, costly and dangerous—but they remain realities” (p. 235).

Military-Industrial Complex. “This so-called complex of military and industry is not an evil conspiracy of power-hungry men determined to dominate the nation. Nor is it a monolithic organization which seeks wars to justify its existence” (p. 47).

Patriotism. “Patriotism in its essence is simply devotion to one’s country . . . it is service and sacrifice for country in combat and in peaceful duties” (p. 215).

And so on. Hardly a hotbed of radical leftist ideology.

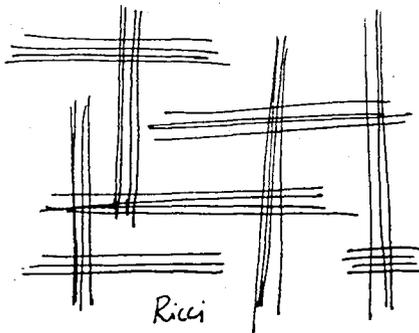
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But at the same time, Colonel Donovan’s message can only bring dismay and alarm to all Americans, for he reveals that the taxpayer (all of us) who, for a quarter of a century has paid through the nose for the defense of his country and for his belief in democracy, has not been getting his money’s worth. Our military machine is self-indulgently wallowing in a surfeit of government funds, uncritically bestowed by Congress in an excess of permissiveness. This has not only resulted in monumental waste but has also produced vast military inefficiency, lack of ingenuity, and dangerous over-dependence upon non-military consultants and advisors.

Colonel Donovan also raises the thorny question of foreign policy aims. While this is—and should be—a matter of continuing national debate, the author is clearly out of his field of expertise here and has little to offer which is new or incisive. Among other things, for example, Donovan repeats (at unnecessary length) the weary thesis that the U.S. has little or nothing to fear from communism, now that the movement has become “polycentric.”

This line of thinking conveniently overlooks ample historical evidence that joint means to a

common end do not necessarily demand firm *ideological* unity. Thus, despite disagreement over exporting revolution to the rest of Latin America, Cuban and Russian Communists had no difficulty in cooperating to counter American military power by installing missiles in Cuba. In the same crisis, de Gaulle, despite anti-American attitudes and policies, did not hesitate to declare unqualified support for the actions undertaken by the Kennedy Administration. Similarly, the witness of history reveals that in the two eras in which it was at its most fragmented—the Middle Ages and the highly nationalistic nineteenth century—Western civilization was also at its most effective in forcing its will upon the rest of the world through, respectively, the Crusades and colonialist expansion.



It is very popular in America today to speak of personal alienation. But this reviewer wonders if this trend might not be in part an unconscious reflection of America’s enforced alienation as a country. The position of the world’s leading power has always been a lonely and perplexing one. The problem of defining the true limits of the first nation’s legitimate interests eluded the British

throughout the nineteenth century as well as the French and Spanish in their stints as top dog. And the problem can all too readily be traced back to the beginnings of recorded history. America’s dilemma in this regard is intensified by our isolated, introspective, puritanical past, which but poorly prepared us for our present position. It is further complicated by the highly technological nature of modern industrial society, which automatically reinforces the position of the pre-eminent nation and widens the gulf between it and all of the less powerful countries.

The United States is not only by far the richest and most powerful nation in the world today—de Gaulle was quite correct in contending that the USSR cannot serve as an effective counterweight to U.S. power—but also may well be the richest and most powerful nation the world will ever know. This awesome but melancholy fact does not make for the neat and easy foreign policy aims and decisions the extreme Left and far Right are both so ready to offer.

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Nevertheless, the authority, sincerity and concern of Colonel Donovan, as well as that of General Shoup, after a lifetime of distinguished and dedicated service to the nation, cannot be faulted. Every thoughtful citizen has the obligation to heed and to ponder this disturbing analysis of how our wealth and power have, paradoxically, made the defense of our society not simpler and easier but more difficult and complex; not more secure but more fraught with the possibility of fatal error.

As long as it is held, greatest power demands ethical self-examination to an intense degree, with the full knowledge that any answer can at best be only ephemeral, a fleeting respite in an implacably ongoing process, the name of which is change.