

in exploring the most farflung connections and showing us how they hook up. **WV**

**THE GREATEST POWER ON EARTH:
THE INTERNATIONAL RACE
FOR NUCLEAR SUPREMACY**
by **Ronald W. Clark**
(Harper & Row; ix+342 pp.; \$13.95)

NUCLEAR ILLUSION AND REALITY
by **Solly Zuckerman**
(Viking Press; xiv+154 pp.; \$10.95)

**CONTROLLING THE BOMB:
NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN
THE 1980s**
by **Lewis A. Dunn**
(Yale University Press; xii+209 pp.;
\$21.00/\$6.95)

Albert L. Huebner

Although the story of nuclear power has been told many times, *The Greatest Power on Earth* makes an important contribution to the record. Clark has combined earlier information with

newly available material—declassified documents and private papers—to reconstruct the interplay of science and politics that so strongly influenced today's world. The narrative provides some valuable insights into our present nuclear dilemmas.

An illuminating episode involving Niels Bohr, one of this century's greatest theoretical physicists, is representative. Bohr sought to convince both Churchill and Roosevelt that keeping the atomic bomb project a complete secret from Stalin was certain to poison relations with Russia and endanger the prospect for peace. He secured a meet-

ing with Churchill, which, instead of persuading the British leader that the scientific community could help to promote better relations with Russia, only heightened Churchill's apprehensions. Bohr later managed to see Roosevelt, even seemed to impress the president with his viewpoint and inspire his trust. But he was outmaneuvered by Churchill, who went so far as to suggest that Bohr "be confined or at any rate made to see that he is very near the edge of mortal crimes."

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nuclear project, not to mention East-West suspicions, set the stage for postwar crises. Clark documents British distrust of American security and American distrust both of British security and the emigré physicists from the Continent. Then the Americans were distressed to learn that the French team of scientists not only had taken out patents on various nuclear processes but also had come to a private agreement with the British Government—which, even at the height of the war, seemed prepared to divert energies from the war effort in order to achieve postwar preeminence in the generation of nuclear electricity. As Clark shows, none of these misgivings was entirely unjustified.

Suspicion and secrecy were codified into U.S. law in 1946 with passage of the McMahon Act, which, Clark observes, “enshrined the fallacy of America’s atomic monopoly and put an absolute ban on international co-operation, military or civilian....” With Americans lulled into complacency about nuclear weapons and the British and French convinced of the need to go it alone, prospects for genuine international control were pushed further into the future. By the time strategies did change, it was toward “mutually assured destruction,” not cooperation.

In *Nuclear Illusion and Reality*, Lord Solly Zuckerman argues convincingly that most of the huge arsenal of weapons accumulated to assure this mutual destruction is utterly useless. Only a small fraction of the weaponry already possessed by the superpowers is needed to provide “minimum deterrence,” by which Zuckerman means a nuclear force just large enough to make sure that aggression doesn’t pay. Beyond this, nuclear buildup is without any value or, worse, is counterproductive.

The weapons have no military use, their destructiveness being so great that the devastation to each side in a conflict would outweigh any conceivable reason for starting it. And Zuckerman draws upon his long experience as scientific advisor to the British Government to show that any presumed difference between “theatre” and strategic weapons is part of the nuclear illusion, since limited use is virtually certain to escalate into all-out war.

At best, the arms race contributes nothing to military strength or strategic value. At worst, new weapons, by creating ripples of uncertainty, bring fresh

threats to security. And an escalating arms race in a time of ever more expensive weapons can cripple economically, if not bankrupt, the superpowers.

Zuckerman has done a masterly job of separating much that is illusory from reality, at a time when illusions make the world more dangerous with each passing day. That being so, it may seem uncharitable to point out a flaw, but it is one that runs deep and must be faced.

In the long run, the reliance on minimal deterrence that Zuckerman advocates is itself only the illusion of safety. Nuclear deterrence, minimal or not, is a policy rooted in constant fear of attack. A society evolving in such a climate of fear is subject to psychological, social, political, and moral corrosion that eventually will threaten both domestic and international peace. Minimum deterrence is on the path away from the overkill megatonnage that today threatens life on the planet. But while it is an important step toward solution of the nuclear problem, it is not the solution itself.

Controlling the Bomb is the exact complement of *Nuclear Illusion and Reality*. While Zuckerman is concerned about the established nuclear powers, Dunn anguishes over those who are yet to join the nuclear club. His book, a detailed outline of diplomatic steps directed at containing the nuclear genie, threads together proposals and options for slowing proliferation and checking its scope, always with the goal of minimizing the consequences of nuclearization of conflict-prone regions.

The importance of such imminent proliferation has been underscored by recent events. The conflicts in the Falkland Islands and Lebanon involved only one overtly nuclear power, England; but Israel and Argentina are close to nuclear capability, and the Middle East teems with would-be club members. The circumstances that have kept a fragile nuclear peace since 1945 are not present in these and other international hot-spots; use of nuclear weapons in any one of them could send destabilizing waves throughout the world. It would be a mistake to think that the bombs Dunn wants to see controlled are less threatening globally than those possessed by the superpowers.

Clark, Zuckerman, and Dunn focus on very different aspects of the nuclear problem, but they have one message in common: There is a great deal to be done, and the hour is late. **WV**

**A COMPASSIONATE PEACE:
A FUTURE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**
by American Friends Service
Committee

(Hill and Wang; vii+266 pp.; \$6.95 [paper])

Charles Bloomstein

In 1970 the American Friends Service Committee published *Search for Peace in the Middle East*. The present essay updates that and supports the conclusion of the earlier work: Only the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, coincident with recognition by the Palestinians and Arabs of the State of Israel, with secure borders, can bring peace to that troubled area. I tend to agree. Yet, despite many good things, this study falls so far short of its goals that I find it disappointing.

The response to the earlier study was predictable. Supporters of Israel found it biased against that country. A comparable reaction can be expected to this updated study, and with some justification. Israeli intransigence is overstressed and Palestinian rigidity understated.

The study predicts that many will also find it naive as well as biased. It is. Not because it calls for a higher morality than political “realities” permit (it does not), but because it seems convinced that a simple recounting of “facts” will change the minds and hearts of people dedicated to a cause. Would it were so.

The bulk of the study is devoted to Israel, the Palestinians, and the PLO. There are chapters, quite dispensable, on Iran and Afghanistan; and the policies of the U.S. and USSR are also treated in separate sections. This narrow focus I believe to be a serious defect, since a number of critical connections are bypassed. The style is documentary—flat and nonperjorative. But many judgments are made, some undocumented, some undocumentable. Among the latter is the curious assertion that Soviet policy in the area is devoted to securing a peaceful southern border. How the authors became privy to this baffles me. They do state that Iraq and Syria, both Soviet clients, find the Israeli-Arab war to their taste. Al Fatah is described as conservative and neutral, with a strong socialist wing. Oddly, the conservative Arab nations do not regard it so, and just what