

of world power compel American acquiescence to *razriadka* [the common Soviet word for détente].”

If Mitchell is correct, *razriadka* is the centerpiece of the Soviets’ long-term strategy for “the restructuring of international relations” featuring Moscow as the hub of the new world socialist system. In a chapter entitled “Proletarian Internationalism: The U.S.S.R. and World Revolution,” the reader is reminded, with ample quotations from the Soviet press, that support for national liberation movements still holds a position of the highest priority and, further, that the “Zaradov doctrine” appears to reserve a special place of honor for the role of revolutionary violence.

The Soviets apparently have abandoned the Marxist notion that under full communism the social division of labor, which gives rise to class differentiation, will cease to exist. The Communist party as the vanguard of the proletariat and the bureaucratic state have become mainstays of the new superpower ideology. Increasingly, Mitchell notes, Soviet theoreticians are applying to the Socialist Commonwealth the same conceptual categories they have long used to discuss ties among their own national minorities. In Brezhnev’s words: “This process of a gradual drawing together [*sblizhenie*] of socialist countries is now operating quite definitely as an objective law [*zakonomernost*].” Mitchell describes the new formulations on this subject as “a dramatic extension of the first Brezhnev Doctrine, connecting the propositions of that doctrine with the concept of proletarian internationalism and the Soviet model of the domestic integration of nationalities.”

According to the new Soviet superpower ideology, three main developments have combined to bring about a fundamental change in the world correlation of forces: the strengthening of the Soviet “base bloc,” an unparalleled level of internal stability, and a major rearmament program. Andrei Gromyko sees this change as providing the Soviet Union, for the first time in history, with the “opportunity of laying down the direction of international politics.” In the Soviet view, Moscow is now able to practice a kind of countercontainment that leaves the USSR, as Mitchell says, free “to promote the further disintegration of competing structures.”

Mitchell’s well-researched study suggests that the Soviets have restructured their ideology to conform with their present strategy for restructuring international relations. Obviously, ideology is only one weapon in the continuing “diplomatic struggle of the two worlds,” and not the most decisive one at that—although Soviet writers now place a new emphasis on “subjective” factors in international politics. Unless the author errs in considering Soviet pronouncements as policy and not mere propaganda, the obstacles to an overall accommodation between the superpowers would seem almost insuperable. One can only hope that Mitchell’s brand of unrelenting realism does not impede progress toward the achievement of Cox’s laudable goals.

#### **THE WORD REMAINS: A LIFE OF OSCAR ROMERO**

by James R. Brockman, S.J.  
(Orbis Books; 256 pp.; \$12.95 [paper])

*Holly Myers*

Oscar Romero was archbishop of San Salvador for a scant time, but it was his fate to be named to the post in the years when his country awakened to the terrible injustice embedded in its society. The history of that awakening, and its legacy of struggle, is now also the history of the Salvadoran Church. It is nowhere better embodied than in the life of the martyred archbishop who did much to cement the alliance of the Salvadoran Church and people, restoring the Church’s credibility as a force for peace and justice.

James Brockman’s book is fascinating as biography, particularly as it traces the development of Romero’s thought during his last tumultuous years, and also as a document of the Salvadoran struggle for liberation. One is made aware of the fierce simplicity of the choices open to the nation as well as how difficult are the practical applications of those moral choices—how to work toward justice in a monstrously repressive society.

Romero was not greeted with enthusiasm by the majority of priests and religious in El Salvador when he was installed as archbishop in 1977. They had favored the naming of Arturo Rivera Damas—now the acting archbishop—someone they believed would

be more responsive to the needs of the Salvadoran people. But Romero reacted swiftly to the new responsibilities placed upon him and, through close identification with recent Church teachings, soon proved himself to be a tireless servant in the cause of the dispossessed. Romero’s episcopal motto was “*sentir con la iglesia*”—to be of one mind and heart with the Church—and he took his lead directly from the teaching of Vatican II and from the two Latin American bishops’ conferences, the first in Medellin in 1968, the second in Puebla in January, 1979. His ever-deepening commitment to the Puebla ideal of the “preferential option for the poor,” strengthened by persecution and opposition as well as by tremendous popular support, came as a surprise to many; but Brockman’s work reveals that it was hardly the “conversion” his detractors claimed it to be.

Unfortunately, Romero’s own identification with the poor was not shared by the Salvadoran bishops, and his commitment to the cause of the poor engendered a back-biting disunity within the Salvadoran Church hierarchy. The effect was serious, and Brockman bids us consider whether this public split in the hierarchy emboldened assassins against clergy, citizens, and Romero himself. Of the five bishops, only Arturo Rivera supported him; the other four, along with the papal nuncio, undercut his efforts, accusing him and all the activist priests and religious in the country of “Marxist” partisanship. Dissension within the Salvadoran Church led, in turn, to troublesome relations with the Vatican. This was especially evident in Romero’s dealings with conservative Cardinal Baggio, and an apostolic visitor recommended that Romero relinquish full control of his diocese. As archbishop, Romero made several trips to Rome for consultation, as well as to present his own viewpoint; and one senses his increasing confidence over time. His second, and last, private audience with John Paul II was heartening. Romero wrote in his diary: “I felt God’s confirmation and his force for my poor ministry.”

Another important aspect of the Salvadoran crisis for Romero was the media. The country’s newspapers, television, and radio are owned by the oligarchy, who use them to distort events and manipulate the citizenry. The press continually published slanderous attacks on the Church and on

Romero, frequently in the form of "advertisements" by bogus groups claiming "Christian" authority, and also in regular news stories. For example, the murder of a priest and four young men when a weekend religious retreat was stormed by security forces was reported in the Salvadoran press as a defensive maneuver provoked by those inside the "guerrilla training center." To counter these lies the populace depended on the Church, principally the Church radio station, YSAX, which broadcast Romero's Sunday mass, and on the archdiocesan publication, *Orientación*. Shortly before Romero's death YSAX was bombed; in response, a Costa Rican short-wave station transmitted his mass to all Central America while people arrived with tape recorders at the cathedral itself in order to disseminate further the archbishop's message.

Brockman quotes extensively from Romero's moving homilies and his pastoral letters on the urgent issues confronting his Church. There is much to reflect on in them: "...the peace in which we believe is the product of justice. Violent conflicts...will not disappear until its last roots disappear. Therefore, while the cause of the present misery and the intransigence of the most powerful minorities, who will not tolerate the least changes, are maintained, the explosive situation will become worse"; "...the fear of Marxism keeps many from confronting the oppressive reality of liberal capitalism. Before the danger of a system clearly marked by sin, they forget to denounce and combat the reality implanted by another system equally marked by sin."

In his fourth pastoral letter Romero discussed the implementation of the "preferential option for the poor" pledged by the bishops at Puebla. To do this, he said, the Salvadoran Church needed to "know and denounce the mechanisms that generate poverty," to support the "aspirations of workers and campesinos who want to be treated like free and responsible persons," to evangelize "anew" in all Church celebrations, and, finally, to dedicate itself to the "pastoral accompaniment" of all Christians who found a vocation in legitimate political activism in popular organizations. It was Romero's active vision of community that so threatened the rulers of El Salvador.

In early February, after his last trip to Rome, Romero wrote to human

rights advocate Jimmy Carter, who had just announced U.S. military aid for the "new" government: "It would be unjust and deplorable for foreign powers to intervene and frustrate the Salvadoran people, to repress them and keep them from deciding autonomously the economic and political course that our nation should follow." He also called upon the consciences of the Christian Democrats: "As a political force of our people, it is urgent that they see from what point it is most effective to use that force on behalf of our poor—whether isolated and impotent in a government dominated by a repressive military or as one more force incorporated in a broad-based design for a popular movement." Most Americans' awareness of Salvadoran history begins at this

juncture: Napoleon Duarte joined the junta on March 16, Oscar Romero was murdered on the 24th, and until the March, 1982, elections the United States claimed the junta as its own.

Just two weeks before his death, Romero had responded to a journalist's inquiry: "A bishop will die, but the church of God, which is the people, will never perish." Father Brockman dedicates his excellent biography to the memory of Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, Jean Donovan, Maura Clarke, and "all who have given their lives for the gospel in El Salvador." The tragedy he recounts is also a triumph, and not just for Oscar Romero but for the thousands upon thousands who struggled along with him—a triumph, still incomplete, of the Salvadoran people.

**COMMON SECURITY: A PROGRAMME FOR DISARMAMENT**  
**Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament**  
**and Security Issues under the Chairmanship**  
**of Olof Palme**

(Pan Books [London and Sydney]; xxi+202 pp.; £1.95)

*William T. R. Fox*

Western strategies for security, mutual deterrence, and an American nuclear umbrella over NATO never have been wholly consistent with each other; but they are being questioned today as they have not been for many years. There are also widespread doubts about the zeal of the superpowers for slowing the arms race. A-plague-on-both-your-houses kind of pacifism in Europe, especially among the young, the Protestant, and the more northerly situated, and spreading sentiment in North America for a nuclear freeze all testify to grass roots discontent with current security arrangements. Those closer to the corridors of power on both sides of the Atlantic may be troubled too.

*Common Security*, the report of a self-styled independent commission convened and chaired by Olof Palme, then former Social Democratic prime minister of Sweden, reflects this worry. The commission's seventeen members have formulated a program to redirect the East-West arms race onto a "downward spiral." Together with the Bundy-Kennan-McNamara-Smith article in *Foreign Affairs* last spring, which calls for a fresh look at the United States commitment to undertake a nuclear first strike to defend its Western European allies,

*Common Security* may be raising to a new level public debate on how best to exorcise the threat of nuclear holocaust.

Palme commission members came from seventeen countries, including all superpowers and second-tier powers save China. These politicians and diplomats from the Communist East, capitalist West, neutral North, and non-aligned South met a dozen times over the course of eighteen months and, remarkably, produced and agreed unanimously upon a report that makes specific and significant proposals. Among the group, all of whom had had key roles in the conduct of their nation's foreign affairs, were Giorgi Arbatov, Egon Bahr, David Owen, and Cyrus Vance. That these four, as well as twelve others, could put their names on the commission's report suggests that occasionally reason triumphs over ideology. (The French member did "suspend his participation" in January, 1982, for reasons not specified in the report.)

Efforts to escape from what John Herz has taught us to call the "security dilemma"—the greater the effort at unilateral security, the greater the increase in all-around insecurity—often have seemed like efforts to square the