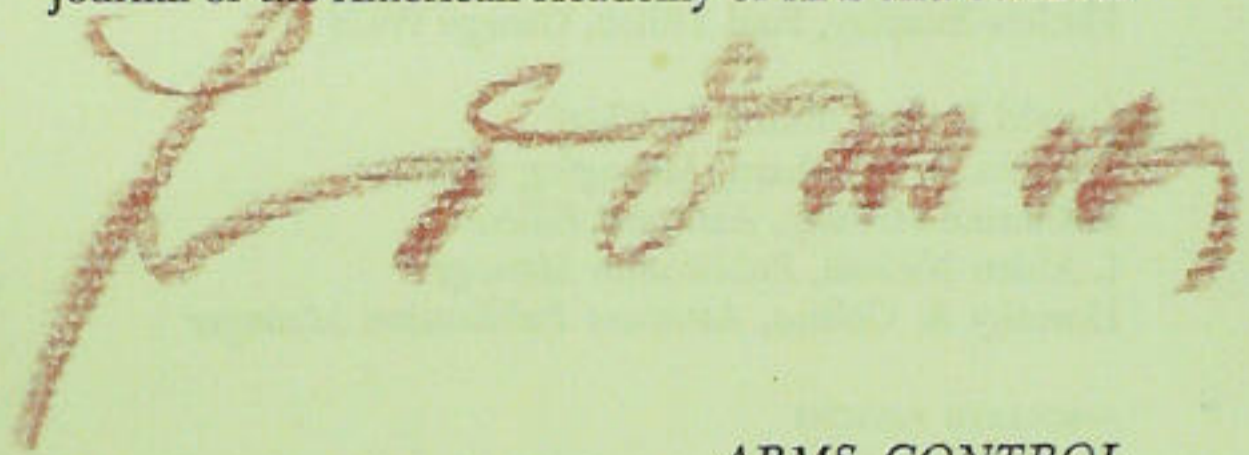


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ERICH FROMM

The Case for Unilateral Disarmament

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT that the proposal for a unilateral disarmament—in the broad sense of the unconditional dismantling of a country's military establishment—will be acceptable neither to the United States nor to the Soviet Union in the immediate future. Hence, inasmuch as this paper is concerned with *practical* suggestions for arms control, it proposes another and very limited concept of unilateral disarmament, one which has been called by Charles Osgood "*graduated unilateral action (or disengagement)*" or which might be called *unilateral initiative in taking practical steps towards disarmament*. The basic idea underlying this concept is that of a radical change of our method of negotiating multilateral disarmament. This change implies that we give up the present method of bargaining in which every concession we make is dependent on a corresponding and guaranteed concession on the part of the Russians; that, instead, we take, unilaterally, gradual steps toward disarmament in the expectation that the Russians will reciprocate and that, thus, the present deadlock in the negotiations for universal disarmament can be broken through.

In order to describe the nature of this policy of unilateral steps, I cannot improve on the following description by Osgood, who, as far as I know, was the first one to express this idea in two brilliant and profound articles.¹ "To be maximally effective," he writes, "in inducing the enemy to reciprocate, a unilateral act (1) should, in terms of *military aggression*, be clearly disadvantageous to the side making it, yet not cripplingly so; (2) should be such as to be clearly perceived by the enemy as reducing his external threat; (3) should not increase the enemy's threat to our heartland;² (4) should be such that reciprocal action by the enemy is clearly available and clearly indicated; (5) should be announced in advance and widely publi-

cized to ally, neutral and enemy countries—as regards the nature of the act, its purpose as part of a consistent policy, and the expected reciprocation; but (6) should not demand prior commitment to reciprocation by the enemy as a condition for its commission.”³

As to the specific steps which should be taken in this fashion, it would require a great deal of further thought, aided by competent specialists. But in order to give at least an idea of the concrete steps this policy would envisage, I want to mention the following (some of them in agreement with Osgood): sharing of scientific information; stopping of atomic tests; troop reductions; evacuation of one or more military bases; discontinuation of German rearmament; etc. The expectation is that the Russians are as willing as we are to avoid war, hence that they will begin to reciprocate and that once the course of mutual suspicion has been reversed, bigger steps can be taken which may lead to complete bilateral disarmament. Furthermore, I believe that disarmament negotiations should be paralleled by *political* negotiations, which aim essentially at mutual noninterference on the basis of the recognition of the *status quo*. Here, too (and again in essential agreement with Osgood’s position), unilateral steps such as the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line and admission of China to the United Nations would be taken in the expectation of reciprocation by the Russians (i.e., curbing of Chinese aggression, noninterference in the Middle and Far East).

What are the premises underlying the proposition for unilateral steps towards disarmament? (At this point I shall mention only some fundamental ones, while others will be discussed in the second part of this paper which presents the argument for total unilateral disarmament.) They are briefly: (1) that, as indicated before, the present method of negotiations does not seem to lead to the goal of bilateral disarmament because of the deeply ingrained mutual suspicions and fears; (2) that without achieving *complete* disarmament, the armament race will continue and lead to the destruction of our civilization as well as that of the Russians or, even without the outbreak of a war, will slowly undermine and eventually destroy the values in defense of which we are risking our physical existence; (3) that while unilateral steps constitute a definite risk (and must do so by the very nature of the idea), the risk at every step is not a crippling one and is infinitely smaller than the danger we run by the continuation of the arms race.

Even though the broader concept of complete—rather than graduated—unilateral disarmament is, as stated before, not a practical possibility in the near future, as far as the United States and the

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USSR are concerned, I believe it worthwhile to present the arguments for this position, not primarily because the editor of this journal asked me to present this position nor even because I share it with a small minority of others who believe that the risks in the continuation of the armament race are far greater than the very serious risks of unilateral disarmament. While both reasons might not be sufficient to justify the following presentation, I do believe that it is not only justified but important for another reason: thinking through the arguments for a radical—even though practically unacceptable position—contributes to breaking through the thought barrier which prevents us now from getting out of the dangerous circle of seeking peace by means of threat and counterthreat. Taking seriously the reasoning which supports the unpopular position of complete unilateral disarmament can open up new approaches and viewpoints which are important even if our practical aim is that of graduated unilateral action or even only that of negotiated bilateral disarmament. I believe that the difficulty of arriving at complete disarmament lies to a large extent in the frozen stereotypes of feelings and thought habits on both sides and that any attempt at unfreezing these patterns and of rethinking the whole problem can be of importance in finding a way out of the present dangerous impasse.

The proposal for complete unilateral disarmament has been advocated from a religious, moral or pacifist position by such men as Victor Gollancz, Lewis Mumford, and some Quakers. It has also been supported by men like Bertrand Russell, Stephen King-Hall, and C. W. Mills, who are not opposed to the use of force under all or any circumstances, yet who are uncompromisingly opposed both to thermonuclear war and to all and any preparation for it. This writer finds himself somewhat between the position of the strict pacifists and men like Bertrand Russell and Stephen King-Hall.⁴

The difference between these two groups, however, is not as fundamental as it may seem. They are united by their critical attitude toward the irrational aspects of international politics and by their deep reverence for life. They share the conviction of the oneness of the human race and faith in the spiritual and intellectual potentialities of man. They follow the dictates of their conscience in refusing to have any "part in making millions of women and children and noncombatants hostages for the behavior of their own governments."⁵ Whether they think in theistic terms or in those of non-theistic humanism (in the sense of the philosophic continuum from Stoic to eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy), they all are rooted in the same spiritual tradition and are unwilling to compro-

mise with its principles. They are united by their uncompromising opposition to any kind of idolatry, including the idolatry of the state. While their opposition to the Soviet system is rooted precisely in this attitude against idolatry, they are critical of idolatry whenever it appears in the Western world whether it is in the name of God or of democracy.

While there is no proponent of unilateral disarmament who does not believe that the individual must be willing to give his life for the sake of his supreme values, if such an ultimate necessity arises, they are all equally convinced that to risk the life of the human race, or even the results of its best efforts in the last five thousand years, is immoral and irresponsible. As warfare becomes at once more senseless and more devastating, the convergence between religious pacifist, humanist, and pragmatic opponents to nuclear armament grows.

From the standpoint of the proponents of unilateral disarmament, to continue the armament race is catastrophic, *whether the deterrent works or not*. In the first place, they have little faith that the deterrent will prevent the outbreak of a thermonuclear war.⁶ They believe that the results of a thermonuclear war would be such that in the very "best" case they completely belie the idea that we ought to fight such a war in order to save our democratic way of life. There is no need to enter the guessing game as to whether one-third or two-thirds of the population of the two opponents and what proportion of the neutral world (depending on how the wind blows) will be destroyed. This is a guessing game that verges on madness; for to consider the possibility of the destruction of 30%, 60%, or 90% of one's own and the enemy's population as an acceptable (although, of course, most undesirable) result of one's policy is indeed approaching pathology. The increasing split between intellect and affect, which is so characteristic of our Western development in the last centuries, has reached its dangerous, schizoid peak in the calm and allegedly rational way in which we can discuss possible world destruction as a result of our own action. It does not take much imagination to visualize that sudden destruction and the threat of slow death to a large part of the American population, or the Russian population, or large parts of the world, will create such a panic, fury, and despair as could only be compared with the mass psychosis resulting from the Black Death in the Middle Ages. The traumatic effects of such a catastrophe would lead to a new form of primitive barbarism, to the resurgence of the most archaic elements, which are still potentialities in every man and of which we have had ample evidence in the terror systems of Hitler and Stalin. It would sound

most unlikely to many students of human nature and psychopathology that human beings could cherish freedom, respect for life or love after having witnessed and participated in the unlimited cruelty of man against man which thermonuclear war would mean. It is a psychological fact that acts of brutality have a brutalizing effect on the participants and lead to more brutality.

But What if the Deterrent Works?

What is the likely future of the social character of man in a bilateral or multilateral armed world, where, no matter how complex the problems or how full the satisfactions of any particular society, the biggest and most pervasive reality in any man's life is the poised missile, the humming data processor connected to it, the waiting radiation counters and seismographs, the over-all technocratic perfection (overlying the nagging but impotent fear of its imperfection) of the mechanism of holocaust? To live for any length of time under the constant threat of destruction creates certain psychological effects in most human beings—fright, hostility, callousness, a hardening of the heart, and a resulting indifference to all the values we cherish. Such conditions will transform us into barbarians—though barbarians equipped with the most complicated machines. If we are serious in claiming that our aim is to preserve freedom (that is, to prevent the subordination of the individual under an all-powerful state), we must admit that this freedom will be lost, whether the deterrent works or does not work.

Aside from these psychological facts, the continuation of the arms race constitutes a particular threat to Western culture. In the process of conquering nature, producing and consuming have become Western man's main preoccupation—the goal of his life. We have transformed means into ends. We manufacture machines which are like men, and we produce men who are like machines. In his work, the individual is managed as a part of a production team. During his leisure time, he is manipulated as a consumer who likes what he is told to like and yet has the illusion that he follows his own taste. In centering his life around the production of things, man himself is in danger of becoming a thing, worshiping the idols of the production machine and the state while he is under the illusion of worshiping God. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind," as Emerson has put it. Circumstances which we created have consolidated themselves into powers which rule over us. The technical and bureaucratic system we have built tells us what to do, it decides for us.

We may not be in danger of becoming slaves, but we are in danger of becoming robots, and the human values of our tradition are threatened—integrity, individuality, responsibility, reason, and love. Talking about these values more and more becomes an empty ritual.

This trend toward a world of impotent men directed by virile machines (both in the United States and in the Soviet Union)—brought about by technological and demographic factors, and by the increasing centralization and bureaucracy in big corporations and government—will reach the point of no return if we continue the arms race. Dangerous as our present situation is, we still have a chance to put man back into the saddle, to effect a renaissance of the spiritual values of the great humanistic tradition. Unless such a renaissance occurs, unless we can achieve a radical revitalization of the spirit on which our culture is founded, we shall lose the vitality necessary for survival and we shall decay, just as many other great powers have decayed in history. The real threat to our existence is not Communist ideology, it is not even the Communist military power—it is the hollowness of our beliefs, the fact that freedom, individuality, and faith have become empty formulas, that God has become an idol, that our vitality is sapped because we have no vision except that of having more of the same. It seems that a great deal of the hatred of Communism is, in the last analysis, based on a deep disbelief in the spiritual values of democracy. Hence, instead of experiencing love of what we are *for*, we experience hate of what we are *against*. If we continue to live in fear of extinction and to plan mass destruction of others, the last chance for a revival of our humanist-spiritual tradition will be lost.

Benefits and Dangers of Unilateral Disarmament

If these are the dangers of the policy of the deterrent, what do the proponents of unilateral disarmament consider to be the benefits—and the dangers—of their policy?

The most likely result of unilateral disarmament—whether it be undertaken by the United States or by the Soviet Union—is that it would prevent war. The main reason which could impel either the Soviet Union or the United States to atomic war is the constant fear of being attacked and pulverized by the opponent. This position is succinctly expressed by Herman Kahn, who is in no way a proponent of unilateral disarmament. Kahn states that, “aside from the ideological differences and the problem of security itself, there does not seem to be any objective quarrel between the United States and

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Russia that justifies the risks and costs that we subject each other to. The big thing that the Soviet Union and the United States have to fear from each other is fear itself."⁸ If, indeed, the main cause of war lies in mutual fear, then the disarmament of either the Soviet Union or the United States would most likely do away with this major cause and, thus, with the probability of war.

But are there motives other than fear which could prompt the Soviet Union to try for world conquest? One such motive could be economic interest in expansion, which was a basic motivation for the initiation of war in the nineteenth century and also for the first two World Wars. Exactly here we see the difference between the nature of the conflicts in 1914 or 1939 and the present situation. In World War I, Germany threatened British markets and the French sources of coal and iron; in 1939, Hitler needed territorial conquest for the economic expansion he wanted. Today, neither the Soviet Union nor the United States has overriding economic interests in the conquest of markets and supplies, since a 2 or 3 percent rise in the level of national productivity would bring a greater advantage than would any military conquest, and, moreover, each has the capital, raw material, supplies, and population for a constant increase in its general productivity.⁹

The more serious possible motive is found in the fear, widely held in the United States, that the Soviet Union is out to conquer the world for Communism and that, if the United States disarmed, Russia would be all the more eager to achieve her wish for world domination. This idea of Russian intentions is based on an erroneous appreciation of the nature of the present-day Soviet Union. It is true that under Lenin and Trotzky the Russian Revolution was aimed at conquering the capitalistic world (or at least, Europe) for Communism, partly because the Communist leaders were convinced that there was no possibility of success for Communist Russia unless the highly industrialized states of Europe (or at least Germany) joined their system, and partly because they were prompted by the belief that the victory of the Communist revolution in the world would bring about the fulfillment of their secular-messianic hopes.

The failure of these hopes and the ensuing victory of Stalin brought about a complete change in the nature of Soviet Communism. The annihilation of almost all the old Bolsheviki was only a symbolic act for the destruction of the old revolutionary idea. Stalin's slogan of "socialism in one country" covered one simple aim—the rapid industrialization of Russia, which the Czarist system had not accomplished. Russia repeated the same process of accumulating

capital which Western capitalism had gone through in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The essential difference is that, while in these centuries in the West the sanctions were purely economic, the Stalinist system now developed political sanctions of direct terror; in addition, it employed socialist ideology to sugar-coat the exploitation of the masses. The Stalinist system was neither a socialist nor a revolutionary system, but a state-capitalism based on ruthless methods of planning and economic centralization.

The period of Khrushchevism is characterized by the fact that capital accumulation has succeeded to a point where the population can enjoy a great deal more consumption and is less forced to make sacrifices; as a result, the political terror can be greatly reduced.

But Khrushchevism has by no means changed the basic character of Soviet society in one essential respect: it is not a revolutionary nor a socialist regime, but one of the most conservative, class-ridden regimes anywhere in the Western world, humanly coercive, economically effective. While the aim of democratic socialism was the emancipation of man, the overcoming of his alienation, and the eventual abolition of the state, the "socialist" slogans used in Soviet Russia reflect empty ideologies, and the social reality is the very opposite of true socialism. The ruling class of the Soviet Union is no more revolutionary than the Renaissance popes were followers of the teachings of Christ. To try to explain Khrushchev by quoting Marx, Lenin, or Trotzky shows an utter failure to understand the historical development which has taken place in the Soviet Union and an incapacity to appreciate the difference between facts and ideologies. It should be added that our attitude is the best propaganda service the Russians could wish for. Against the facts, they try to convince the workers of Western Europe and the peasants in Asia that they represent the ideas of socialism, of a classless society, etc. The Western attitude, of falling for this propaganda, does exactly what the Russians want: to confirm these claims. (Unfortunately very few people except democratic socialists have sufficient knowledge of the difference between socialism and its distorted and corrupt form which calls itself Soviet socialism.)

The role of Russia is still more emphasized by the fact that Russia feels threatened by a potentially expansionist China. Russia one day might be in the same position with regard to China as we believe we are in relation to Russia. If the threat to Russia from the United States were to disappear, Russia could devote her energy to coping with the threat from China, unless by universal disarmament this threat would cease to exist.

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The above-mentioned considerations indicate that the dangers which might arise if the Soviet Union were not to give up its armaments are more remote than they seem to many. Would the Soviet Union use her military superiority to try to occupy the United States or Western Europe? Aside from the fact that it would be exceedingly difficult, to say the least, for the Soviet Union's agents to run the economic and political machines of the United States or Western Europe, and aside from the fact that there is no vital need for Russia to conquer these territories, it would be most inconvenient to try to do so—and for a reason which is generally not sufficiently appreciated. Even the pro-Communist workers in the West have no idea of the degree of coercion to which they would have to submit under a Soviet system. They, as well as non-Communist workers, would oppose the new authorities, who would be forced to use tanks and machine guns against the protesting workers. This would encourage revolutionary tendencies in the satellite states, or even within the Soviet Union, and be most undesirable to the Soviet rulers; it would especially endanger Khrushchev's policy of liberalization, and hence his whole political position.

Eventually the Soviet Union might try to exploit its military superiority for the penetration of Asia and Africa. This is possible, but, with our present policy of the deterrent, it is doubtful whether the United States would really be willing to start a thermonuclear war in order to prevent the Russians from gaining certain advantages in the world outside of Europe and the Americas.

All these assumptions may be wrong. The position of the proponents of unilateral disarmament is that the chance that they are wrong is much smaller than the chance that the continuation of the arms race will finish civilization as we cherish it.

Some Psychological Considerations

One cannot discuss the question of what might happen as a result of unilateral disarmament—or, for that matter, of any mutual disarmament—without examining some psychological arguments. The most popular one is that "the Russians cannot be trusted." If "trust" is meant in a moral sense, it is unfortunately true that political leaders can rarely be trusted. The reason lies in the split between private and public morals: the state, having become an idol, justifies any immorality if committed in its interest, while the very same political leaders would not commit the same acts if they were acting in behalf of their own private interests. However, there is another meaning to "trust

in people," a meaning which is much more relevant to the problem of politics: the trust that they are sane and rational beings, and that they will act accordingly. If I deal with an opponent in whose sanity I trust, I can appreciate his motivations and to some extent predict them, because there are certain rules and aims, like that of survival or that of commensurateness between aims and means, which are common to all sane people. Hitler could not be trusted because he was lacking in sanity, and this very lack destroyed both him and his regime. It seems quite clear that the Russian leaders of today are sane and rational people; therefore, it is important not only to know what they are capable of, but also to predict what they might be motivated to do.¹⁰

This question of the leaders' and the people's sanity leads to another consideration which affects us as much as it does the Russians. In the current discussion on armament control, many arguments are based on the question of what is *possible*, rather than on what is *probable*. The difference between these two modes of thinking is precisely the difference between *paranoid* and *sane* thinking. The paranoiac's unshakable conviction in the validity of his delusion rests upon the fact that it is logically possible, and, so, unassailable. It is logically possible that his wife, children, and colleagues hate him and are conspiring to kill him. The patient cannot be convinced that his delusion is *impossible*; he can only be told that it is exceedingly *unlikely*. While the latter position requires an examination and evaluation of the facts and also a certain amount of faith in life, the paranoid position can satisfy itself with the possibility alone. I submit that our political thinking suffers from such paranoid trends. We should be concerned, not with the possibilities, but rather with the probabilities. This is the only sane and realistic way of conducting the affairs of national as well as of individual life.

Again on the psychological plane, there are certain misunderstandings of the radical disarmament position which occur in many of the discussions. First of all, the position of unilateral disarmament has been understood as one of submission and resignation. On the contrary, the pacifists as well as the humanist pragmatists believe that unilateral disarmament is possible only as an expression of a deep spiritual and moral change within ourselves: it is an act of courage and resistance—not one of cowardice or surrender. Forms of resistance differ in accordance with the respective viewpoints. On the other hand, Gandhists and men like King-Hall advocate nonviolent resistance, which undoubtedly requires the maximum of courage and faith; they refer to the example of Indian resistance against

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Britain or Norwegian resistance against the Nazis. This point of view is succinctly expressed in *Speak Truth to Power* (see reference 4):

Thus, we dissociate ourselves from the basically selfish attitude that has been mis-called pacifism, but that might be more accurately described as a kind of irresponsible antimilitarism. We dissociate ourselves also from utopianism. Though the choice of nonviolence involves a radical change in men, it does not require perfection. . . . We have tried to make it clear that readiness to accept suffering—rather than inflict it on others—is the essence of the nonviolent life, and that we must be prepared if called upon to pay the ultimate price. Obviously, if men are willing to spend billions of treasure and countless lives in war, they cannot dismiss the case for nonviolence by saying that in a nonviolent struggle people might be killed! It is equally clear that where commitment and the readiness to sacrifice are lacking, nonviolent resistance cannot be effective. On the contrary, it demands greater discipline, more arduous training, and more courage than its violent counterpart.¹¹

Some think of armed resistance, of men and women defending their lives and their freedom with rifles, pistols, or knives. It is not unrealistic to think that both forms of resistance, nonviolent or violent, might deter an aggressor from attacking. At least, it is more realistic than to think that the use of thermonuclear weapons could lead to a "victory for democracy."

The proponents of "security by armament" sometimes accuse us of having an unrealistic, flatly optimistic picture of the nature of man. They remind us that this "perverse human being has a dark, illogical, irrational side."¹² They even go so far as to say that "the paradox of nuclear deterrence is a variant of the fundamental Christian paradox. In order to *live*, we must express our willingness to kill and to die."¹³ Apart from this crude falsification of Christian teaching, we are by no means oblivious of the potential evil within man and of the tragic aspect of life. Indeed, there are situations in which man must be willing to die in order to live. In the sacrifices necessary for violent or nonviolent resistance, I can see an expression of the acceptance of tragedy and sacrifice. But, there is no tragedy or sacrifice in irresponsibility and carelessness: there is no meaning or dignity in the idea of the destruction of mankind and of civilization. Man has in himself a potential for evil; his whole existence is beset by dichotomies rooted in the very conditions of his existence. But these truly tragic aspects must not be confused with the results of stupidity and lack of imagination, with the willingness to stake the future of mankind on a gamble.

Finally, to take up one last criticism, directed against the position of unilateral disarmament: that it is "soft" on Communism. Our position is precisely based on the negation of the Soviet principle of the omnipotence of the state. Just because the spokesmen for unilateral disarmament are drastically opposed to the supremacy of the state, they do not want to grant the state the ever-increasing power which is unavoidable in the arms race, and they deny the right of the state to make decisions which can lead to the destruction of a great part of humanity and can doom future generations. If the basic conflict between the Soviet system and the democratic world is the question of the defense of the individual against the encroachment of an omnipotent state, then, indeed, the position for unilateral disarmament is the one which is most radically opposed to the Soviet principle.

After having discussed the case for unilateral disarmament (in the broad sense), I want to return to the practical proposition of unilateral steps toward disarmament. I do not deny that there are risks involved in this limited form of unilateral action but considering the fact that the present method of negotiations has produced no results and that the chances that they will in the future are rather slim, considering furthermore the grave risk involved in the continuation of the arms race, I believe that it is practically and morally justified to take this risk. At present we are caught in a position with little chance for survival, unless we want to take refuge in hopes. *If we have enough shelters, if there is enough time for a warning and strategic evacuation of cities, if the "United States' active offenses and active defenses can gain control of the military situation after only a few exchanges,"*¹⁴ we might have only five, or twenty-five, or seventy million killed. However, if these conditions do not materialize, "an enemy could, by repeated strikes, reach almost any level of death and destruction he wished."¹⁵ (And, I assume, the same threat exists for the Soviet Union.) In such a situation, "when nations are poised at the last moment when an agreement appears possible to end the risk of horrifying war, unleashed by fanatics, lunatics or men of ambition,"¹⁶ it is imperative to shake off the inertia of our accustomed thinking, to seek for new approaches to the problem, and above all, to see new alternatives to the present choices that confront us.

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- 1 Charles E. Osgood's "Suggestions for Winning the Real War with Communism," "Conflict Resolution," vol. III, no. 4, December 1959, p. 131, and also "A Case for Graduated Unilateral Disarmament," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, vol. XVI, no. 4, pp. 127 ff.
- 2 This condition is in my opinion to be taken only as an optimal *desideratum*, since any weakening of one power's aggressive potential means strategically some increase in the opponent's aggressive potential.
- 3 Charles E. Osgood's "Suggestions for Winning the Real War with Communism," p. 316.
- 4 Bertrand Russell, *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959. Stephen King-Hall, *Defense in the Nuclear Age*. Nyack, N.Y.: Fellowship Publications, 1959. Jerome Davis and General H. B. Hester, *On the Brink*. New York: Lyle Stuart, 1959. Lewis Mumford, *The Human Way Out*. Pendell Hill Pamphlet no. 97, 1958. C. W. Mills, *The Causes of World War Three*. New York, 1959. George F. Kennan, "Foreign Policy and Christian Conscience," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1959. Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*. Nyack, N.Y.: Fellowship Publications, 1959. American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth to Power, Quaker Search for an Alternative to Balance*. 1955.
- 5 George F. Kennan, *loc. cit.* pp. 44 ff.
- 6 This premise is shared by the report of the National Planning Association of America: *1970 Without Arms Control; Implications of Modern Weapons Technology* (by NPA Special Project Committee on Security through Arms Control; Planning Pamphlet no. 104, May 1958, Washington, D.C.), which states: "Not only does the danger of war remain a possibility, but the probability totalled over time increases, becoming a certainty if sufficient time elapses without succeeding in finding alternatives." Or, E. Finley Carter, President of the Stanford Research Institute, writes: "In the search for security through the application of technology to weapons for destruction, the Soviet bloc and the Western allies have created a mortal common enemy—the threat of accidental nuclear war" (*SRI Journal*, Stanford Research Institute, Fourth Quarter, 1959, vol. 3, p. 198). Herman Kahn also concludes, "It is most unlikely that the world can live with an uncontrolled arms race lasting for several decades" (*ibid.*, p. 139). He emphasizes that it is unrealistic to believe that war has become impossible because of its extremely destructive character.

The advisor on Science and Technology of the Democratic Advisory Council of 27 December 1959 declared: "All-out nuclear war seems not only possible but probable as long as we pursue our present military policies and fail to achieve international agreements of broad scope designed to alleviate this unstable situation. The triggering of a nuclear war by mistake, by misadventure or by miscalculation is a constant danger." It must be stressed that the danger lies not only in technical errors, but equally in the blundering decision-making by political and military leaders. If one remembers the political and military blunders committed by many of the leaders in the conduct of wars of 1914 and 1939, it is not difficult to visualize that, given present-day weapons, the same type of leaders will blow the world to pieces,

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in spite of good intentions.

- 7 For a detailed analysis of modern society cf. my *The Sane Society*. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1955.
- 8 *SRI Journal*, 1959, vol. 3, p. 140.
- 9 For the very same reasons, there is a real chance for the future abolition of war, a chance which never existed in the past. In most of man's history, the improvement of his material situation required an increase in human energy (slaves), additional land for cattle raising or agriculture, or new sources of raw materials. The techniques of the present and of the future will permit an increase in material wealth by an increased industrial and—indirectly—an agricultural productivity, without the need of enslaving or robbing others. At present and in the future, war would have as its only "rationale" the irrationality of human desire for power and conquest.
- 10 Whether or not political leaders are sane is not a matter of historical accident. Any government which has set out to do the impossible—for instance, to achieve equality and justice when the requisite material conditions are lacking—will produce fanatical and irrational leaders. This was the case with Robespierre, as it was with Stalin. Or, a government which tries to reconcile the interests of the most backward social class (the lower middle class) with those of the economically progressive classes (workers and businessmen) as the Nazi government did, again will produce fanatical and irrational leaders. The Soviet Union today is on the road toward solving its economic problems successfully; hence it is not surprising that her leaders are realistic men of common sense.
- 11 *Loc. cit.* p. 52 and p. 65.
- 12 Peter B. Young, "The Renunciators," *Airpower*, the Air Force Historical Foundation, vol. VII, no. 1, p. 33.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Herman Kahn, *Report on a Study of Non-Military Defense*. Rand Corporation, 1958, p. 13.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 General de Gaulle, in a speech in April 1960.

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Eric F. Fromm

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A Socialist
Manifesto and
Program

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ERICH FROMM

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Erich Fromm

INTRODUCTION

**LET
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THIS DOCUMENT by Dr. Erich Fromm was written as a proposed program for the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. It was submitted to the Special Program Committee of the SP-SDF, a body established at the Party's 1958 national convention in Detroit, Michigan. The committee was charged with the task of re-examining traditional socialist concepts, bringing forward new ideas and proposals, and stimulating the research and discussion necessary to the adoption of a democratic socialist program for modern America. In the course of the past two years the committee met a number of times, considered papers on various political and social topics and intensively discussed the elements of a new socialist program. Its work is still in process. However, since the discussion and adoption of a new program is the responsibility of the entire membership of the SP-SDF and not that of any single committee, this paper is now being made available to all members and to interested non-members for their consideration.

In publishing this document, the Special Program Committee does not necessarily imply its full agreement with the entire statement. Actually, reactions among the members of the committee varied; some responded with enthusiastic accord while others registered a certain amount of dissent. But the entire group is agreed that this manifesto

by Dr. Fromm is a most significant and challenging document; one which constitutes the basis of further discussions and deserves the most careful study.

The publication of this document is not only an important event in itself, but also symptomizes the lively resurgence of the Socialist Party. Other noteworthy aspects of this revival include the publication of our new bi-weekly newspaper *New America*, significant gains in membership and activity, the growth of our youth section, the Young Peoples Socialist League.

Thoughtful Americans today are disturbed and bewildered. We live in dread of nuclear war. We wonder about our nation's ability to meet the Soviet challenge. We are increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of our lives: our work, our leisure, our family life, the impact of our culture upon our children. We wonder about our "national purpose." Here is a document which sheds light on our ills, offers us realizable human ideals and points the way toward their attainment. The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation is proud to present this statement by a man who is a member of our National Committee and one of the outstanding scholars in the world today. We commend it to you for your thoughtful consideration.

Darlington Hoopes, *National Chairman*
Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation

November, 1960

1

THE QUESTION

WHEN THE MEDIEVAL world was torn wide open, Western man seemed to be headed for the final fulfillment of his keenest dreams and visions. He freed himself from the authority of a totalitarian church, the weight of traditional thought, the geographical limitations of our but half-discovered globe. He discovered nature and the individual. He became aware of his own strength, of his capacity to make himself the ruler over nature and over traditionally given circumstances. He believed that he would be capable of achieving a synthesis between his newborn sense of strength and rationality and the spiritual values of his humanistic-spiritual tradition; between the prophetic idea of the messianic time of peace and justice to be achieved by mankind in the historical process, and the Greek tradition of theoretical thought. In the centuries following the Renaissance and the Reformation he built a new science which eventually led to the release of hitherto unheard-of productive powers, and to the complete transformation of the material world. He created political systems which seem to guarantee the free and productive development of the individual:

he reduced the time of work to such an extent that Western man is free to enjoy hours of leisure to an extent his forefathers had hardly dreamed of.

Yet where are we today?

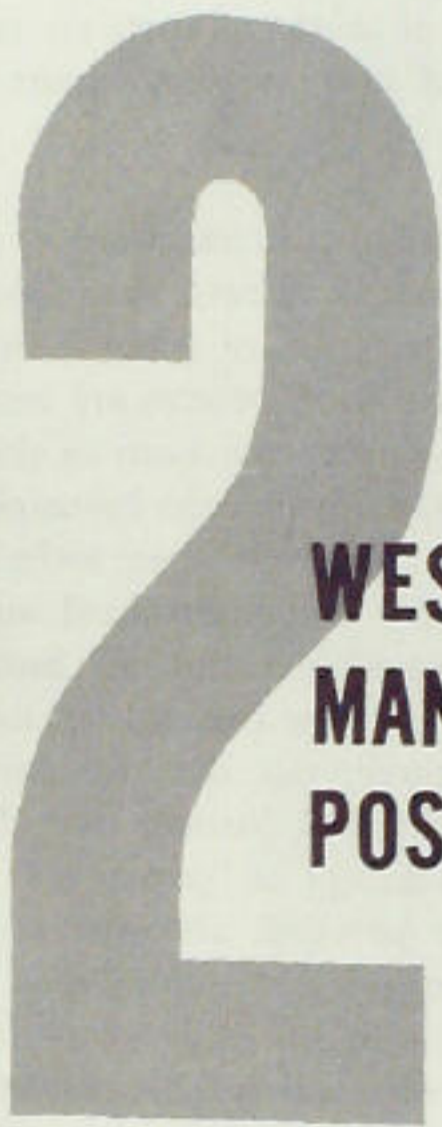
The world is divided into two camps, the capitalist and the communist camp. Both camps believe that they have the key to the fulfillment of the human hopes of generations past; both maintain that, while they must coexist, their systems are incompatible.

Are they right? Are they not both in the process of converging into a new industrial neo-feudalism, into industrial societies, led and manipulated by big, powerful bureaucracies, societies in which the individual becomes a well-fed and well-entertained automaton, who loses his individuality, his independence and his humanity? Have we to resign ourselves to the fact that we can master nature and produce goods in an ever-increasing degree, but that we must give up the hope for a new world of solidarity and justice; that this ideal will be lost in an empty technological concept of "progress"?

We ask, is there no other alternative than that between capitalist and communist managerial industrialism? Can we not build an industrial society in which the individual retains his role as an active, responsible member who controls circumstances, rather than being controlled by them? Are economic wealth and human fulfillment really incompatible?

Furthermore, these two camps not only compete economically and politically, they are both set against each other in deadly fear of an atomic attack, which will wipe out both—if not all civilization. Indeed, man has created the atomic bomb; it is the result of one of his greatest intellectual achievements. But he has lost the mastery over his own creation. The bomb has become his master, the forces of his own creation have become his most dangerous enemy.

Is there still time to reverse this course? Can we succeed in changing it and becoming the masters of circumstances, rather than allowing circumstances to rule us? Can we overcome the deep-seated roots of barbarism which make us try to solve problems in the only way in which they can never be solved—by force, violence and killing? Can we close the gap between our great intellectual achievement and our emotional and moral backwardness?



WESTERN MAN'S POSITION

IN ORDER TO ANSWER these questions, a more detailed examination of Western man's present position is necessary.

To most Americans the case for the success of our mode of industrial organization seems to be clear and overwhelming. New productive forces, (steam, electricity, oil and atomic energy) and new forms of organization of work (central planning, bureaucratization, increased division of labor, automation, etc.,) have created a material wealth in the most advanced industrial countries which has done away with the extreme poverty in which the majority of their populations lived a hundred years ago.

Working hours have been reduced from 70 to 40 hours per week in the last hundred years, and with increasing automation an ever-shorter working day may give man an undreamed-of amount of leisure. Basic education has been brought to every child; higher education to a considerable percentage of the total population. Movies, radio, television, sports, hobbies, fill out the many hours which man now has for his leisure.

Indeed, it seems that for the first time in history the vast majority—and soon all men—in the Western world will be primarily concerned with living, rather than with the struggle to secure the material conditions for living. It seems that the fondest dreams of our forefathers are close to their realization, and that the Western world has found the answer to the question of what is the “good life.”

While the majority of men in North America and Western Europe still share this outlook, there are an increasing number of thoughtful and sensitive persons who see the flaws in this enticing picture. They notice, first of all, that even within the richest country in the world, the U.S.A., about one-fifth of the population does not share in the “good life” of the majority, that a considerable number of our fellow citizens have not reached the material standard of living which is the basis for a dignified human existence. They are aware, furthermore, that more than two-thirds of the human race, those who for centuries were the object of Western colonialism, have a standard of living from ten to twenty times lower than ours, and have a life expectancy half that of the average American.

They are struck by the irrational contradictions which beset our system. While there are millions in our own midst, and hundreds of millions abroad, who do not have enough to eat, we restrict agricultural production and, in addition, spend hundreds of millions each year in storing our surplus. We have affluence, but we do not have amenity. We are wealthier, but we have less freedom. We consume more, but we are emptier. We have more atomic weapons, but we are more defenseless. We have more education, but we have less critical judgment and convictions. We have more religion, but we become more materialistic. We speak of the American tradition which, in fact, is the spiritual tradition of radical humanism, and we call “un-American” those who want to apply the tradition to present-day society.

However, even if we comfort ourselves, as many do, with the assumption that it is only a matter of a few generations until the West and eventually the whole world will have reached *economic* affluence, the question arises: *What has become of man, and where is he going if we continue on the road our industrial system has taken?*

3 THE HUMAN PROBLEM

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND how those elements by which our system succeeded in solving some of its *economic* problems are leading to an increasing failure to solve the *human* problem, it is necessary to examine the features which are characteristic of 20th century capitalism.

Concentration of capital led to the formation of giant enterprises, managed by hierarchically organized bureaucracies. Large agglomerations of workers work together, part of a vast organized production machine which, in order to run at all, must run smoothly, without friction, without interruption. The individual worker and clerk become a cog in this machine; their function and activities are determined by the whole structure of the organization in which they work. In the large enterprises, legal ownership of the means of production has become separated from the management and has lost importance. The big enterprises are run by bureaucratic management, which does not own the enterprise legally, but socially. These managers do not have the qualities of the old owner—individual initiative, daring, risk-taking—

but the qualities of the bureaucrat: lack of individuality, impersonality, caution, lack of imagination; they administer *things and persons*, and relate to persons as to things. This managerial class, while it does not own the enterprise legally, controls it factually; it is responsible (in an effective way) neither to the stockholders nor to those who work in the enterprise. In fact, while the most important fields of production are in the hands of the large corporations, these corporations are practically ruled by their top employees. The giant corporations which control the economic—and to a large degree the political—destiny of the country, constitute the very opposite of the democratic process; *they represent power without control by those submitted to it.*

Aside from the industrial bureaucracy, the vast majority of the population is administered by still other bureaucracies. First of all, by the governmental bureaucracy (including that of the armed forces), which influences and directs the lives of many millions in one form or another. More and more, the industrial, military and governmental bureaucracies are becoming intertwined, both in their activities and, increasingly, in their personnel. With the development of ever greater enterprises, unions also have developed into big bureaucratic machines in which the individual member has very little to say. Many union chiefs are managerial bureaucrats, just as industrial chiefs are.

All these bureaucracies have no plan, and no vision; and due to the very nature of bureaucratic administration, this has to be so. When man is transformed into a thing, and managed like a thing, his managers themselves become things; and things have no will, no vision, no plan.

With the bureaucratic management of people, the democratic process becomes transformed into a ritual. Whether it is a stockholders meeting of a big enterprise, or a political election, or a union meeting, the individual has lost almost all influence to determine decisions and to participate actively in the making of decisions. Especially in the political sphere, elections become more and more reduced to plebiscites in which the individual can express preference for one of two slates of professional politicians, and the best that can be said is that he is governed with his consent. But the means to bring about this consent are those of suggestion and manipulation and, with all that, the most fundamental decisions—those of foreign policy which involve peace and war—are made by small groups which the average citizen hardly even knows.

The political ideas of democracy, as the founding fathers of the United States conceived them, were not purely political ideas. They were rooted in the spiritual tradition which came to us from prophetic Messianism, the gospels, humanism, and from the enlightenment philosophers of the 18th Century. All these ideas and movements were centered around one hope: that man, in the course of his history, can liberate himself from poverty, ignorance, and injustice, and that he can build a society of harmony, peace, of union between man and man, and between man and nature. The idea that history has a goal, and the faith in man's perfectability within the historical process has been the most specific element of Occidental thought. It is the soil in which the American tradition is rooted, and from which it draws its strength and vitality. What has happened to the ideas of the perfectability of man and of society? They have deteriorated into a flat concept of "progress," into a vision of the production of more and better *things*, rather than standing for the birth of the fully alive and productive *man*. Our political concepts have today lost their spiritual roots. They have become matters of expediency, judged by the criterion of whether they help us to a higher standard of living and to a more effective form of political administration. Having lost their roots in the hearts and longings of man, they have become empty shells, to be thrown away if expediency might warrant it.

Not only in the sphere of production is the individual managed and manipulated, but also in the sphere of consumption, which allegedly is the one in which the individual expresses his free choice. Whether it is the consumption of food, clothing, liquor, cigarettes, or of movies and television programs, a powerful suggestion apparatus is employed with two purposes: first, to increase constantly the individual's appetite for new commodities, and second, to direct these appetites into the channels most profitable for industry. The very size of the capital investment in the consumer goods industry and the competition between a few giant enterprises make it necessary not to leave consumption to chance, nor to leave the consumer a free choice of whether he wants to buy more, and what he wants to buy. His appetites have to be constantly whetted, tastes have to be manipulated, managed, and made predictable. Man is transformed into the "consumer" the eternal suckling, whose one wish is to consume more and "better" things.

While our economic system has enriched man materially, it has impoverished him humanly. Notwithstanding all propaganda and slogans

about the Western world's faith in God, its idealism, its spiritual concern, our system has created a materialistic culture and a materialistic man. During his working hours, the individual is managed as part of a production team. During his hours of leisure time he is managed and manipulated to be the perfect consumer, who likes what he is told to like, and yet has the illusion that he follows his own tastes. All the time he is hammered at by slogans, by suggestions, by voices of unreality which deprive him of the last bit of realism he may still have. From childhood on, true convictions are discouraged. There is little critical thought, there is little real feeling, and hence only conformity with the rest can save the individual from an unbearable feeling of loneliness and lostness. The individual does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and inner richness, but as an impoverished "thing," dependent on powers outside of himself into which he has projected his living substance. Man is alienated from himself, and bows down before the works of his own hands. He bows down before the things he produces, before the state, and the leaders of his own making. His own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him. More than ever in history the consolidation of our own product to an objective force above us, outgrowing our control, defeating our expectations, annihilating our calculations, is one of the main factors determining our development. His products, his machines, the state have become the idols of modern man, and these idols represent his own life forces in alienated form.

Indeed, Marx was right in recognizing that "the place of all physical and mental senses has been taken by the self-alienation of all these senses, by the sense of having. Private property has made us so stupid and impotent that things become ours only if we *have* them, that is, if they exist for us as capital, and are owned by us, eaten by us, drunk by us; that is, used by us. We are poor in spite of all our wealth because we *have* much, but we *are* little."

As a result, the average man feels insecure, lonely, depressed, and suffers from a lack of joy in the midst of plenty. Life does not make sense to him; he is dimly aware that the meaning of life cannot lie in being nothing but a "consumer." He could not stand the joylessness and meaninglessness of life, were it not for the fact that the system offers him innumerable avenues of escape, ranging from television to tranquilizers, which permit him to forget that he is losing

more and more all that is valuable in life. In spite of all slogans to the contrary, we are approaching quickly a society governed by bureaucrats who administer a mass-man, well fed, well taken care of, dehumanized, and depressed. We produce machines that are like men, and men who are like machines. That which was the greatest criticism of *socialism* fifty years ago—that it would lead to uniformity, bureaucratization, centralization and a soulless materialism—is a reality of today's *capitalism*. We talk freedom and democracy, yet an increasing number of people are afraid of the responsibility of freedom, and prefer the slavery of the well-fed robot; they have no faith in democracy and are happy to leave it to the political experts to make the decisions.

We have created a widespread system of communication by means of radio, television and newspapers. Yet people are misinformed and indoctrinated rather than informed about political and social reality. In fact, there is a degree of uniformity in our opinions and ideas which could be explained without difficulty if it were the result of political pressure and caused by fear. The fact is that all agree "voluntarily," in spite of the fact that our system rests exactly on the idea of the right to disagreement, and on the predilection for diversity of ideas.

Doubletalk has become the rule in the free enterprise countries, as well as among their opponents. The latter call dictatorship "people's democracies," the former call dictatorships "freedom-loving people" if they are political allies. Of the possibility of fifty million Americans being killed in an atomic attack, one speaks of the "hazards of war," and one talks of victory in a "showdown," when sane thinking makes it clear that there can be no victory for anyone in an atomic holocaust.

Education, from primary to higher education, has reached a peak. Yet, while people get more education, they have less reason, judgment, and conviction. At best their intelligence is improved, but their reason—that it, their capacity to penetrate through the surface and to understand the underlying forces in individual and social life—is impoverished more and more. Thinking is increasingly split from feeling, and the very fact that people tolerate the threat of an atomic war hovering over all mankind, shows that modern man has come to a point where his sanity must be questioned.

Man, instead of being the master of the machines he has built, has become their servant. But man is not made to be a thing, and with all the satisfactions of consumption, the life forces in man cannot

be held in abeyance continuously. We have only one choice, and that is mastering the machine again, making production into a means and not an end, using it for the unfolding of man—or else the suppressed life energies will manifest themselves in chaotic and destructive forms. Man will want to destroy life rather than die of boredom.

Can we make our mode of social and economic organization responsible for this state of man? As was indicated above, our industrial system, its way of production and consumption, the relations between human beings which it fosters, creates precisely the human situation which has been described. Not because it *wants* to create it, not due to evil intentions of individuals, but because of the fact that the average man's character is formed by the practice of life which is provided by the structure of society.

No doubt the form which capitalism has taken in the 20th century is very different from what it was in the 19th century—so different, in fact, that it is doubtful whether even the same term should be applied to both systems. The enormous concentration of capital in giant enterprises, the increasing separation of management from ownership, the existence of powerful trade unions, state subsidies for agriculture and for some parts of industry, the elements of the "welfare state," elements of price control and a directed market, and many more features, distinguish 20th-century capitalism radically from that of the past. Yet whatever terminology we choose, certain basic elements are common to the old and the new capitalism. The principle that not solidarity and love, but individualistic, egotistical action brings the best results for everybody; the belief that an impersonal mechanism, the market, should regulate the life of society, not the will, vision and planning of the people. Capitalism puts things (capital) higher than life (labor). Power follows from possession, not from activity. Contemporary capitalism creates additional obstacles for the unfolding of man. It needs smoothly working teams of workers, clerks, engineers, consumers; it needs them because big enterprises, led by bureaucracies, require this kind of organization and the "organization man" who fits into it. Our system must create men who fit its needs; it must create men who cooperate smoothly and in large numbers; who want to consume more and more; whose tastes are standardized and can be easily anticipated and influenced. It needs men who feel free and independent, not subject to any authority or principle of conscience, yet who are willing to be commanded, to do

what is expected of them, to fit into the social machine without friction; who can be guided without force, led without leaders, prompted without aim—except the one to make good, to be on the move, to go ahead. Production is guided by a principle that capital investment must bring profit, rather than by the principle that the real needs of people determine what is to be produced. Since everything, including radio, television, books, medicines, is subject to the profit principle, the people are manipulated into the kind of consumption which is often poisonous for the spirit, and sometimes also for the body.

The failure of our society to fulfill the human aspirations rooted in our spiritual traditions has immediate consequences for the two most burning practical issues of our time: that of peace and that of the equalization between the wealth of the West and the poverty of two-thirds of mankind.

The alienation of modern man with all its consequences makes it difficult for him to solve these problems. Because of the fact that he worships things, and has lost the reverence for life, his own and that of his fellow men, he is blind not only to moral principles, but also to rational thought in the interest of his survival. It is clear that atomic armament is likely to lead to universal destruction and, even if atomic war could be prevented, that it will lead to a climate of fear, suspicion, regimentation, which is exactly the climate in which freedom and democracy cannot live. It is clear that the economic gap between poor and rich nations will lead to violent explosions and dictatorships—yet nothing but the most half-hearted and hence futile attempts are suggested to solve these problems. Indeed, it seems that we are going to prove that the gods blind those whom they want to destroy.

4

THE AIM OF SOCIALISM

THUS FAR GOES the record of capitalism. What is the record of socialism? What did it intend, and what did it achieve in those countries in which it had a chance of being realized?

Socialism in the 19th century, in the Marxian and in its many other forms, wanted to create the material basis for a dignified human existence for everybody. It wanted work to direct capital, rather than capital to direct work. For socialism, work and capital were not just two economic categories, but rather they represented two principles: capital, the principle of amassed things, of *having*; and work, that of life and of man's powers, of *being* and becoming. Socialists found that in capitalism things direct life; that *having* is superior to *being*; that the past directs the present—and they wanted to reverse this relation. The aim of socialism was man's emancipation, his restoration to the unalienated, uncrippled individual who enters into a new, rich, spontaneous relationship with his fellow man and with nature. The aim of socialism was that man should throw away the chains which bind him, the fictions and unrealities, and transform himself into

a being who can make creative use of his powers of feeling and of thinking. Socialism wanted man to become independent, that is, to stand on his own feet; and it believed that man can stand on his feet only if, as Marx said, "he owes his existence to himself, if he affirms his individuality as a total man in each of his relations to the world, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinkings, willing, loving—in short, if he affirms and expresses all organs of his individuality." The aim of socialism was the union between man and man, and between man and nature.

Quite in contrast to the frequently uttered cliché that Marx and other socialists taught that the desire for maximal material gain was the most fundamental human drive, these socialists believed that it is the very structure of capitalist society which makes material interest the deepest motive, and that socialism would permit non-material motives to assert themselves, and free man from his servitude to material interests. (It is a sad commentary on man's capacity for inconsistency that the same people who condemn socialism for its alleged "materialism," criticize it at the same time with the argument that only the "profit motive" can motivate man to do his best.)

The aim of socialism was individuality, not uniformity; liberation from economic bonds, not making material aims the main concern of life; the experience of full solidarity of all men, and not the manipulation and domination of one man by another. The principle of socialism was that each man is an end in himself, and must never be the means of another man. Socialism wanted to create a society in which each citizen actively and responsibly participated in all decisions, and in which he could participate because he was a man and not a thing, because he had convictions and not synthetic opinions.

For socialism not only is poverty a vice, but also wealth. Material poverty deprives man of the basis for a humanly rich life. Material wealth, like power, corrupts man. It destroys the sense of proportion and of the limitations which are inherent in human existence; it creates an unrealistic and almost crazy sense of the "uniqueness" of an individual, making him feel that he is not subject to the same basic conditions of existence as his fellow men. Socialism wants material comfort to be used for the true aims of living; it rejects individual wealth as a danger to society as well as to the individual. In fact, its opposition to capitalism is related to this very principle. By its very logic, capitalism aims at an ever-increasing material wealth, while

socialism aims at an ever-increasing human productivity, aliveness and happiness, and at material comfort only to the extent to which it is conducive to its human aims.

Socialism hoped for the eventual abolition of the state, so that only things, and not people, would be administered. It aimed at a classless society in which freedom and initiative would be restored to the individual. Socialism, in the 19th century, and until the beginning of the First World War, was the most significant humanistic and spiritual movement in Europe and America.

What happened to socialism?

It succumbed to the spirit of capitalism which it had wanted to replace. Instead of understanding it as a movement for the liberation of man, many of its adherents and its enemies alike understood it as being exclusively a movement for the *economic* improvement of the working class. The humanistic aims of socialism were forgotten, or only paid lip service to, while, as in capitalism, all the emphasis was laid on the aims of economic gain. Just as the ideals of democracy lost their spiritual roots, the idea of socialism lost its deepest root—the prophetic-messianic faith in peace, justice and the brotherhood of man.

Thus socialism became the vehicle for the workers to attain their place *within* the capitalistic structure rather than transcending it: instead of changing capitalism, socialism was absorbed by its spirit. The failure of the socialist movement became complete when in 1914 its leaders renounced international solidarity and chose the economic and military interests of their respective countries as against the ideas of internationalism and peace which had been their program.

The misinterpretation of socialism as a purely economic movement, and of nationalization of the means of production as its principal aim, occurred both in the right wing and in the left wing of the socialist movement. The reformist leaders of the socialist movement in Europe considered it as their primary aim to elevate the economic status of the worker within the capitalist system, and they considered as their most radical measures the nationalization of certain big industries. Only recently have many realized that the nationalization of an enterprise is in itself not the realization of socialism, that to be managed by a publicly appointed bureaucracy is not basically different for the worker than being managed by a privately appointed bureaucracy.

The leaders of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union interpreted

socialism in the same purely economic way. But living in a country much less developed than Western Europe, and without a democratic tradition, they applied terror and dictatorship to enforce the rapid accumulation of capital, which in Western Europe had occurred in the 19th century. They developed a new form of state capitalism which proved to be economically successful, and humanly destructive. They built a bureaucratically managed society in which class distinction—both in an economic sense and as far as the power to command others is concerned—is deeper and more rigid than in any of the capitalist societies of today. They define their system as socialistic because they have nationalized the whole economy, while in reality their system is the complete negation of all that socialism stands for, the affirmation of individuality and the full development of man. In order to win the support of the masses who had to make unendurable sacrifices for the sake of the fast accumulation of capital, they used socialistic, combined with nationalistic, ideologies and this gained them the grudging cooperation of the governed.

Thus far the free enterprise system is superior to the communist system because it has preserved one of the greatest achievements of modern man—political freedom—and with it a respect for the dignity and individuality of man, which links us with the fundamental spiritual tradition of humanism. It permits possibilities of criticism and of making proposals for constructive social change which are practically impossible in the Soviet police state. It is to be expected, however, that once the Soviet countries have achieved the same level of economic development that Western Europe and the United States have achieved—that is, once they can satisfy the demand for a comfortable life—they will not need terror, but will be able to use the same means of manipulation which are used in the West: suggestion and persuasion. This development will bring about the convergence of 20th century capitalism and 20th century communism. Both systems are based on industrialization: their goal is ever-increasing economic efficiency and wealth. They are societies run by a managerial class and by professional politicians. They both are thoroughly materialistic in their outlook, regardless of lip service to Christian ideology in the West and secular Messianism in the East. They organize the masses in a centralized system, in large factories, in political mass parties. In both systems, if they go on in the same way, the mass-man, the alienated man, a well fed, well clothed, well entertained automaton-man governed by bureaucrats who have

as little a goal as the mass-man has, will replace the creative, thinking, feeling man. *Things* will have the first place, and man will be dead; he will *talk* of freedom and individuality—while he will *be* nothing.

Where do we stand today?

Capitalism and a vulgarized, distorted socialism have brought man to the point where he is in danger of becoming a dehumanized automaton; he is losing his sanity and stands at the point of total self-destruction. Only full awareness of his situation and its dangers, and a new vision of a life which can realize the aims of human freedom, dignity, creativity, reason, justice and solidarity can save us from almost certain decay, loss of freedom, or destruction. We are not forced to choose between a managerial free enterprise system and a managerial communist system. There is a third solution, that of democratic, humanist socialism which, based on the original principles of socialism, offers the vision of a new, truly human society.

On the basis of this general analysis of capitalism, communism and humanist socialism, a socialist program must differentiate between three aspects:

What are the *principles* underlying the idea of a socialist party?

What are the *intermediate goals* of humanist socialism for the realization of which socialists work?

What are the immediate *short-range goals* for which socialists work, as intermediate goals have not yet been achieved?

5

HUMANIST SOCIALISM

a. WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES which underlie the idea of a humanist socialism?

1) Every social and economic system is not only a specific system of relations *between things and institutions*, but a system of *human relations*. Any concept and practice of socialism must be examined in terms of the kind of relations between human beings to which it is conducive.

2) The supreme value in all social and economic arrangements is man; the goal of society is to offer the conditions for the full development of man's potentialities, his reason, his love, his creativity; all social arrangements must be conducive to overcoming the alienation and crippledness of man, and to enable him to achieve real freedom and individuality. The aim of socialism is an association in which the full development of each is the condition for the full development of all.

3) The supreme principle of socialism is that man takes precedence over things, life over property, and hence, work over capital; that

power follows creation, and not possession; that man must not be governed by circumstances, but circumstances must be governed by man.

4) In relations between people, the principle must govern that every man is an end in himself, and must never be made into a means to another man's ends. From this principle it follows that nobody must personally be subject to anyone because he owns capital.

5) Humanist socialism is rooted in the conviction of the unity of mankind and the solidarity of all men. It fights any kind of worship of state, nation or class. It considers that the supreme loyalty of man must be that to the human race, and to the moral principles of humanism. It strives for the revitalization of those ideas and values upon which Western civilization was built.

6) Humanistic socialism is radically opposed to war and violence in all and any forms. It considers any attempt to solve political and social problems by force and violence not only as futile, but as immoral and inhuman. Hence it is uncompromisingly opposed to any policy which tries to achieve security by armament. It considers peace to be not only the absence of war, but a positive principle of human relations based on free cooperation of all men for the common good.

7) From socialist principles it follows not only that each member of society feels responsible for his fellow citizens, but for all citizens of the world. The injustice which lets two-thirds of the human race live in abysmal poverty must be removed by an effort far beyond the ones hitherto made by wealthy nations to help the under-developed nations to arrive at a humanly satisfactory economic level.

8) Humanistic socialism stands for freedom. It stands for freedom *from* fear, want, oppression and violence. But freedom is not only *from*, but also freedom *to*; freedom to participate actively and responsibly in all decisions concerning the citizen, freedom to develop the individual's human potential to the fullest possible degree.

9) Production and consumption must be subordinated to the needs of man's development, not the reverse. As a consequence, all production must be directed by the principle of its social usefulness, and not by that of its material profit for some individuals or corporations. Hence if a choice has to be made between greater production on the one hand, or greater freedom and human growth on the other, the human as against the material value must be chosen.

10) In socialist industrialism the goal is not to achieve the highest *economic* productivity, but to achieve the highest *human* productivity.

This means that the way in which man spends most of his energy, in work as well as in leisure, must be meaningful and interesting to him. It must stimulate and help to develop *all* his human powers—his intellectual as well as his emotional and artistic ones.

11) While, in order to live humanly, basic material needs must be satisfied, consumption must not be an aim in itself. All attempts to stimulate material needs artificially for the sake of profit must be prevented. Waste of material resources and senseless consumption for consumption's sake are destructive to mature human development.

12) Humanist socialism is a system in which man governs capital, not capital man; in which, so far as it is possible, man governs his circumstances, not circumstances man; in which the members of society plan what they want to produce, rather than that their production follows the laws of the impersonal powers of the market and of capital with its inherent need for maximum profit.

13) Humanist socialism is the extension of the democratic process beyond the purely political realm, into the economic sphere; it is political *and* industrial democracy. It is the restoration of political democracy to its original meaning: the true participation of informed citizens in all decisions affecting them.

14) Extension of democracy into the economic sphere means democratic control of all economic activities by the participants (manual workers, engineers, administrators, etc.). Humanist socialism is not primarily concerned with legal ownership, but with social control of the large and powerful industries. Irresponsible control by bureaucratic management representing the profit interest of capital must be replaced by administration acting on behalf of, and controlled by, those who produce and consume.

15) The aim of humanist socialism can be attained only by the introduction of a maximum of decentralization compatible with a minimum of centralization necessary for the coordinated functioning of an industrial society. The functions of a centralized state must be reduced to a minimum, while the voluntary activity of freely cooperating citizens constitutes the central mechanism of social life.

16) While the basic *general* aims of humanist socialism are the same for all countries, each country must formulate its own *specific* aims in terms of its own traditional and present situation, and devise its own methods to achieve this aim. The mutual solidarity of socialist countries must exclude any attempt on the part of one country to

impose its methods on another. In the same spirit, the writings of the fathers of socialist ideas must not be transformed into sacred scriptures, which are used by some to wield authority over others: the spirit common to them, however, must remain alive in the hearts of socialists, and guide their thinking.

17) Humanist socialism is the voluntary, logical outcome of the operation of human nature under rational conditions. It is the realization of democracy, which has its roots in the humanistic tradition of mankind, under the conditions of an industrial society. It is a social system which operates without force, neither physical force, nor that of hypnoid suggestions by which men are forced without being aware of it. It can be achieved only by appealing to man's reason, and to his longing for a more human, meaningful and rich life. It is based on faith in man's ability to build a world which is truly human, in which the enrichment of life and the unfolding of the individual are the prime objects of society, while economics is reduced to its proper role as the means to a humanly richer life.

INTERMEDIATE GOALS OF HUMANIST SOCIALISM

b. IN DISCUSSING the goals of humanist socialism we must differentiate between the *final* socialist goal of a society based on the free cooperation of its citizen and the reduction of centralized state activity to a minimum, and the intermediate socialist goals before this final aim is reached. The transition from the present centralized state to a completely decentralized form of society cannot be made without a transitory period in which a certain amount of central planning and state intervention will be indispensable. But in order to avoid the dangers that central planning and state intervention may lead to, such as increased bureaucratization and weakening of individual integrity and initiative, it is necessary: a) that the state is brought under the efficient control of its citizens; b) that the social and political power of the big corporations is broken; c) that from the very beginning all forms of decentralized, voluntary associations in production, trade, and local social and cultural activities are promoted.

While it is not possible today to make concrete and detailed plans

for the *final* socialist goals, it is possible to formulate in a tentative fashion the *intermediate* goals for a socialist society. But even as far as these intermediate goals are concerned it will take many years of study and experimentation to arrive at more definite and specific formulations, studies to which the best brains and hearts of the nation must be devoted.

I. Following the principle that social control and not legal ownership is the essential principle of socialism, its first goal is the transformation of all big enterprises in such a way that their administrators are appointed and fully controlled by all participants (workers, clerks, engineers, etc.), with the participation of trade union and consumer representatives. These groups constitute the highest authority for every big enterprise. They decide all basic questions of production, price, utilization of profits, etc. The stockholders continue to receive an appropriate compensation for the use of their capital, but have no right of control and administration.

II. The autonomy of an enterprise is restricted by central planning to the extent to which it is necessary to make production serve its social ends.

III. Small enterprises should work on a cooperative basis, and they are to be encouraged by taxation and other means. Inasmuch as they do not work on a cooperative basis, the participants must share in the profits and control the administration on an equal basis with the owner.

IV. Certain industries which are of basic importance for the whole of society, such as oil, banking, television, radio, medical drugs, and transportation, must be nationalized, but the administration of these nationalized industries must follow the same principles of effective control by participants, unions and consumers.

V. In all fields in which there is a social need, but not an adequate existing production, society must finance enterprises which serve these needs.

VI. The individual must be protected from fear and the need to submit to anyone's coercion. In order to accomplish this aim, society must provide, free for everyone, the minimum necessities of material existence in food, housing and clothing. Anyone who has higher aspirations for material comforts will have to work for them, but the minimal necessities of life being guaranteed, no person can have power over anyone on the basis of direct or indirect material coercion.

VII. Socialism does not do away with individual property for use; neither does it require the complete leveling of income; income should be related to effort and skill; but differences in income should not create such different forms of material life that the life experience of one cannot be shared by, and thus remains alien to, another.

VIII. The principle of political democracy must be implemented in terms of the 20th century reality. Considering our technical instrumentalities of communication and tabulation, it is possible to reintroduce the principle of the town meeting into contemporary mass society. The forms in which this can be accomplished need study and experimentation. They may consist of the formation of hundreds of thousands of small face-to-face groups (organized along the principle of place of work or place of residence) which would constitute a new type of Lower House, sharing decision-making with a centrally elected parliament. Decentralization must strive at putting important decisions into the hands of the inhabitants of small local areas subject, however, to the fundamental principles which govern the life of the whole society. But whichever forms are to be found, the essential principle is that the democratic process is transformed into one in which well-informed and responsible citizens express their will, not automatized mass-men, controlled by the methods of hypnoid mass suggestion.

IX. Not only in the sphere of political decisions, but with regard to all decisions and arrangements, the grip of the bureaucracy must be broken in order to restore freedom. Aside from decisions which filter down from above, activity in all spheres of life on the grass-roots level must be developed which can "filter up" from below to the top. Workers organized in unions, consumers organized in consumers' organizations, citizens organized in the above-mentioned face-to-face political units, must be in constant interchange with central authorities. This interchange must be such that new measures, laws, provisions, etc., can be suggested and, after voting, decided from the grass-roots, and that all elected representatives are subject to continuous critical appraisal and, if necessary, recall.

X. According to its basic principles, the aim of socialism is the abolition of national sovereignty, the abolition of any kind of armed forces, and the establishment of a commonwealth of nations.

XI. In the sphere of education, the main aims are those of helping to develop the critical powers of the individual and to provide a basis for the creative expression of his personality—in other words, to nurture

free men who will be immune to manipulation and to the exploitation of their suggestibility for the pleasure and profit of others. Knowledge should not be a mere mass of information, but the rational means of understanding the underlying forces that determine material and human processes. Education should embrace not only reason but the arts. Capitalism, as it has produced alienation, has divorced and debased both man's scientific understanding and his aesthetic perception. The aim of socialist education is to restore man to the full and free exercise of both. It seeks to make man not only an intelligent spectator but a well-equipped participant not only in the production of material goods but in the enjoyment of life. To offset the dangers of alienated intellectualization, factual and theoretical instruction shall be supplemented by training in manual work and in the creative arts, combining the two also in craftsmanship (the production of useful objects of art), in primary and secondary education. Each adolescent must have had the experience of producing something valuable with his own hands and skills.

XII. The principle of irrational authority based on power and exploitation must be replaced, not by a *laissez-faire* attitude, but by an authority which is based on the competence of knowledge and skill—not on intimidation, force or suggestion. Socialist education must arrive at a new concept of rational authority which differs both from irrational authoritarianism and from an unprincipled *laissez-faire* attitude.

XIII. Education must not be restricted to childhood and adolescence, but the existing forms of adult education must be greatly enlarged. It is especially important to give each person the possibility of changing his occupation or profession at any time of life; this will be economically possible if at least his minimal material needs are taken care of by society.

XIV. Cultural activities must not be restricted to providing intellectual education. All forms of artistic expression (through music, dance, drama, painting sculpture, architecture, etc.) are of paramount importance for the human development of man. Society must channel considerable means for the creation of a vast program of artistic activities and useful as well as beautiful building programs, even at the expense of other and less important consumer satisfactions. Great care should be taken, however, to conserve the integrity of the creative artist, to avoid turning socially responsible art into bureaucratic or "state" art.

A healthy balance must be maintained between the legitimate claims of the artist upon society and its legitimate claims upon him. Socialism seeks to narrow the gap between the producer and the consumer in the realm of art and seeks ultimately to eliminate this distinction so far as possible by creating optimum conditions for the flourishing of every individual's creative potentialities. But it holds up no pre-conceived pattern and recognizes that this is a problem that will require much more study than has been given it up till now.

XV. Complete equality of races and sexes is a matter of course for a socialist society. This *equality*, however, does not imply *sameness*, and every effort must be made to permit the fullest development of the gifts and talents peculiar to each racial and national group, as well as to the two sexes.

XVI. Freedom of religious activities must be guaranteed, together with the complete separation of State and Church.

SHORT-RANGE GOALS

C. THE FOREGOING PROGRAM is meant to serve as a guide to the principles and goals of socialism. Its concrete and detailed formulation requires a great deal of discussion. To conduct this discussion and to arrive at concrete and detailed suggestions is one of the main tasks of the Socialist Party. Such discussion requires examining all data which practical experience and the social sciences can bring forward. But first of all it requires imagination and the courage to see new possibilities, instead of the outworn routine of thinking.

Quite aside from this, it will take considerable time until the majority of the people in the United States will be convinced of the validity of socialist principles and goals. What is the task and function of the Socialist Party during the time before it has succeeded in this task?

a.) The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation (SP-SDF) must embody in its own structure and activities the very principles it stands for; it must not only strive for the achievement of socialism in the future but must begin with its realization in its own midst imme-

diately. Hence the SP-SDF must not try to convince the people of its program by appeal to irrational emotions, hypnoid suggestions, "attractive personalities," etc., but by the realism, correctness and penetration of its analysis of economic, social, political and human situations. The SP-SDF must become the moral and intellectual conscience of the United States, and divulge its analyses and judgments in the widest possible manner.

b.) The conduct of activities of the SP-SDF must follow its principles in the sense of the optimum of decentralization and the active, responsible participation of its members in discussions and decisions. It must also give full scope to the expression and divulgence of minority opinions. The socialist program cannot be a fixed plan, but must grow and develop through the continuous activity, effort, and concern of the members of the party.

c.) The SP-SDF thus must be different from other political parties—not only in its program and ideals, but in its very structure and in its way of functioning. It must become a spiritual and social home for all its members who are united in the spirit of humanistic realism and sanity, and by the solidarity of the common concern for, and the common faith in, man and his future.

d.) The SP-SDF must develop an extensive educational campaign among workers, students, professionals and members of all social classes who can be expected to have a potential understanding for socialist criticism and socialist ideals.

e.) The SP-SDF cannot expect to gain victory in a short time. But this does not mean that it should not aim at the widest social influence and power. It must strive to gain the allegiance of an ever-increasing number of people who, through the party, make their voices heard within the United States and throughout the whole world.

f.) The SP-SDF is rooted in the humanistic tradition of socialism; it strives for the transformation of the traditional socialist goals to fit the conditions of 20th century society as a condition for their realization. Particularly it rejects the ideas of achieving its goals by force or by the establishment of any kind of dictatorship. Its only weapons are the realism of its ideas, the fact that they appeal to the true needs of man, and the enthusiastic allegiance which those citizens will give it who have seen through the fictions and delusions which fill the minds of people today, and who have faith in a richer, fuller life.

g.) It is not enough that the members of the SP-SDF believe

in a common ideal. Such faith becomes empty and sterile if it is not translated into action. The life of the party must be organized in such a manner that it offers ample and varied possibility for every member to translate his concern into meaningful and immediate action. How can this be done?

1.) It must be understood clearly that the basic goals of socialism, especially the method of management of big enterprises by the participants, union and consumers' representatives, the revitalization of the democratic process, the guaranteed minimum for existence for every citizen, constitute problems the details of which are exceedingly difficult to solve. Their solution requires basic theoretical research in the fields of economics, work organization, psychology, etc.; and, in addition, practical plans and experimentation. If these social problems are approached in the same spirit of faith and imagination which exists among the natural scientists and technicians, solutions will be found which, looked at from the present situation, might appear as fantastic as space travel appeared twenty years ago. Yet the difficulties of arriving at a solution for a sane and human social organization are not any greater than those in the fields of the theoretical and applied natural sciences.

2. The first task, then, for the activities of the members of the SP-SDF is to study the problems of applied socialism within their own sphere of activity, and to discuss their experiences and suggestions for socialist solutions in the working units of the SP-SDF. Supplementing this group activity are permanent committees set up by the SP-SDF for the investigation of these problems. These committees will be composed of specialists in the various fields of economics, sociology, psychology, foreign policy, etc. The committees of investigation and the working units will be in close mutual contact, exchanging their ideas and experiences, and thus stimulating each other.

3. But the activities of the members of the SP-SDF must not be restricted to imaginative thinking and planning. Beyond this, immediate and concrete action is necessary. It is important that each member demonstrates the socialist way of life in his or her place of work, wherever it may be: in factories, offices, schools, laboratories, hospitals, etc. Each member must demonstrate the socialist way of approaching problems by his own way of dealing with them and by stimulating others. It is especially important that the members of the SP-SDF who are union

members work actively for greater member activity and participation in the life of the trade unions. Inside and outside the trade unions, the members of the SP-SDF will support all tendencies for decentralization, active grass-roots participation, and fight all forms of bureaucratism.

4. The SP-SDF wants to attract men and women who are genuinely concerned with the problem of the humanization of society and who, out of this concern, work for it and are willing to make the sacrifice in time and money which this work requires.

h.) Although the SP-SDF has its center in the fundamental goals of its programs, it will participate actively in the furtherance of all immediate political aims which are of importance for the progressive development of our society. It will cooperate with all political groupings and individuals that sincerely strive for the same aims. Among these aims are, in particular:

(1) A sane foreign policy, based on a realistic appreciation of the given facts of political life—a policy which seeks for reasonable compromise and realizes that war can be averted only if the two power blocs accept their present economic and political positions and renounce every attempt to change them by force.

(2) Fight against the idea that our security can be gained by armaments. The only way to avoid total destruction lies in total disarmament. This implies that disarmament negotiations must not be used to prevent real disarmament, but that we must be willing to take risks in the attempt to achieve it.

(3) A program of economic aid to underdeveloped countries on an immensely larger scale than our present one, and at the cost of considerable sacrifice on the part of our citizens for the accomplishment of such a program. We advocate a policy which does not serve the interests of American capital investments in foreign countries and does not involve United States foreign policy in indirect interference with the independence of small nations.

(4) Strengthening of the United Nations and of all efforts to use its assistance in the solving of international disputes and in large-scale foreign aid.

(5) Support of all measures to raise the standard of living of that part of our population which is still living below the material standard of the majority. This applies to poverty caused by economic as well as by regional and racial factors.

(6) Support of all efforts for decentralization and grass-roots activities. This implies support of all attempts to curb irresponsible power in corporative, governmental and union bureaucracy.

(7) Support of all measures for social security which lead to immediate relief in distress situations caused by unemployment, sickness and old age. Support of all measures in the direction of socialized medicine, with the understanding that the free choice of doctors and a high level of medical services must be upheld.

(8) Economic measures which lead to the full use of our agricultural productive capacity and our surplus—nationally and internationally.

(9) Support of measures to set up an economic commission consisting of representatives of industry, commerce, trade unions, economists and consumer representatives. This commission should be charged with understaking a regular examination of the needs of our economy, and developing overall plans for changes in the interest of the nation as a whole. Its most immediate task would be to discuss and propose plans for the change from armaments to peace production. The reports of this commission—including minority reports—should be published and distributed widely. Similar commissions should be convoked in the field of foreign policy, culture and education; the members of these commissions should represent wide sectors of the population, and consist of men whose knowledge and integrity are generally recognized.

(10) Vast governmental expenditures for housing, road building and hospital construction, and for cultural activities (music, theater, dance, art).

(11) Given the wealth of the United States, we can begin to experiment socially. State-owned enterprises must be organized in which various forms of workers' participation in management are tried out.

(12) In industries of basic social importance, the government must organize yardstick enterprises, which compete with private industry and in this way force it to raise its standards. This must be done first of all in the field of radio, television and movies, and in other fields if desirable.

(13) Efforts must be made to begin with a program of workers' participation in the management of the big corporations. Twenty-five per cent of the votes on the decision-making boards should be given to workers and employees, freely elected in each enterprise.

(14) The influence of the unions must be strengthened, not only with regard to the problems of wages, but also with regard to their in-

fluence on problems of working conditions, etc. Simultaneously a process of democratization within the unions must be furthered with all energy.

(15) All attempts must be supported which aim at the restriction of hypnoid suggestion in commercial and political propaganda.

We are aware that the above-mentioned program refers mainly to industrialized countries like those of North America and Europe. For all other countries the program must vary according to their specific conditions. However, the general principles underlying this program, that of production for social use, the strengthening of an effective democratic process, industrially as well as politically, are valid for all countries.

6

THE SOCIALIST APPEAL

WE APPEAL TO EVERY citizen to feel his responsibility for his life, that of his children, and that of the whole human family. Man is on the verge of the most crucial choice he has ever made: whether to use his skill and brain to create a world which can be, even if not a paradise, yet a place for the fullest realization of man's potentialities, a world of joy and creativity, or a world which will destroy itself either with atomic bombs, or through boredom and emptiness.

Indeed, socialism differs from other party programs in that it has a vision, an ideal for a better, more human society than the present one. Socialism does not want only to improve this or that defect of capitalism; it wants to accomplish something which does not yet exist; it aims at a goal which transcends the given empirical social reality, yet which is based on a real potentiality. Socialists have a vision and say: This is what we want; this is what we strive for; it is not the absolute and the final form of life, but it is a much better, more human form of life. It is the realization of the ideals of humanism which have inspired the greatest achievements of Western and Eastern culture.

Many will say that people do not want ideals, that they do not want to go beyond the frame of reference in which they live. We socialists say that this is not true. On the contrary, people have a deep longing for something they can work for, and have faith in. Man's whole vitality depends on the fact that he transcends the routine part of his existence, that he strives for the fulfillment of a vision which is not impossible to realize—even though it has not yet been achieved. If he has no chance to strive for a rational, humanistic vision, he will eventually, worn out and depressed by the boredom of his life, fall prey to the irrational satanic visions of dictators and demagogues. It is exactly the weakness of contemporary society that it offers no ideals, that it demands no faith, that it has no vision—except that of more of the same. We socialists are not ashamed to confess that we have a deep faith in man and in a vision of a new, human form of society. We appeal to the faith, hope and imagination of our fellow citizens to join us in this vision, and in the attempt to realize it. Socialism is not only a socio-economic and political program; it is a human program: *the realization of the ideals of humanism under the conditions of an industrial society.*

Socialism must be radical. To be radical is to go to the roots; and the root is Man. Today, Things are in the saddle and ride man. Socialism wants to put man, the total, creative, real man, back into the saddle.

Other Important Reading

SOCIALIST PAMPHLETS

The 1960 Socialist Platform, a statement of the ideals and practical proposals of democratic socialism in the America of the Sixties. (15¢) 24 pp.

Political Realignment—A Way Forward, a basic policy declaration of the Socialist Party in favor of the forging of a real second party in the United States as the way forward to progressive social change. (10¢) 8 pp.

The Unfinished Revolution by Tom Kahn, a brilliantly written description and analysis of the movement for civil rights by an active socialist participant. (50¢) 64 pp.

We Have a Vision . . . A Deep Faith, five moving statements on "Why join the Socialist Party" by Erich Fromm, William Davidon, Betty Lou Burleigh, Murray Kempton and William O. Hart. Single copies free.

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In Autumn a pamphlet by Eric Foner is expected to come out with Don the day (and the date) Title: "Is world peace still possible?" It is a very powerful plea for democratic socialism at least its his-
torical anti-
fascism) that way M. S. V. be heard in the
On "representative democracy" important new thoughts are put forth. The crisis is turning human to world politics and amazing some of his idiomers. In these he is deserving support!

A Debate on THE QUESTION OF CIVIL DEFENSE

HERMAN KAHN

ERICH FROMM & MICHAEL MACCOBY

In the hope of contributing to a clarification of the whole question of civil defense by bringing into focus the precise points of disagreement between the two main contending positions, we invited HERMAN KAHN (perhaps the leading advocate of a more intensified civil defense effort) and ERICH FROMM (who has become one of America's most influential spokesmen for disarmament and whose collaborator in the present debate, MICHAEL MACCOBY, has been a prominent participant in the peace movement) to argue their respective cases for the readers of COMMENTARY. The two articles that follow were written independently, though the authors of course had access to each other's previously published statements.

HERMAN KAHN's *On Thermonuclear War* has, since its appearance in 1960, earned itself a secure place among the most controversial books of our time. Formerly on the staff of the RAND Corporation, Mr. Kahn is now director of the Hudson Institute (a non-profit research organization concerned with problems of national security and international order). His new book, *Thinking About the Unthinkable*, is scheduled for publication in the spring by Horizon Press. ERICH FROMM, the distinguished psychoanalyst and social critic, has recently been devoting much of his time to the study of the current international crisis (which forms the subject of his latest book, *May Man Prevail?*). MICHAEL MACCOBY holds a Ph.D. in social psychology from Harvard and has taught both at Harvard and Chicago.

Herman Kahn: Nuclear war may be unthinkable, but it is not impossible. Obviously first priority ought to be given—and is being given—to the objective of deterring or otherwise avoiding a nuclear war. But because war is not impossible, we also have an obligation to allocate at least a modest proportion of our intellectual and material resources to the objective of alleviating the potential results of a nuclear conflict, in the event that one should occur. The fact that this is only a second-priority objective does not mean—as some people seem to think—that it is unimportant or that we have any cause to neglect it.

Of the many measures that the United States has been taking to reduce the harm that we might suffer in consequence of a nuclear war—measures intended not only to save lives and property, but also to facilitate recuperation—civil defense was until very recently underemphasized almost to the point of negligence. A much greater degree of attention has been paid to improving our active defense (anti-missile and anti-aircraft systems), to strengthening our strategic forces, and to developing a more adequate system of Command and Control (including preparations to limit or terminate a war). To be sure, these measures also contribute to the

E. FROMM

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double aim of saving lives and property and facilitating recovery, but they need to be complemented by an intelligent shelter program and a careful series of plans designed to cope with the medical, economic, social, and political problems that might arise in a postwar world. Indeed, if one evaluates our over-all military posture by its ability to protect people and property in the event of a nuclear war, it becomes clear that civil defense now deserves increased emphasis relative to the other things we have been doing.

In considering civil defense against nuclear weapons, we enter a field which is, in a critical sense, new: there is no adequate experience; no one has fought and survived more than a comparatively small and one-sided nuclear war. If, therefore, we wish to understand what the existence of these weapons of unprecedented destructiveness may mean for us, we have no choice but to rely on theoretical analysis and extrapolation, while trying to relate our theories as closely as possible to the known facts and lessons of the real past. So self-evident is this statement that it would hardly be worth making, except for the fact that a great many people regard nuclear war as "unthinkable" and refuse to think about it at all.

This refusal to "think about the unthinkable" takes a variety of forms, among them a primitive escapism (pretending that the terrible danger we are living under simply does not exist), the construction of a crude mirror-image ("I don't want to hurt anyone—why should anyone want to hurt me?"), and even a deliberate overestimation of the horror of war that acts to justify a feeling of hopelessness and apathy. I must admit, a bit reluctantly, to believing that even many of the "realistic" and sophisticated objections to civil defense that have been made by its opponents stem from roughly the same escapist motives. Nevertheless these objections have been put forward with great force and intensity; they deserve to be confronted and analyzed as arguments, what-

ever the motives of the objectors may or may not be. On what, then, do the opponents of civil defense base their case?

According to one prominent school of thought, there can be *no* effective defense against a thermonuclear attack, and therefore a program of shelter-building and other preparations for survival involves a waste of money and energy that might better be spent on "waging the peace," or, alternately, on improving our deterrent and our capability for waging limited war. A second school of thought opposes civil defense for exactly the opposite reason, arguing that our preparations for survival might become *so* effective that the Soviet Union would regard them as "provocative"; they would thus lead to an acceleration of the arms race or even to a Soviet attack. Nor do some opponents of civil defense rule out the possibility that we ourselves might launch a surprise attack if we were sure that we had effective protection against retaliation.

Though it would seem logically impossible to combine the view that civil defense is ineffective with the idea that it is too effective, some of its opponents reconcile the two positions by assuming the worst: either we or the Soviets will launch an attack out of the belief that civil defense makes a difference, and it will then turn out that the belief was unfounded.

Still another school of thought (mostly, but not completely, composed of certain conservative groups and some military officers) rejects civil defense because it is a form of Maginot-mindedness—that is, because it is defensive rather than offensive: "Brave men do not hide in holes." Until recently these groups made up the most effective opposition to shelter programs. While, by and large, they have backed down somewhat (probably as a result of the Berlin crisis and through a sort of "right-wing" reaction to the extremism of the "left-wing" criticism of civil defense), they still probably constitute the most important political and bureaucratic opposition to increases in civil defense.

BEFORE THE main arguments outlined above are analyzed, one important point should be made clear: that civil defense is indeed likely to be ineffective in contributing to three major objectives. First of all, it cannot *reliably* hold casualties and property damage to "classical levels"; in fact, it is almost prohibitively difficult to give any great degree of protection to concentrated populations in target areas from a surprise attack directed at them. Second, civil defense cannot, by and large, contribute directly to the conduct of military operations, and third, it cannot contribute very much to deterring a Soviet attack.

If we go back to the First and Second World Wars, we find that civil defense functioned as an integral part of the war effort; the ability to mobilize men and materials after the war started was crucial to victory. Civilians, therefore, represented a second line of defense. They supplied men, materials, and morale to the fighting forces. A thermonuclear war, however, changes the situation entirely. Almost (but not all) strategists today believe that it is impossible—even by heroic achievements in civil defense—to mobilize the civilian society to contribute to a significant military effort after a thermonuclear war has started, if the enemy tries to prevent it. For one thing, a thermonuclear war is unlikely to last longer than thirty days, and it may even last as little as thirty minutes—hardly enough time for the operation of a "post-attack mobilization base." Thus, the fact that we can give some protection to a factory worker or a machine tool or a mine or even a city would not, on the whole, make the Soviets fear the United States any more than if we could provide no protection at all.

For this reason, cities (with a few possible exceptions) cannot be considered high-priority military targets in a thermonuclear war, as they were in World War II. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that any first strike would be aimed at the capacity to retaliate, and that

cities would not only be secondary targets, but might well be deliberately spared.* If we were ever to bomb Russian cities, we would be bombing them because we wanted to punish the Soviets; we would be bombing them for reasons of malevolence or reprisal and not because they were military targets. (The Soviet planners, in my opinion, would to some extent agree with this judgment from their side; or if not, it is likely that they will soon come to accept a similar conception.)

But the case for civil defense need not rest either on the degree to which it can contribute to the war effort or on its capacity to strengthen our ability to deter a Soviet attack. It is not the purpose of civilians to protect the military. People are ends, not means. Therefore the main question is: Can civil defense be used to give a worthwhile degree of protection to lives and property and to facilitate recuperation after a war is over? The answer to this question, under many plausible circumstances, is undoubtedly Yes. Taking ade-

* I have discussed the different kinds of thermonuclear war at length in my book *On Thermonuclear War* and in my testimony (August 6, 1961) before the Holifield Committee. One of the most important distinctions depends on the target system the enemy chooses for his first strike. These can be characterized very roughly as:

1. Countervalue (attacks against people and property);
2. Countervalue + counterforce (attacks against people and property and also against retaliatory forces; i.e., bombers and missiles);
3. Straight counterforce (SAC, ICBM's, Polaris, etc., are the only objective);
4. Counterforce + "bonus" (people and property are included as secondary targets whenever they can be hit without distracting from the primary military objectives);
5. Counterforce + avoidance (people and property are carefully avoided where possible and only military objectives are aimed at).

Only numbers 3 and 5 seem to be rational for the attacker (who would then try to use the cities as hostages either to intimidate or to try to force his opponent to negotiate), but any of these attacks could occur. Even the simplest civil defense programs would be extremely effective in the last three cases (keeping casualties in the 1-25 million range instead of the 10-100 million). Quite elaborate programs, however, might fail to protect much more than half the population in the first two cases.

COMMENTARY

quate measures now could save the lives of forty million men, women, and children and reduce enormously the medical and genetic after-effects of a war. To be sure, in most situations forty million of the survivors' fellow citizens would not have been saved, but this is no reason for needlessly condemning an additional forty million people to death or neglecting those measures which could certainly diminish the other harmful effects of a war. In an even grimmer situation, civil defense could save the lives of as many as a hundred million people, and under some not improbable conditions civil defense could keep casualties down to one or two million. It could also mean that the nation would recuperate in five years instead of twenty, or in twenty rather than a hundred. In this sense, civil defense can be considered at least partially effective against most forms of nuclear attack that we can now anticipate, and extremely effective in certain special cases that could very well arise if our programs for avoiding war should fail in their purpose. And since there is always a chance that these programs may fail, we have an inescapably compelling reason—which is at once moral and political—at least to examine, and very likely to take, the steps that would reduce death, suffering, and destruction as much as possible.

ON WHAT GROUNDS do those critics of civil defense who call it ineffective base their judgment? One argument often advanced is that civil defense is ineffective because the long-range physical consequences of a thermonuclear war would make life impossible for the survivors, assuming that there were any. Now, it is true that—according to the best scientific estimates—the postwar environment would be more hostile to human life for some ten thousand years. However, objective studies also indicate that this environment would not be so hostile as to preclude, at least in the long run, decent and useful lives for the survivors and their descendants.*

People in the postwar world would for a time have to get by on a standard of living far below the one we consider necessary in the United States today. We must remember, however, that our standard today is far higher than the mere preservation of life would require.† Even more to the point, the present standard of public health in America could be dropped without catastrophic consequences. For example, though much of the food supply in the postwar world would be contaminated by Strontium 90, much of it could still be used without necessarily causing death or even serious illness—and even more of it could be used if preparations were made in advance to combat contamination.

Under such conditions, the average individual would run somewhat greater risks of various types of disease and greater risks of having genetically deformed children, but statistically these risks would not be so much larger than those normally run today. Thus—to take the case that most horrifies people when confronted by the idea of a thermonuclear war—the percentage of children born with serious genetic defects might go up, after a war big enough to have exposed the survivors to

* Indeed what evidence there is suggests that relatively normal and happy lives would not be impossible even under the relatively harsh conditions that might prevail after a nuclear war, and in spite of the personal and social traumas that would have been experienced. This assertion seems to arouse the utmost hostility in many people, yet it is as well documented a conclusion as many that we have in this uncertain field, and substantially better documented than the opposite view. (See for example *Air War and Emotional Stress* by I. L. Janis, or the series of studies on disasters and their aftereffects by the Disaster Research Group of the National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council.) It should be clear that to say that suffering would be great but not unlimited, or even to say that one would recover in some sense, is neither to advocate such suffering nor to view suffering callously.

† Studies that have been done (mainly by RAND, the Stanford Research Institute, and OGD) indicate that after the first year or so, assuming there is a successful reorganization, the standard of living (including life expectancy and probability of a normal birth) would be higher than the standards prevalent in the U.S. between 1900 and 1930.

an average dose of 250 roentgens,* from the present level of about 4 to an estimated 5 per cent. It can, of course, be said that this is an intolerably large increase; even one more deformed infant is too many. One can hardly disagree with that proposition. Yet the fact remains that life would still go on. People, after all, have lived under far worse conditions than we are accustomed to in this country today, not only throughout most of human history, but even in vast areas of the contemporary world. To argue that an effort to save people's lives is useless because life would not be worth living in the postwar world is tantamount to saying that people should not be saved because they would have to endure a lower standard of living and a lower standard of health. It is hard to think of any other equally preposterous proposition that serious men are still willing to back.

It is curious, moreover, that those who are most pessimistic in their estimate of the consequences of a nuclear war are generally to be found among the opponents of civil defense. If one believes that a thermonuclear war would be so horrible as to make life for the survivors more difficult than it has ever been in the whole of human history, then it would seem that one is all the more obligated to take measures that might ease the lot of the survivors rather than abandoning them to their fate.

CIVIL DEFENSE, THEN, is not rendered ineffective by the long-range physical consequences of a thermonuclear war. Nor is it likely to be rendered ineffective by the psychological consequences that some observers have claimed would follow from the traumas of such a war. One must recognize that for most people deep grief is alleviated by time, that people do recover in large part from tragedies, that life does go on. In fact, the detailed map exercises that have been made by students of nuclear war lead to the conclusion that most survivors would not go through as horrible a set of personal experiences as many Rus-

sians, Germans, Poles, Yugoslavs, Japanese, and others did in World War II. These people have been left with deep emotional scars, yet few of them now feel they would be better off dead; most are leading "normal and happy" lives.

None of this is to imply that we do not have good sound technical reasons for worrying about the effectiveness of civil defense. Any man today who says that we, as a nation, can survive a thermonuclear war is saying something very complicated. He is saying that we can handle *all* of the problems—military, social, political, economic, and medical—that would arise from a thermonuclear war; not merely some, but all. Furthermore, he is assuming that a civil defense program would be functioning on the day the war started and that it would not have been rendered obsolete between the time it was designed and the time it was completed. As I have pointed out above, many different kinds of thermonuclear war might conceivably occur. The worst kind—a surprise attack out of the blue directed against population—presents a virtually impossible problem of defense for those in target areas. But our weakness in the worst case (the very case on which opponents of civil defense like to dwell) does not settle the issue. For one thing, a surprise attack out of the blue directed against population is the least likely of all the possibilities. For another thing, programs which are designed to meet less ferocious and more likely wars (e.g., a "straight counterforce" attack which ignores cities and aims only or mainly at strategic capability) can still accomplish something; even in the worst case there is still a difference, after all, between 180 million dead and 90 million dead. One should not lightly condemn 90 million people to an unnecessary death by an undemonstrable supposition that nothing can be done to save them.

* This is a reasonable estimate of what might happen, given modest precautions against fallout, in the most likely kinds of war that could occur in the early 60's.

As for the problem of obsolescence, civil defense, like any other military system, must be improved and adapted over time. Actually, obsolescence is less serious a problem for civil defense than for many other military systems because even a civil defense system which has been outstripped by technological developments may nevertheless provide a large degree of protection (depending again on the kind of attack that is made).

Unhappily, it may soon be technologically possible to build (probably in less than ten years and at a cost of something in the neighborhood of \$10 billion) what I have elsewhere called "doomsday machines"—that is, devices which could actually destroy all unprotected people, or perhaps eventually *all* people, for only the most elaborate measures could have any hope of protecting against such devices. However, so far as we know, doomsday machines are not now being built by either side, and there are good reasons for believing that they will not be built in the near future. This is not to say that they will never be built; I am not alone in thinking that there is a serious danger of one or more such weapons being built, in a matter of decades, if we do not first arrive at an adequate system of arms control. Of course, the weapons that already exist give us reason enough to want arms control, while the possibility of doomsday machines gives us no reason whatever to neglect civil defense against the far less destructive weapons that are now or soon will become part of the nuclear arsenal, and those which may be developed in the near future.*

A PART FROM getting a program inaugurated early enough so that if a war should break out we can rely on having a shelter capability in being on the day it starts, there are other problems to be considered in estimating the effectiveness of civil defense and the possibility of the nation's recovering from a thermonuclear war. Would the social organism fall apart

completely—that is, die in some sense—as a result of the tremendous shock it would receive from a large thermonuclear war? Obviously we cannot know for sure. In order to argue that society would reorganize itself after an attack, one must have faith in the ability of people to improvise, to meet emergencies with some intelligence and energy. Faith of this kind is not unreasonable. Insofar as there are historical examples to study (and some of them are close to thermonuclear wars in intensity, e.g., the devastation of Germany and the Soviet Union in World War II)—they provide evidence that people can and do rise to the occasion.

Undoubtedly we are moving here amid vast uncertainties. Many of our suppositions may prove wrong. Given these uncertainties, the advocates of civil defense should not claim too much, and neither should its opponents. It does seem, however, that if there is a reasonable possibility for the survival of society after a nuclear war, a moral obligation is imposed upon us to prepare facilities in advance that would help people to meet the emergencies they would have to face and that would improve their capability for improvising and organizing. That there is such a possibility is indicated by whatever serious studies have been made; these studies are only partial and they are certainly not infallible, but they do give us enough ground for supposing that the survivors of a nuclear war would not meet any objectively insuperable obstacles—especially if they were supported by proper preparations.

* Actually, because of the desire on both sides to procure weapon systems that are relatively invulnerable, the current technological trend is toward less destructive systems. For example, a Polaris submarine carries sixteen missiles with a total yield in the five to twenty megaton region. A B-52 squadron (fifteen planes)—which under current conditions may be a less reliable deterrent—might be capable of carrying ten to fifty times as much yield. The Minuteman missile which replaces the Atlas-Titan missiles is also likely to carry much less yield per missile than its predecessor.

What do such preparations consist of? Among the most important are those designed to cope with immediate survival needs and to maintain or restore economic momentum. Plans must be made so that enough food, water, shelter, and clothing will be available immediately after an attack. That means having sufficient stocks on hand to last until production can begin again, and preparing schemes and facilities for distributing these stocks under the many different possible circumstances that could arise. One reason for optimism concerning U.S. recovery is that, as certain analyses indicate, enormous stocks of the highest priority items would be left after the kinds of nuclear attacks which might be launched against this country if a war should break out at some point in the early 1960's. For example, according to the best estimates, we would not face starvation even if we were unable to get agriculture going again for a year or two.* To take another example, studies also provide evidence that the national transportation system would continue to work adequately,† and that therefore the preparations now being made to distribute food before an attack are not strictly necessary. But since, as I have repeatedly tried to emphasize, these studies are not infallible, it is wise to take out as much insurance as possible against the errors they may contain.

The question of political recovery is more difficult to answer. We live today in a very stable country. It is one of the few countries in the world in which the government does not worry about revolution and subversion as major problems. However, these problems might well exist in the postwar world. Even if we won the war, it is conceivable that we might no longer live in a democracy. But again, if adequate preparations were made, our democratic institutions could probably survive most kinds of thermonuclear war. For some very small wars this is almost certainly true; for others, it is a judgment based on the belief that while the lives and thoughts of all the survivors would be af-

fectured by the war, their character structure and value system would probably not be changed in any startling fashion.

On this point it has sometimes been argued that the only survivors of a thermonuclear war would be "backwoods reactionaries" who could not be expected to support the rebuilding of democratic institutions. But the argument is faulty, since it not only exaggerates the difference between urban and rural America but also fails to recognize that many or even most of our cities would survive the likeliest forms of nuclear war that we can anticipate. Yet even if it were true that the cities would all be wiped out, it would still be an indefensible moral position that implied—as this one does—that people who live in the country are less worth saving than those who live in cities.

THIS IS BY NO MEANS as complete a picture as can be drawn, and although the studies that have been made contain many gaps, there is good reason to conclude that civil defense is not completely—or even largely—ineffective. Precisely *how* effective civil defense can be depends on the kind of war that occurs and the kind of programs that are instituted. The recommendation by the Kennedy administration that we spend \$207 million in 1962 for the identification, counting, and equipping of existing shelter space, for the improvement of air-raid warning and fallout detection systems, and for research and development, is both realistic and desirable as a first step. (In fact such a step was recommended in the RAND 1957 civil defense study.) But it is only a first step.

* See "Report on a Study of Non-Military Defense" (RAND Report R-322-RC) and "Post-Attack Farm Problems" (Stanford Research Institute, Part I, December 1960; Part II, October 1961).

† "A System Analysis of the Effects of Nuclear Attack on Railroad Transportation in the Continental United States" (Stanford Research Institute, April 1960) and "Effects of Nuclear Attack on Rail Activity Centers" (Stanford Research Institute, July 1961).

A reasonable program might involve a gradual build-up from about \$1 billion annually to somewhere in the neighborhood of under \$5 billion annually. An expenditure of that order would buy a valuable degree of protection against most forms of nuclear attack that might occur. The money would be used for the construction of various types of shelter, research and experimentation, educating civil defense cadres, and preparing plans and facilities for post-attack recuperation. But if an ambitious civil defense program should be implemented, it would be important to keep it small enough and to carry it out in a way such that it would be unlikely, by itself, to provoke an accelerated arms race.

THIS BRINGS US to the second set of arguments often used by opponents of civil defense: not that civil defense is ineffective but that it is potentially too effective. The argument is this: If civilians are considered a target, then an attempt to protect them could touch off a greater effort by the Soviets to acquire the necessary power to destroy them even in their protected state. If we build an adequate shelter system, they may then go to heroic efforts to build larger missiles and a greater number of them. Or equally important, if the Soviets fear that our civil defense preparations increase the chances of our striking them in a crisis or in an emergency, they may then have to keep their forces more alert. This could, in turn, make them more accident-prone or trigger-happy. We would then be faced with what is known as a situation of "false pre-emption" or "anticipatory retaliation." That is, they may strike us because they think that we are going to strike them.

Now, I agree that some of these problems might be raised by a large crash civil-defense program—say, one that was initiated at substantially more than \$5 billion annually. But I do not believe that the kind of program recommended by the present administration—or even a pro-

gram as large as the one advocated here—would greatly affect the arms race.* In order to understand why, we have to consider the psychological aspect of a conflict such as the one we are involved in with the Soviet Union.

There is a widespread feeling that civil defense is a sign of war hysteria and militarism or an admission that war is inevitable, and that it will therefore bring about the very thing we fear: if we build shelters, we will have to use them. In other words, civil defense is an example of the mechanism known as "self-fulfilling prophecy." In the present context, this term—whose original application was somewhat different from the use that is made of it by opponents of civil defense†

* It is very difficult to see how any "aggressive" implications can plausibly be read into the current program. Far from contributing to deterrence, a program of concentrating much of our population in fallout shelters that are vulnerable to blast and thermal effects, makes people ideal hostages for an enemy who deliberately spares them on his first strike. However, very few people who have considered these issues would take the position that the probability of war in the absence of this program is so low that the hypothetical decrease in deterrence is enough to outweigh the savings in life and property in the event of a war.

But there is a more legitimate objection to the \$207 million program currently being carried out. Even though it emphasizes using existing structures as community shelters, there is still a heavy reliance on individual and local community efforts. This leads to all kinds of exhortatory and sometimes inflammatory speeches or exaggerated claims by civil defense enthusiasts, and raises the "Shoot Thy Neighbor" and other divisive problems. A great country ought not to proceed permanently in such a fashion with the business of defending its citizens against the potential hazards of nuclear war.

† The phrase, I believe, was first given wide currency by Dr. Robert K. Merton in an article published in 1948. Merton's concern was with how the treatment of ethnic out-groups by ethnic in-groups sometimes acts to bring about the very characteristics condemned in the original stereotypes. He tried to outline the different conditions under which prejudiced prophecies might be defeated rather than fulfilled, and to emphasize that "deliberate institutional controls" could prevent such fears from being translated into reality. Certainly the expectation of hostility from other nations that underlies national defense can have both a self-fulfilling (arms race) and a self-defeat-

—is invoked to refer to situations in which one side acts in a hostile manner because it suspects the other side of hostility; the other side, observing this behavior, responds by acting hostile itself, thus confirming the original estimate made by the first side, which then acts even more hostile and suspicious than before, and so on, until the spiral reaches a very high level of mutual distrust and belligerence.

I think there is no doubt that this process actually does operate both in personal and in international relations. But I also think that when the question is one of civil defense rather than of strategic force (which is a different matter), many of the people who appeal to the "self-fulfilling prophecy" are usually being less rational than superstitious: "thinking makes it so." They object to civil defense in much the same way that some women will object to an examination for cancer or some men will object to buying life insurance. Yet it is not the examination which brings on the malignancy or the preparation for family security which causes death. On the contrary, it is an indisputable principle of everyday experience that appropriate precautions taken as a result of realistic fears ordinarily help to prevent such fears from being realized. Of course, the operative words here are "appropriate" and "realistic," and it is on determining what constitutes an appropriate precaution and a realistic fear that we ought to concentrate our minds. Prophecies are not fulfilled magically, but only through communications and reactions that can be identified when they occur. And we may be willing to accept some small costs on the debit side of the ledger if the over-all balance is improved.

ing (deterrent) aspect. Which aspect becomes more important depends entirely on our goals (unilateral disarmament, deterrence unless and until better arrangements can be worked out, bargaining from a position of strength, etc.), on the specific situation, and not least on the type (first-strike capability, second-strike capability, active, civil, etc.) and *quantity* of defense which is under consideration. How much is often as important as what kind.

In short, the problem in launching a civil defense effort is similar to the problem that exists in all our military programs: to find the line above which we cannot go without provoking the Soviets into greatly accelerated efforts. To those of us who are not ready to accept any large degree of immediate unilateral disarmament, this quantitative question is crucial, since even maintaining our current establishment at its present level involves us in the danger of getting caught in a spiralling arms race. It is true that both sides—restrained by economic and social limitations and the knowledge that unreasonable efforts are likely to touch off similar responses on the part of the antagonist—are running neither as fast nor as hard as they could. Consequently, it is of the utmost (though still not overriding) importance to do nothing that could be interpreted as an excessive loosening of self-restraint.

So far as the over-all strategic balance is concerned, I believe that if we desired we could in the short- and medium-run obtain a meaningful and large increase in our "current superiority" over the Soviets (given their technological and economic limitations). However, it is unlikely that this could be done without making the arms race much more dangerous than it already is. Therefore, unless the Soviets force international relations to deteriorate drastically, we should be careful to avoid pursuing an undue degree of increase in the superiority of our over-all strategic force. So far as civil defense is concerned, I would—as I have already indicated—be opposed to current programs at the level of \$5 or \$10 billion a year, despite the fact that in my opinion such larger programs could be justified by an analysis based only on narrow military and economic considerations. The civil defense line probably should be drawn somewhere below \$5 billion annually, and the U.S. should build up to that figure only gradually, so as not to involve itself in too abrupt a change of policy.

THE THIRD ARGUMENT generally advanced by opponents of civil defense is that an American civil defense effort might lead to a preventive war by the Soviet Union (because such a program would convince the Soviets of our aggressive intentions). Alternately, it is asserted that a civil defense program might induce a preventive war by the United States (because by attacking at a propitious moment, we could hold casualties to a few million). Both these arguments seem almost completely incredible. They rest on the notion that unless one can guarantee total annihilation, the other side will not be deterred; that is to say, unless we can promise the Soviets that every single American will be killed in their reprisal, they will worry about a surprise attack against them out of the blue. Yet neither side has shown so great a desire to strike the other as this notion implies. In my opinion, if there were perfect protection for every citizen of both countries, and an invulnerable post-attack recuperation capability to boot, deterrence would still operate under most circumstances; after all, the empty cities—which have such immense historical and cultural significance—would still be hostages. In addition there would be uncertainties in the analysis: who would trust a hypothetical analysis enough to make him press a button in cold blood? But in the more practical case we can ignore these subtleties; no country is going to go to war lightly simply because by doing so it could reduce fatalities from 60 million in a possible future war to, say, 20 million. Twenty million is a very impressive number of people to sacrifice to an estimate of the future course of international politics.

There are, however, circumstances in which certain kinds of civil defense programs might tend to convert an especially tense crisis into a war. Harsh choices can arise. We may have to decide between the risk of immediate war and appeasement or surrender, with whatever that entails in terms of future risks. In such a situation

some kinds of civil defense, in particular evacuation programs, could affect one side's decision or the other's, and thus would increase the risk of immediate war. But we must recognize both that the risk may have to be taken and that having a credible ability to accept that risk may deter the Soviets from deliberately creating the very situation in which it would arise. I would, in fact, conjecture that an appropriate civil defense program might even contribute to a relatively large reduction in the probability of war—by reducing the frequency and intensity of Soviet-inspired crises.

Still another argument that has been made against civil defense is that although it is ineffective, it can fool our leaders and make them more reckless, or it can fool the people who will then become more reckless themselves or allow the government to be. Since I have already set forth my reasons for believing in the effectiveness of civil defense, and since I have already indicated my objections to the notion that a danger of recklessness is involved, there is no need to discuss this argument further. However, it may be worth speculating on why people hold to such positions. The reasons, I think, range from a simple visceral desire to dismiss the whole subject of nuclear war; to a fanatic desire to concentrate all our energies—material and intellectual—on a single “approved” approach (whether this be deterrence, accommodation, or unilateral disarmament) with no insurance for contingencies; to an even more fanatic desire to construct an oversimplified “everybody red or everybody dead” argument.

In short, the critics of civil defense do not want to think about the possibility of a nuclear war actually being fought. They prefer wishing it away, ignoring it, denying its existence as a problem worthy of the most serious thought and consideration. Even professional strategists sometimes do not want to concern themselves with the details of the balance of terror—the obvious possibilities for miscalculation,

unauthorized behavior, accident, or even war by calculation. They do not want to consider these possibilities seriously, in the sense of letting them affect programs. Most such strategists fear that civil defense competes financially with improved deterrent or limited war forces. Many also fear that it will weaken the morale of the civilian population by casting doubt on the capacity of SAC to deter or by making the risks of war seem more urgent and actual. Hence these strategists take refuge in the *automatic* balance of terror—the idea that there can be only one kind of thermonuclear war, a war inevitably involving mutual annihilation, and therefore a war that can never take place. Yet everything depends on how the war may start, how it may be fought, and how it may be terminated. And unless one understands that there is a whole range of possible situations, one cannot fully appreciate the potential effectiveness of the different

kinds of civil defense programs which might be recommended.

IT IS NOT ONLY our first-priority objectives that are essential; there is a long list of things that we cannot safely do without. We need to eat and sleep as well as to breathe, and though human biology permits of no question about which comes first, neither can be ignored indefinitely. Similarly, there is no question that it is far more important to avoid war than to find ways of reducing its damage and of recovering from its effects. But since we cannot be certain that we will succeed in preventing war, it is essential that we take moderate and prudent steps to minimize the disaster that such a failure would mean. In the event of a war, civil defense could not only save millions of lives but could also prove crucial to the continued survival in the world of Western ideals and institutions.

* * *

Erich Fromm & Michael Maccoby Up until 1961 few Americans took the possibility of nuclear war very seriously. Many were convinced that such a war would never occur because it would be too destructive; others did not think about it at all. The change which took place in 1961 was brought about in the first instance by the acute Berlin crisis and President Kennedy's speech of July 25. The President told the nation after his Vienna meeting with Khrushchev that the Soviet leader had threatened to execute his Berlin plans within six months at the most, and since we were resolved not to accept such an ultimatum, the inference was that a thermonuclear war was a definite possibility before the end of the year. The President added in this context that he would announce the steps a citizen could "take without delay to protect his family in the case of an attack," and proposed a new \$207 million shelter program.

The President's speech might not have been so effective had the soil not been pre-

pared by the most vocal and most influential spokesman for civil defense, Herman Kahn, and a number of his colleagues, especially from the RAND Corporation. Mr. Kahn's basic approach can be described as being close to psychoanalysis. Not so much because he makes many statements about psychological matters (such as the quality and duration of grief, the discipline of people during and after a nuclear attack, the capacity to be happy in the post-attack world, etc.), but primarily because his central thesis is that, out of fear, people repress the awareness that thermonuclear war may come, and consequently they ignore the possibilities of defense. Hence in order to enable them to prepare adequately, the thing to do is to make them aware that a thermonuclear war can occur. No psychoanalyst could quarrel with this principle. The question is only whether an awareness that thermonuclear war is actually possible leads to an increased sense of realism or whether, as we believe, old illusions are replaced by

even more dangerous ones. Kahn, whose good will and great ability we do not doubt, has on the whole given the opinion leaders and the political leaders of this country the impression that nuclear war need by no means be catastrophic—that, provided we take the proper steps, the country can recover, and that after ten or twenty years people can once again lead happy and prosperous lives. He has, indeed, qualified this general thesis by many “ifs,” but it is the general thesis that has taken hold, while the qualifications have become the fine print which is forgotten.

There are two conceptions of the role of civil defense and, specifically, of a shelter program. The first—stressed in Kahn’s testimony last August before the Holifield Committee* and also in President Kennedy’s speech of May 25—sees the shelter program as “life insurance,” and argues for it on the ground that it would save many millions of lives. At present the assumption is made that fallout shelters might save not only lives in rural areas, but also in the cities—since it is calculated that the Soviets are not likely to attack our cities. As we shall try to show later, this calculation is quite unwarranted, and the probability is that our urban population would be wiped out in a thermonuclear war. However, since millions of people living in rural areas away from population centers and military installations might be saved by fallout shelters, and since nuclear war is possible or even likely to occur, who would dare to dissuade a family or a community from constructing fallout shelters? We certainly would not.

Quite different from the “insurance” idea is the conception of civil defense as part of our *national strategy*. Many spokesmen for civil defense contend that it will greatly improve our strategic position, that it may help to avert war. We shall try to show: (1) that there are severe limitations to the effectiveness of civil defense; (2) that it is more likely to provoke war than to deter it; (3) that

even if it were optimally successful in war, it would not prevent the replacement of our democratic system by a totalitarian one. If we are right on these points, then even the justification of civil defense as “insurance” may have to be reconsidered. The true situation may be analogous to one in which a man takes out life insurance under conditions that considerably increase the likelihood of his death. In such a case, one might still not try to dissuade him if he wished to buy insurance, but certainly he and his friends would be right to have severe doubts about its usefulness.

THE FIRST and most fundamental limitation of any shelter program is that it could not save our urban population in the event of an attack against our cities. Rather than frankly accepting this fact, Kahn and other advocates of civil defense argue that if the Russians strike first they will try to destroy our missile and SAC bases, *not* our cities. Given such a strike, the greatest danger to those city dwellers fortunate enough to be living well away from strategic centers would be from delayed fallout, and thus fallout shelters might lower the immediate death toll from fifty to ten million people.†

On what grounds do strategists suppose that the Russians would not direct a first strike against our population centers? Kahn, in his book *On Thermonuclear War*, gives several reasons: (1) they have so few missiles that they would have to choose between attacking our military installations *or* our cities, and therefore in order to neutralize our striking power they would choose to hit our military installations; (2) they would not wish to attack

* “Hearings Before a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Government Operations,” House of Representatives, August 1961. All quotations in this article, unless otherwise designated, are from the record of these hearings.

† This calculation assumes a strike with a yield no larger than 3,000 megatons, in spite of the fact that we have the power to launch over 40,000 megatons, and there is no proof that the Russians are behind us.

our cities first, in order to hold them as hostages against our retaliatory strike; (3) "almost nobody wants to go down in history as the first man to kill 100,000,000 people."

The weakness of Kahn's first point lies in its shortsightedness. Since it will take no less than a year for even a minimal civil defense program to bear fruit, calculations ought to be made not on the basis of present Russian missile strength, but on the number of missiles the Soviets may have a year or two from now. In addition, even if they did decide to make our military installations their main target, the Soviets might kill an additional 50 million people by diverting only a fraction of their missile strength to our ten largest population centers. (This is the kind of attack Kahn calls "counterforce plus bonus.") Further, we have so increased our strength in the past year that a successful attack against our bases would no longer cripple our retaliatory power. The Russians would thus be foolish to limit their attack to our military installations, knowing that their own cities would remain as hostages.

As to the second point—that they would avoid hitting our cities in order to hold them as hostages—Kahn imagines that after having destroyed our military bases, they would command us not to strike their cities on pain of having our own cities destroyed in retaliation. But is it realistic to assume that after the destruction of our military installations and the death of ten to fifteen million people, the Russians would expect our government to wait and listen to their demands rather than to use all its strength immediately in a mood of fury and revenge against the Russian cities?

And finally, as for the reluctance of a political leader to go down in history as the first man to kill 100,000,000 people, such considerations did not interfere with the decision to saturate cities with bombs during the Second World War; nor did they restrain the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Why then

should we expect the force of moral considerations to be greater now when the survival of entire nations is at stake?

All this, it should be added, applies only to a first strike by the Russians. *If we were to initiate a first strike*—in retaliation for, say, a Soviet invasion of West Berlin—the Russians would not hit back at our empty bases; clearly, they would attack our cities.

ASSUMING, THEN, that our cities were attacked, what chance of survival would the urban population have? Almost none, given the effects of the megaton weapons. A 20-megaton groundburst leaves a crater 300 feet deep and a half mile in radius, destroying all underground shelters. Within a four-mile radius, the most heavily reinforced concrete structures are leveled. At eleven miles, the blast pressure destroys all conventional frame or brick buildings, and buries most basement fallout shelters, while winds of 160 miles per hour turn hurtling debris and human bodies into deadly missiles.

But blast is the least of the killers in thermonuclear war; fire, instant radiation, and delayed fallout would claim many more lives. Within at least a 25-mile radius of a 20-megaton blast—an area of about 2,000 square miles—any exposed person would die of burns, and raging fires would soon begin to consume the air in fallout and blast shelters.* As long as there was fuel for these fires, they would burn on, unchecked. Even more widespread in its potential effect is the danger of blindness to those above ground at the moment of blast; anyone who glimpsed the explosion would be blinded, for it would emit a light pulse at less than 0.015 second (the time needed for a saving eye-blink).

While in the city itself almost nobody could survive, people living in the suburbs

* In the fire-bombing of Hamburg during World War II, the firestorm caused a ground temperature of 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit in which all exposed humans were incinerated, while those in shelters were asphyxiated or burned.

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—even if they escaped these instantaneous effects of blast, flying debris, heat, blindness, and radiation—would still be threatened by delayed fallout. At 25 miles from a 20-megaton explosion one might expect doses of 3,000 roentgens per hour arriving after about twenty minutes—enough to kill a person within two minutes, unless he were in a specially constructed fallout shelter. If he could succeed in reaching a shelter with a large shielding factor within twenty-two minutes after the blast, and if he could avoid glimpsing the fireball, a hard fight for survival would then have only begun.

What about saving the urban population by *evacuation*? While many reject the idea of evacuation, others (including Kahn) consider it a serious possibility. It is hard to see why. If we were to evacuate our cities for every political crisis, we would probably have to leave them empty for several months practically every year. Even if this were feasible (which it is not), after one or two such evacuations no one would leave, for the warning signal would come to be considered a repeated cry of "wolf." Further, every time we evacuated, we would give the Russians a reason for supposing that we were planning a first strike, and hence the chances of a preemptive attack would increase. As to evacuating cities *after* a warning, fifteen minutes would obviously not be enough time if the Russians struck first. If, on the other hand, *we* wanted to strike first, it would require many hours at the very least to evacuate all our major cities, and since such a move would be impossible to conceal from the Russians, they would obviously not wait for our attack, but would hasten to hit us first. At best we might secretly evacuate our leaders before striking, but how many of them would be willing to leave for safety knowing that their wives and children would soon be killed?

Finally, let us consider the possibility of protecting our urban population by vast underground shelters (which have also been proposed by certain enthusiasts of

civil defense). In the case of a surprise attack it would take more than fifteen minutes to get people down to the streets from big offices and apartment buildings. The panic, and the struggle for elevators, doors, and the like could only result in the same kind of situation that arises in a theater when fire breaks out. Even if there were a shelter entrance not further than five minutes' brisk walk from any point in the city, it takes little imagination to visualize how many people would be trampled to death before reaching the shelter, and how few—even of the strongest and most brutal—would be saved.

IF EVERYONE in the city and its suburbs is likely to be killed, what are the chances for survival beyond the 25-mile range? Here fallout would be the greatest menace. In some areas—say 50 miles from the blast—it would probably be necessary to remain in a fallout shelter for at least two weeks, and afterward it would be possible to leave it for only a few hours each week. How many people would find themselves in this situation depends on the magnitude of the attack, and on the amount of fallout generated by megaton bombs—something the experts have still not agreed upon. A problem in making any calculation is the lack of studies which outline exact fallout danger at different distances from the blast, or in accordance with various possible attacks. Neither are there sufficient data on the effects of other radioactive particles—for instance Strontium 90, which might make farming impossible anywhere in the country. There are experts who think that many farmlands might require forty replantings before becoming safe again, and no one has disproved this estimate. Norman A. Hananian of the RAND Corporation, who prepared the statistics on heavy attacks used by Kahn in his book, concludes his testimony to the Holifield Committee by stating that "the outcomes of future attacks are anything but precisely predictable. Fallout could create overwhelming

disaster, but it might not. Whether it would depends to some extent on factors we have not examined today—on wind, for example. But it depends most importantly on the kind of war that the potential combatants may be prepared to fight." What kind of war can we expect? Ralph E. Lapp has written that present Soviet stockpiles are more than adequate for a 10,000 or 20,000 megaton attack, enough to saturate the whole nation with fallout.

Hanunian considers attacks of from 300 to 30,000 megatons, but the latter, as we have just seen, seems closer to Russian capability. In such an attack, with five-sixths of the bombs directed against military targets, Hanunian estimates that even a total fallout shelter system would be unable to prevent from 54 to 85 million people from being killed. What the experts have so far not studied are the *long-range effects* of 30,000 megaton bombings, which might so contaminate the countryside as to leave crops inedible, unstored water undrinkable, and food-giving animals dead from radioactivity. If a 30,000 megaton attack were to take place—as indeed is possible—what would become of Kahn's optimistic idea of the "B country" (the rural areas and the small towns) rebuilding the "A country" (the 53 major metropolitan areas)?

In summing up our discussion of the limitations of civil defense, let us take a brief look at the possible types of shelter program and try to determine how effective each is likely to be in the event of the kind of war we consider most probable—a war involving attacks on our cities, either directly or as "bonus."

The effectiveness of the current minimal program of marking and stocking shelter space mainly in urban areas would be most limited—except in the unlikely case that the enemy were to decide against attacking even the ten largest cities.

The next possible program—proposed by Walmar Strobe of the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories—is the \$10

to \$30 billion network of well-stocked communal fallout shelters built to house everyone in both rural and urban areas. In our opinion, these shelters could not protect the population of the cities. Perhaps in suburban areas 20 miles or more away from the explosions, some people could be saved (provided, of course, that they were well-organized, disciplined, and able to weather severe stress and disease). However, it does seem to be true that, depending on the type of attack, the time of day, and many other unpredictable circumstances, this program could save a large proportion of the rural population.

A final possibility is the science-fiction program that Kahn has suggested, which would cost \$200 billion. This envisages underground space for factories and urban blast protection that could—as Kahn puts it in *On Thermonuclear War*—"probably take direct hits of 'small' bombs (say less than 5 MT) and [might] even take 'near' misses of 'large' bombs." Yet even after spending so much we would still have no security: since it is infinitely cheaper to increase striking power than it is to raise the level of protection, even the most hardened shelter cannot guarantee safety. If there were a possibility of adequate shelter, it would be found only in underground cities where we would have to live permanently. Is this troglodytic life the fulfillment of the American Dream?

ASSUMING, WITH ALL the qualifications introduced above, that a complete and thorough shelter program could save millions of people *in rural areas*, what would post-attack life be like for the survivors—psychologically, morally, economically, and politically? The situation in the shelters, of course, would vary with the different types of shelter and the amount of fallout in the particular locale. Privately owned luxury shelters would be comfortable, provided they were defended successfully and would-be intruders did not retaliate by blocking the air vents. In the public shelters, the danger of over-

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crowding would exist, especially if the program were not completed before the attack came. Moreover, we should expect that in many communal shelters disease and meager rations would exact a psychological toll.* People might have radios, which would boost their morale (provided transmitting stations were not destroyed), but this might also be offset by hearing that all big cities had been leveled, and that there was widespread disease. Further, unless the attack were to have occurred at night, many families would have been separated, with people not knowing whether their wives, husbands, or children had found protection. Given all these conditions, what would be the state of mind of those in the shelters, immediately after the attack and for some time to come?

Kahn's answer to this question is very optimistic. "It is my personal belief," he told the Holifield Committee, "speaking less as an expert than as a man who has read widely, that these problems [social, psychological, political, and moral questions] have been grossly exaggerated. Most people will not be psychologically deranged. One is not, for example, going to break up family relations by a war. The family relation is a very stable one. . . . One is not even going to obliterate the fact that people are Americans. By and large, they will be about as honest, hard-working, reliable, and responsible as they are today. While everybody's life and thoughts will be affected by the war the character structure of the survivors is unlikely to be changed in any startling fashion."

In his testimony Kahn also speaks about "post-attack grief" and argues against the

* This expectation runs contrary to the experiment of the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories showing "positive" reactions and "considerable satisfaction in the communal experience" after two weeks. But the NRDL's study has limited applicability; the subjects were volunteer prison convicts who could leave at any time, and are therefore not comparable to survivors, fearful of surfacing to death, chaos, and despair, yet stifling in cramped quarters while they remain sheltered.

notion many people have that "because of the enormous number of casualties, all of the pleasure, all of the taste will permanently go out of life for almost everybody." "As far as I know," he says, "that just hasn't happened in anything that has occurred before, and one would not expect it to happen even as a result of a large thermonuclear war." One reason for believing that it would not happen is that "in a sense, grief is family-sized. If one loses a close relative or close friend, one will grieve. If one loses one's family, one will grieve even more. But, in some sense, that is about as far as one can go. Most people would not mourn for a million people much more than they would mourn for their family." Kahn also claims (in *On Thermonuclear War*) that a shock spaced over a few days "is good, not bad" so far as its psychological effects are concerned, because "the habits of a lifetime cannot be changed for most people in a few days." And here, finally, is how he summarizes his conclusions as to the psychological effect of a thermonuclear war in his book: "Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, objective studies indicate that even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of the survivors and their descendants."

Bearing in mind that Kahn himself states explicitly that he does not speak as an expert on such matters, and that he also says that the disaster studies which have been made are not sufficient to establish his case on solid scientific grounds, let us now consider the picture he paints of the post-attack psychological situation.

TO BEGIN WITH, the problem of post-attack psychic shock is not one of families breaking up. The problem is how those families that would not be broken up would react to the break-up of the whole world around them. Kahn believes that the character structure of the sur-

vivors would probably not be "changed in any startling fashion," but he fails to say why he believes so, and his patriotic appeal to the fact that "people are Americans" is not an adequate substitute for good reasoning. Indeed, one might more plausibly assume that non-Americans accustomed to totalitarian discipline would, if anything, be less radically affected than the average American. Moreover, the notion that sudden shock is less far-reaching in its effects than prolonged suffering is totally indefensible. Vast psychiatric experience and a huge body of literature are there to show that traumatic neuroses are produced both in peace and war by sudden fright and by tension of an intensity which transcends the amount our nervous system can tolerate. Such neuroses can result in severe depression, suicidal tendencies, self-accusations, amnesia and disorientation, and states of anxiety—all of which may persist for many years. To be sure, long-lasting states of despair can also produce severe psychic damage, but to ignore (as Kahn does) the effect of sudden shocks of great intensity is only to make the picture rosier than it really is.

The experts testifying last August at the Holifield Committee hearings on civil defense tell us that no disaster study yet made reports the psychological consequences of devastation as wide and as great as would result from a thermonuclear war. We, however, would like to recommend to Kahn and his colleagues that they look into one disaster which *has* been studied, and which *is* comparable to a thermonuclear war in terms of loss of life and disruption of society: the Black Death of 1348–1349. As the distinguished historian William L. Langer writes, the Black Death was "the greatest single disaster that has ever befallen European mankind. In most localities a third or even half of the population was lost within the space of a few months. . . ."^{*} Particularly relevant in the

context of the present discussion is the fact that the cities were the hardest hit by the Black Death. Professor Langer notes that with the Black Death the phenomenal economic progress of the 13th century came to a halt, followed by a prolonged depression, but he also feels that in some sense the economic effects were secondary to the long-range psychological consequences of those mass deaths. He writes that "the horror and confusion in many places brought general demoralization and social breakdown. Criminal elements were quick to take over, looting the deserted houses and even murdering the sick to rob them of their jewels." The period after the crisis was marked "by a mood of misery, depression, and anxiety, and by a general sense of impending doom," so much so that it has been suggested that people hesitated to marry and raise a family. (According to reports, this has also been true of the survivors of Hiroshima.) Langer's summation seems to us remarkably applicable to the most likely outcome of a thermonuclear war:

It is perfectly clear that disaster and death threatening an entire community will bring on a mass emotional disturbance, based on a feeling of helpless exposure, disorientation, and common guilt. Furthermore, it seems altogether plausible to suppose that children, having experienced the terror of their parents and the panic of the community will react to succeeding crises in a similar but even more intense manner. In other words, the anxiety and fear are transmitted from one generation to another, constantly aggravated.

Which brings us to Kahn's idea that grief is "family-sized." The trouble with this idea is that grief is not the only problem when a thermonuclear war is in question. We must remember that the survivors would witness a sudden tearing apart of the whole fabric of society. For most people, the sense of stability, and even of their own identity, rests on the meaning society gives to their lives. What then might we expect would happen to

^{*} "The Next Assignment," *The American Historical Review*, January 1958.

men if everything that seemed to be certain became completely unstable within a matter of hours? Previous wars supply no precedent for such a situation. The soldier was of course exposed to great stresses, but life remained stable for him precisely because he knew that his family and the rest of society were still relatively unchanged. In thermonuclear war, however, no part of the social fabric would remain stable. Half of the population killed; most of the leaders gone; no transportation; unburied corpses; epidemics; no communications, electricity, or water supply; divided families; many months necessary to create the minimum conditions for renewing a semblance of life as it was previously known—and for what? What sense would life make? What hope would there be? How much fury would be generated in those who had fared worse than others? How many would blame themselves for being alive when others were dead? What would be the reaction of those who were just managing to get by when refugees turned up to be fed? How much rage would there be against the leaders or scapegoats who would be held responsible for having brought the war on? No, for the majority of people the problem would not only be grief, but the destruction of a way of life which had given meaning to their efforts, which had produced a sense of identity, as well as a sense of hope for the future.

IF THESE WOULD BE the psychological effects of a thermonuclear war, what shall we say about the *moral* consequences of such a war? Keeping in mind the fact that morality, like psychology, is in large part socially conditioned—that individual morality existing without support from the community is rare—let us try to imagine what the postwar moral atmosphere would look like. Let us imagine a situation in which millions of innocent people have been horribly killed; in which we may have defended our own safety by letting our neighbors die; in which we may have to fight for our minimum standards of

living against thousands who come into our area to be fed and sheltered; in which we are envious of those who protected themselves better than we did; in which we are frightened and resentful of those who made thermonuclear war seem palatable and possible. What sort of ethics would develop in such a situation—something similar to a belief in God, in brotherly love, and in freedom, or the ethics of the jungle and the concentration camp? The question very nearly answers itself. Is it not indicative that even now people speak of the duty to defend their shelters with guns against those who have been less “provident” (or affluent), and that at least one “man of God” has said that such actions do not contradict Christian teaching? Yet not only do they contradict Christian teaching, they even contradict the ethics of military behavior which command the individual soldier to risk his own life in order to save his fellow-soldiers. In the light of all this, it seems quite obvious—and even the experts sometimes vaguely hint at it—that post-attack life would be possible only under a military dictatorship which used force to uphold even a minimum of social responsibility. Not morality but martial law would be the basis for whatever vestige of civilized behavior might survive a nuclear war.

In talking about recuperation, Kahn occasionally draws on the experience of the last two wars. Millions of people were killed, he points out, and billions were destroyed in property value, yet only a few years later things had more or less returned to normal, and most of the survivors were again leading “happy” and moral lives. This is simply not the case. The history of man since the First World War, though still to be written, would show an increasing brutalization; it would demonstrate that brutalization, approved by society, leads to further brutalization. The slaughter of the First World War was senseless; in contrast to the belief that this was the war to end all wars and to establish democracy, it was in fact fought for

territorial aggrandizement and the ambitions of the contending political leaders. In that war, for the first time in modern history, a recognized moral principle—that unarmed civilians must not be attacked—was violated by the aerial bombardment of cities on both sides. Then came the state-approved massacres of Stalin and of Hitler, which were allowed to take place with astonishingly little moral protest, except for the kind motivated by political considerations. Finally—let us at any rate hope that it is the final development—came the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians in the Second World War, first by the Nazis, then by the Allies in the mass bombing of German and Japanese cities. What we see here—to use a favorite term of the atomic strategists—is the “escalation” of brutality from 1914 to 1945; if it were not for this escalation, these same strategists would not be able to write about forty or sixty million dead being “acceptable,” nor would anyone be able to take such reasoning as “normal.” The very fact that a balance sheet of death can today be calmly drawn up is the result of the brutalizing influence of two world wars and the systems of terror that have operated in our time. Many experts are unaware of the degree to which this brutalization is contained in the very discussion of the “acceptability” of killing fifty million people on each side, and they are equally unaware of the further brutalization which a thermonuclear war would produce. Moral development, indeed, is always the moral development of a society, and when a society commands mass murder and mass suicide, only very few will be able to hold fast to Judeo-Christian or humanist ethics.

LET US NEXT consider how a thermonuclear war would affect the *economic* situation of the country. Kahn's estimates here, as in the psychological realm, are quite cheering. It is his thesis in *On Thermonuclear War* that “if proper preparations have been made, it would be possible for us or the Soviets to cope

with all the effects of a thermonuclear war, in the sense of saving most people and restoring something close to the pre-war standard of living in a relatively short time. But there is no reason to believe this will be true unless both nations investigate the problem more thoroughly than has been done so far, and then take the necessary preparations.” S. G. Winter, an economist of the RAND Corporation, in his testimony before the August hearings of the Holifield Committee, is equally optimistic. If his assumptions are valid, he says, “it turns out that capacity is back to the 470 million level in just over a decade.”

But what are the premises on which these estimates rest? In Kahn's case, the premise (as expressed in his book) is that we succeed in holding damage down to the equivalent of something like 53 metropolitan areas destroyed, and that “seven optimistic assumptions” materialize: “1—Favorable political environment. 2—Immediate survival and patch-up. 3—Maintenance of economic momentum. 4—Specific bottlenecks alleviated. 5—‘Bourgeois’ virtues survive. 6—Workable postwar standards adopted. 7—Neglected effects unimportant.” Why these optimal conditions should all be fulfilled, neither Kahn nor Winter makes clear.

Winter arrives at his hopeful diagnosis by thus qualifying all his conclusions: “The issues are too complex to be fully understood, and consequently there is no possibility of providing answers that are beyond reasonable challenge.” “No amount of research,” he continues, “is likely to alter the fact that decisions will finally have to be based on a large measure of faith in, or skepticism about, the basic strength or resilience of the people and institutions of our Nation.” However, he goes on to admit in discussing the research concerning economic recovery: “A good deal of competent and important work has been done, *but it does not really scratch the surface of this vast problem* and there is in particular, a definite need for a sys-

tematic and comprehensive re-examination of the whole problem." [Our italics.]

Such, then, is the scientific basis for the bright outlook of Kahn and Winter.

The picture grows even darker when we study the conditions Winter specifies for avoiding "complete failure in the recovery effort." Such failure would occur if "the effectiveness of the federal government and many state governments is greatly diminished, the banking system disrupted, most surviving firms are bankrupt, electric power and water supply systems are severely damaged, and the transportation network broken in many places, and where few survivors have the responsibility, authority, and plans to do anything about it." Is it not likely that this is precisely what would occur, even with a vast civil defense program? Another condition for recovery is a release from the necessity of spending money on rearmament; that is, the war must "produce a substantial or fairly permanent reduction in the external threat." How could this be expected to happen? If we were to have destroyed Russian military power, China and other nations probably would still have escaped the worst of the war, and might by then have acquired nuclear weapons. Or are we to assume that after a war we would get universal disarmament, which now appears impossible?

There is yet a further condition which Winter believes important for a rapid recovery and the avoiding of bottlenecks: the willingness and ability of foreign nations to trade with us, and even to provide assistance for our reconstruction. This assumes, apparently, that the European countries and Japan would not have been involved in the war, for what other nations would trade with us or give us assistance? The Soviet Union? China? Australia and New Zealand? Or Latin America, which needs our assistance now? Eventually, Winter adds another condition to his prognosis for recovery: that all analysis of the economic problems hinges on relatively optimistic answers to the psy-

chological problems that would arise in the post-attack situation. If this is the case, then it seems to us that the whole prognosis rests on a house of cards, many of which are themselves shaky, being made up as they are of questionable or improbable premises.

Apart from all this, both Kahn and Winter take insufficient account of the *interaction* of the various disasters that would result from a thermonuclear attack. To mention only a few such interactions: people would need instruction by radio, but most transmitters might be destroyed; people would need hospitals, but most would probably be demolished; certain injuries would have to be treated by extensive washing, but not enough water would be available; the dead would have to be buried in heavy fallout areas, but no one would be able to leave the shelter without getting lethal doses of radiation himself, while the bulldozers which, according to Kahn, might be necessary for mass burials would not be available. Our whole mechanized agriculture depends on gasoline, but the refineries situated near population centers (which make up two-thirds of all refineries in this country) might be destroyed; how could the remaining one-third be made sufficient to supply all agricultural and other needs? Winter, in answering questions after his testimony, was forced to admit that his optimistic calculations are based on the premise of an uninterrupted national transportation system. What value has an analysis of economic recovery that depends on such unrealistic assumptions?

IF WE BRING some of the factors neglected by Kahn and Winter into the picture, what would the economic situation after a thermonuclear war look like? Let us assume that all urban centers, more than half (at the least) of the "survival industry," and two-thirds of the heavy industries are bankrupt. Many of their stockholders, who had lived in cities, are dead. Their stocks and bonds have been burned.

Under such circumstances how many would be able to prove property rights? What about money in banks whose books had been destroyed by fire? Winter tells us that "a number of financial institutions are microfilming their vital records . . . but this is not by any means universal." Others, according to the same testimony, would be able to microfilm and store records in a safe place "if they had a day or two of warning." But what about the records of small firms and of individual wills, all of which would be destroyed in the population centers? We must expect that a disappearance of paper from our highly complex economy would wreak havoc with private property.

But even if it turned out to be possible to find records of ownership, another and much more serious threat to the free enterprise system would arise. Some parts of the country would be less devastated than others and would have to help those in worse condition. This could be done only if the state took over the economy and divided goods according to need. Even accepting Winter's optimistic estimate of recovery on the basis of a 25 per cent rate of growth in order to build up destroyed industries, the state would have to control capital investment, and manufacturing would have to be centrally directed in order to secure the production of the most vital necessities. Even if half the population and half the industrial plant were not destroyed, much of our capitalist economy would have to be replaced by a state-directed, centrally managed industrial system. Whether this system would be managed by a small group of industrialists or by the state, and whether individuals would to some extent retain nominal ownership while the state took over ownership of a large chunk of the national wealth, of one thing we can be sure: even the most favorable possible outcome of a thermonuclear war would lead to a centrally controlled managerialism. We have to consider, in addition, that the severe sacrifices and discipline necessary to recovery would

make it imperative to introduce a system of total control not only of production, but of the population. To be sure, such a system might be imposed in the name of freedom rather than by martial law, but it would be totalitarianism all the same. The fact is, then, that even a "successful" thermonuclear war would leave the survivors with a political and economic system not too different from the one we are supposed to be fighting. The alternative, in other words, would not be "better dead than red" but "better red than 'red.'"

IF NO CIVIL DEFENSE program can save our cities or the fabric of our society from the ravages of a thermonuclear war, can an extensive system of shelters nevertheless serve as a deterrent to the enemy? There are two very different forms of deterrence: deterrence *against attack*, and deterrence *against political provocation* (Deterrence I and II in Kahn's terminology). No one claims that shelters would deter an enemy from attacking us first, and President Kennedy has stated explicitly that civil defense "cannot deter a nuclear attack"; according to most experts, the only *attack deterrence* is a powerful second-strike (or retaliatory) capability. But what about *political deterrence*, the attempt to restrain the enemy from political provocations by threatening to strike him first?

According to Kahn and others, civil defense makes it more credible to the enemy that we might strike first; if we cannot protect ourselves against a retaliatory strike, the enemy might call our bluff, discounting the possibility that we would risk our population merely to defend, for example, access routes to Berlin.

Though—as we have seen—civil defense would not save our cities and would even in the "best" case leave us with 50 to 70 million dead, it can be admitted that a shelter program does increase our first-strike credibility and thus improves our political deterrence. However, the enemy must still become convinced of our

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willingness to make such a sacrifice, and we are therefore forced to gamble on whether *he* would believe that a particular political aim was important enough for us to accept destruction of these dimensions. (As Kahn himself points out, most of our leaders would not start a war if they expected to lose more than 60 million American lives.)

But in addition to this, civil defense tends to provoke war precisely *because* it improves our political deterrence. The more credible we make our resolve to strike first, the more the Russians will expect us to attack during a crisis, and hence the more they will be likely to launch a preemptive strike. (Kahn himself writes in his book: "The one circumstance under which almost all Soviet experts agree the Russians might strike is the one in which they anticipate a strike from us.") Our own fear of Russian preemption will in turn make us more prone to strike first, and so on up the spiral. Thus, to the extent that our first-strike capacity becomes more credible, Russian preemption becomes more likely; in balance-sheet language, what we gain in political deterrence we pay for in an increased probability of war.

Aside from the war-provoking aspect of first-strike credibility, a large civil defense program tends to indicate that we are getting ready for war, and this might start a vicious circle of preparations, counter weapons, and counter preparations—which would have the combined effect of hastening the onset of war. Even if we could build a system of civil defense so perfect that it would reduce fatalities to the 3–5 million range—a prospect that at the moment seems no more than a dream—is it likely that the Russians would sit back while we were making ourselves invulnerable enough to force them into any concessions we chose? Notwithstanding our second-strike capability, they might attack before we had gotten very far in building our fortress. For, as Kahn points out, they tend to view strategy more

in terms of chess than poker—and in chess one exchanges queens in order to maintain a tactical position that will otherwise deteriorate.*

ANOTHER WAY in which even a national fallout shelter program could increase the chances of war is by lulling the nation into a false sense of security. We are even now being led to believe the claims of *Life* magazine or Dr. Edward Teller, that with some fallout protection most people could survive a thermonuclear war, while the probable fate of our cities is hardly publicized. To support this illusion of safety, all the tricks of modern advertising are being drawn upon: gay pictures of teenagers chatting in shelters, survival statistics based on minimal attacks against military installations, claims of overwhelming military superiority on our side, and even appeals to individuality and the spirit of the old frontier, as though winning a thermonuclear war were a matter of showing manly courage. Thus Kahn says that "We are in a position much like the pioneer. He had to carry a gun because the Indians might attack him." (This analogy makes sense only if one substitutes "neighbors" for "Indians.") Under the spell of this false sense of security the American people may become more willing to support an adventurist military policy rather than more fervent in demanding disarmament negotiations, just as our leaders may become less hesitant about pushing their terrible buttons.

The belief that thermonuclear war need not be catastrophic increases the possibilities of thermonuclear war. As Walter Millis wrote in reviewing *On Thermonuclear War*, "Unless thermonuclear war can be re-established in the official mind as something which it is possible both to fight and to survive, it is unlikely that there

* Kahn himself comprehends the war-provoking aspect of a large civil defense program, and suggests that even a nationwide program of community fallout shelters should be constructed slowly, so as not to "seriously perturb our own people, our allies, and the Russians."

will be a thermonuclear war." We share with Millis the opinion that thermonuclear war has been avoided until now because neither side believed that it was possible to survive such a war. Once it is accepted that thermonuclear war is essentially no more catastrophic than past "conventional" wars, a major restraint will be gone. It is precisely for this reason that we consider it so dangerous to underemphasize the fantastic damage that a thermonuclear war would surely bring about.

SUPPOSE, HOWEVER, that we are mistaken in our arguments and that Kahn's most optimistic estimates are right. What would the future look like in that case? We would have a totally effective civil defense program, and so—it must be assumed—would the Russians. The stabilized deterrent would work and war would be avoided for the next ten years, or, if a war came, only 3 to 5 per cent of the population of each side would be killed. But where are we then? Each new generation of weapons becomes more destructive; people get more frightened; the protection that shelters may give today will be useless against the much more destructive weapons of 1970. The shelter idea, adopted, may logically lead to building our cities underground, or—as has been seriously suggested—to selecting small numbers of people to live in such deeply buried shelters that they would be sure to survive; thus a new nation might be built up from a few thousand survivors. Against even this last hope for survival, Kahn admits that ten years from now we, or another nation, might develop a "doomsday machine" which could literally wipe out all life on this globe. What use, then, is even a good shelter program now if it will not halt the march toward doomsday?

Or are we to believe that after a thermonuclear war in which only 3 per cent of the population has been killed, the leaders will gain enough wisdom to decide on complete disarmament?

To sum up: in debating the position of Kahn and other experts on civil defense we have been forced to accept their data on technical problems, even though we suspect that their data are themselves not free from the bias which quite naturally comes from their intention to prove that thermonuclear war is not only possible but also "acceptable." Not being physicists ourselves, and not having the facilities of big research organizations at our disposal, we can at least examine the logic and mode of thought on which the studies of Kahn and the others are based. Our main criticism is that their approach to the question of the survival of our nation, and even of civilization, is the approach of a gamble. That is, they tend to accept the idea that thermonuclear war need not be catastrophic on the basis of (1) complete uncertainty in many important areas of investigation; (2) an optimistic slant which leans more heavily on estimates of better rather than worse conditions; (3) unproven or definitely wrong assumptions; (4) neglect of various important factors as well as the interactions between factors.

At best, what these experts are giving the American public is a piece of optimistic guesswork governed by the logic of a gamble. With the life of a nation and perhaps of all mankind as the stake, it is neither wise nor sane to gamble. Herman Kahn's arguments leave us convinced that there is only one moral and rational way out of the grim predicament we are in: universal disarmament, combined with a political settlement in which neither side tries to upset the other's present position.

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