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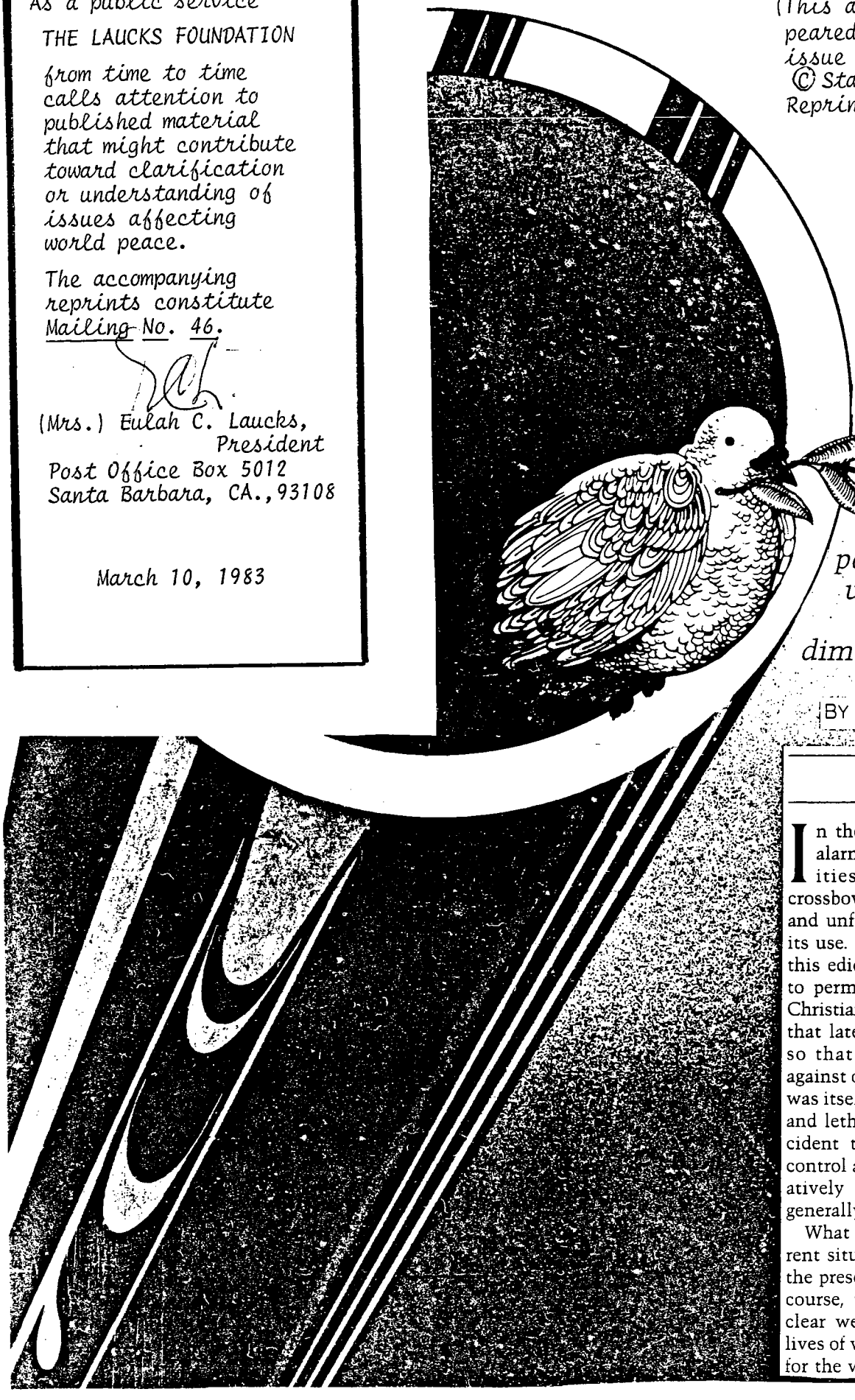
(Mrs.) Eulah C. Laucks,
President
Post Office Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA., 93108

March 10, 1983

(This article originally appeared in the Winter 1982 issue of The Stanford Magazine, © Stanford Alumni Association. Reprinted by permission.)



PEACE:

Ensuring peace and safety in today's world is a complex problem. The following perspectives can help us avoid narrowly focused, one-dimensional solutions.

BY PHILIP H. RHINELANDER

ONE

In the year 1139 Pope Innocent II, alarmed by the inhuman potentialities of the recently developed crossbow, declared it "hateful to God and unfit for Christians" and forbade its use. We are told by historians that this edict was subsequently amended to permit the use of the weapon by Christians against Mohammedans, but that later this limitation broke down so that Christians began to use it against one another until the crossbow was itself superseded by more efficient and lethal devices. I mention this incident to show that efforts at arms control are not new and that, with relatively minor exceptions, they have generally proved ineffective.

What chiefly distinguishes the current situation from past conditions is the presence of two factors. One is, of course, the scale of destruction. Nuclear weapons not only threaten the lives of warriors but have the potential for the wholesale obliteration of civil-

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

ian populations and even the extinction of the human race. This alarming prospect is unprecedented and is, to that extent, a new and terrible factor. But we would do well to remember, I think, that if efforts to meet the threat of primitive weapons were unavailing, we cannot expect the new danger to evaporate merely because the stakes are incalculably higher.

A second factor is that whereas in the twelfth century the Pope had considerable moral and religious authority in the Christian West, we lack today any comparable international agency or power. According to its charter, the United Nations was set up "to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace . . .," but it lacks power to intervene in matters lying within the domestic jurisdiction of any state and armaments fall within that category. Strong arguments have been advanced for the establishing of a new supranational authority, with police powers above those of the member nations, but few, if any, nations seem disposed to accept the limitations upon their sovereign rights of self-determination that such an arrangement would entail. Thus we are left to depend upon special dealings between or among separate nations, subject to the complications posed by the fact that the need for reliable agreements is greatest where there is least trust and most hostility and suspicion.

As Karl Jaspers, the German philosopher and psychologist, pointed out more than twenty years ago in a wide-ranging and thoughtful book, *The Future of Mankind*, we face an unprecedented challenge—a challenge calling, in his view, for a new orientation and new ways of thinking. If we fail to meet the challenge, we risk annihilation of the race. "Man either grows in freedom and maintains the tension of this growth," he wrote, "or he forfeits his right to live. If he is not worthy of his life, he will destroy himself." I shall return to this point later in connection with recent discussions of the prospect of human extinction, which some writers today seem to regard as displacing all other considerations. Jaspers took a different—and, I think, a more comprehensive—view.

TWO

Leonardo da Vinci, the great artist, was also a gifted engineer. Among his other technical projects was a design for a submarine, part of which he purposely kept secret, writing, "This I do not divulge on account of the evil nature of men, who would practice assassination at the bottom of the seas by breaking the ships in their lowest parts and sinking them together with the crews who are in them." His attitude exemplifies another way of dealing with supposedly devastating inventions, namely by suppressing knowledge of them. Such incidents are not unknown in the history of technology, but they have seldom been successful. If we refuse to accept the currently familiar doctrine that increased knowledge is always and necessarily good, we must nevertheless recognize, I think, as Jaspers did, that human beings are naturally inventive animals and that "if we affirm human existence . . . then we must recognize the way of technology as unavoidable. Without being able to calculate it beforehand, man uses technology to create his own situation—as today his extremity." In other words, as the classical Greeks were well aware, man's ingenuity, which is part of his rational nature, is dangerously ambivalent; it has its destructive as well as its constructive side, and the two are not readily separable.

We are told that some of the scientists who helped to develop the atomic bomb had second thoughts after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and felt remorse for having participated in "the devil's work." And we know that some sectors of the public have turned against science and technology in general, and against nuclear power in particular (including its possible peaceful uses), on this account. But we must recognize, I think, that the investigations that led to the discovery of nuclear fission began before the outbreak of the Second World War and would presumably have run their course, though more slowly, if the pressure of war had not played a part. Thus we should have been faced with the peril of nuclear destruction sooner or later even if the bomb had not been invented in 1945 or if, having been invented, it had not been used. The *possibility* of nuclear fission (and fusion) was not created by human action; it had been present in nature from the beginning of time awaiting discovery and potential utilization. It is, therefore, idle to revile those who participated in the Manhattan Project and equally idle to suppose that their researches, once completed, could have been kept in perpetual secrecy. I am not here suggesting a fatalistic view of history but noting merely that whatever secrets nature possesses are equally

available to all scientific inquirers and that new discoveries, though not predictable, are not preventable.

In short, if the most distinctive characteristic of human beings is *rationality*, as Aristotle claimed, we must accept the fact that it includes a high degree of ingenuity and inventiveness, including technical cleverness, which can work either for good or for evil. Perhaps the ultimate challenge, now brought to a head, is the need of humanity to cope with its own discomfortable powers. This is not a new idea, though faith in the inherent value of man's natural powers and in the continued progress of civilization has tended to displace it. In any case, it is evident that even if all nuclear weapons were dismantled, the threat would not be eliminated, since they could be reproduced again if the occasion arose. Thus, a nuclear "freeze," however desirable, would be significant only as a first step toward the establishment of the sort of international trust on which safety must in the long run depend.

THREE

One of the most prominent figures in the peace movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was Baroness Bertha von Suttner. Describing an early meeting with Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and the founder of the Nobel Prize, including the Peace Prize, she quoted him as saying, "I wish I could produce a substance or a machine of such frightful efficacy for wholesale devastation that wars should thereafter become altogether impossible." It would seem in retrospect that modern thermonuclear weapons had fulfilled Nobel's speculative hope for an instrument of ultimate destructiveness, yet wars employing so-called "conventional" weapons have continued since 1945, including wars in Korea and Vietnam in which the United States was heavily involved. Still, there has not as yet been an active military conflict between Russia and the United States, the major nuclear powers, so that Nobel's vision of peace through terror has not been discredited and cannot be dismissed out of hand, as some current advocates of peace would have us suppose.

We may assume, I think, that neither side could hope to win an all-out nuclear war and that the survival of the human race would be at stake. Nobel's hypothesis obviously assumed such a situation. We may also grant that the unlimited stockpiling of nuclear weapons of various types to achieve or maintain theoretical parity at all points is self-defeating, since total destruction could occur but once. (We may recall here Max Beerbohm's satirical caricature of the bumbling, self-important political figure, called Fenning Dodworth, whose sententious essays included one entitled "The End of all Things—and After.") Yet we may nevertheless reject arguments to the effect that the possession of nuclear weapons is inherently wrong because it is "self-contradictory" or immoral to threaten to take action that it would be wrong to carry out in practice. Such claims are too facile.

It is on record that a number of scientists who were familiar with the preparation of the atom bomb submitted a petition to the American authorities urging that it not be used against Japan in 1945 without giving a prior demonstration of its lethal power and thereby allowing the Japanese to avoid its devastating impact by choosing to surrender. This advice was not followed; apparently it did not reach President Truman until too late to alter his decision even if he had been open to the suggestion. But those who made the recommendation, and those who regret that it was not followed, clearly believed that a *threat* put forward as a warning would have been morally preferable to an actual *use* of the bomb against Hiroshima without such warning. And if it should transpire, as it conceivably might do despite the odds, that nuclear terror has contributed to the avoidance of actual nuclear hostilities between the United States and Russia under present or future conditions, it is hard to see how the result could be condemned as *morally* objectionable because the threat of evildoing had been involved in bringing it about. If Nobel's vision was impractical, it was not, I think, logically or morally reprehensible.

We encounter here a textbook distinction, familiar to modern students of ethics, between so-called *consequentialist* theories of morality, under which the goodness or badness of an act is determined by its consequences for human welfare, and *deontological* theories (the word being derived from a Greek term signifying what is required, fitting, or obligatory), under which acts are judged by fixed rules rather than by their good or bad results in particular cases. I put the distinction more baldly than is strictly justified to stress a major difference as regards the relation of means to ends. According to theories of the first type, the ends actually achieved are what count, so that generally speaking the end will justify the means. Utilitarian theories are the best known (though not the only) theories of this kind. On such a basis, policies of nuclear deterrence would be judged morally acceptable or unacceptable depending on their prospective outcome, so that if terror tactics served to prevent or to reduce the devastation of nuclear war, the tactics would be justified. But theories of the other type (typified by the views of Kant but including certain familiar theologically based views also) could yield very different conclusions. Here it stands as a central maxim that one may never do wrong in order that good may come; "*fiat justitia, ruat coe-*

Even if all nuclear weapons were dismantled, the threat would not be eliminated, since they could be reproduced again if the occasion arose.

lum"—"let justice be done though the skies fall." On this basis, so the argument proceeds (in one version at least), it is wrong to engage in indiscriminate and wholesale destruction of human life; hence it is wrong to contemplate it, to prepare for it, or to threaten it; hence it is wrong to construct or possess nuclear weapons capable of bringing about such a result.

The broader question remains, however, whether to recognize any moral validity in schemes of nuclear deterrence is to commit ourselves to a consequentialist theory of ethics. I think not, because I believe that the familiar textbook distinction is too sharp and overly abstract. It calls for reconsideration. If we look at the functions that a moral code or set of principles must serve to be effective in *practice*, we shall soon discover, I believe, that such a code must combine elements of uniformity, with general rules to coordinate activities and expectancies, and elements of flexibility to allow for exceptional or unexpected situations and to meet ideals of development. Duties cannot be prescribed without regard for consequences, nor can concern for consequences eliminate the need for general rules covering normal and recurrent situations. The two aspects may be opposed theoretically but in practice each limits the other.

Because the quest for peace seeks to put an end to war, whereas efforts to control armaments deal with the conduct of war, it is sometimes assumed (if not claimed) that the two topics are distinct and call for separate consideration. But under modern conditions there are too many points of intersection and overlap to permit independent discussion. In *To End War*, by Robert Pickus and Robert Woito of the World Without War Council, published in 1970, the authors took full notice of this circumstance and introduced a thoughtful discussion of the issues involved in the pursuit of peace, with some observations worth quoting:

> Ignoring the contemporary military discussion is one error. Focusing entirely on weapons and the consequences of their use is another. Many contemporary peace organizations concentrate on opposing the development of American military power or on explaining the consequences of nuclear war. Given the dangerously enlarged role of the military in American life, and the realities of nuclear warfare, such an emphasis is not wholly awry. Anti-militarism makes the most sense, however, when those rejecting military deterrence offer alternative proposals for meeting legitimate American security and value concerns. Those teaching the horror of nuclear war are most persuasive when they recognize and deal with the threat of military power in the hands of other nations' political leaders. They are more likely to gain a hearing if their strategy for peace suggests action that will move other nations, as well as our own, away from reliance on national military power.

The writers went on to identify twelve sets of relevant problems, with useful explanatory references to the extensive literature then available on each one, urging their readers to examine the issues in order to come to informed conclusions, and cautioning against narrow perspectives and the "dangerous combination of passion and ignorance" which they thought to be exercising increasing influence among peace advocates at the time. The great need, as they saw it, was for *persuasion founded on intelligent understanding* as opposed to militant protest, and a willingness to face complexities and ambiguities as opposed to a demand for superficial or simplistic remedies. Such cautions are, in my view, as appropriate today as they were when put forward twelve years ago. Though the particular lines of attack have altered somewhat, the prevailing tendency today is still toward one-dimensional perspectives and preoccupation with single causes, special villains, and the search for specific sovereign remedies, as if the threat of nuclear destruction were an intrusive visitation, like the plague, calling for an antidote that would leave normal human existence otherwise unchanged. If Jaspers was right, this sort of approach is inadequate.

FOUR

In the first decade of the present century, Wilfred Trotter, a British surgeon, published a pair of articles on the susceptibility of human beings to what he called the "herd instinct," a source of collective behavior that he saw as "irrational, imitative, cowardly, cruel . . . and suggestible." Regarding this as a dangerous element in human affairs, he commented, "It needs but little imagination to see how great are the probabilities that after all man will prove but one more of nature's failures." I mention this observation as lending support to Jaspers's view that what is at stake today is man's fitness to survive.

Jonathan Schell, in his widely publicized *New Yorker* articles of last winter (subsequently published in book form as *The Fate of the Earth*), holds out the possibility of human extinction in a nuclear war as the ultimate catastrophe. Schell seems to believe (as I read him) that if the public awoke from its lethargy and realized the full enormity of the prospective termination of human existence, all other concerns and values would be put aside (including those of freedom and justice), and appropriate action would be taken (though he does not undertake to say just what should be done or how)

to preserve the human race and the birth of future generations. Here the ultimate evil to be avoided at all costs seems to be, not the death or suffering of the immediate victims of a total nuclear disaster, deplorable as these might be, but the "more profound oblivion" that final and complete annihilation of humanity would bring about. Since life is the precondition of all human values, we have, therefore, an overriding obligation not to imperil the survival of mankind by nuclear maneuverings.

Like most seriously advanced arguments, this position has both strengths and weaknesses. [Max Lerner's review in the *New Republic*, April 1982, is worth serious attention.] I would note here merely that Schell's approach is wholly *anthropocentric*; he brushes aside the question of man's *fitness* to survive, which he takes for granted, and criticizes Jaspers, whom he mentions briefly but misquotes and misinterprets, for considering it. But the point is surely important. It is one thing to assume that human survival is the ultimate value to be protected at all costs and at any price. It is quite another thing to see mankind as facing a challenge to make good its capacity and fitness to survive in the face of its own self-destructive dispositions. In either case we are summoned to awareness and the need for action, but on the former basis the stress falls upon emotional arousal and "commitment" while on the latter basis it falls upon practical wisdom and judgment coupled with power to endure in the face of perilous uncertainties. The difference is profound.

Five

In 1910 William James published a notable article entitled "The Moral Equivalent of War." Speaking as a pacifist and antimilitarist he pointed out that what are called the "military virtues," or most of them, while particularly needed in war, are also essential to the well-being of vigorous peaceful civilizations. He had in mind such traits as courage, fidelity, loyalty, tenacity, heroism, self-discipline, and the capacity for self-sacrifice. "Militarism," he wrote, "is the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible. Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid indeed; and there is a type of military character which everyone feels that the race should never cease to breed, for everyone is sensitive to its superiority." His point was that advocates of peace should not discount or decry the military virtues, as if they could or should be separated out from those appropriate to the pursuits of peace, but ought to seek ways to develop them independently of war. For this purpose he recommended a general requirement of compulsory, universal service by young persons for a specified period in the development of natural resources for the common good in times of peace.

Proposals of this sort have never been popular; the analogy to military conscription has operated as an objection rather than a recommendation, reflecting the very distrust of the military virtues that James wished to overcome. But the reasons that impelled him to recognize the need for a moral equivalent of war deserve consideration. The challenge of war calls forth some of the best potentialities of human nature as well as some of the worst. If this were not the case, wars could hardly have played so great and persistent a part in human history as they have done, nor would accounts of heroic exploits and gallantry against odds evoke public wonder and admiration. We need not conclude, as some have done, that war is inevitable or that a world without war would be dull and spiritless. What we must do, as James understood, if we are to work effectively for peace, is to come to terms with the paradox involved.

Since the days of Aristophanes and Euripides, the cruelty and irrationality of war have been forcefully portrayed and persistently attacked. Yet those who are sensitive to the horrors of war can also regard it with excitement and fascination. Is this due to apathy or deficient understanding or lack of human feeling? I think not. It reflects the fact that our minds are not limited to single perspectives. We can view the same phenomena in changing contexts and from various angles, and the appearances can differ according to the point of view. The penny which is round in one dimension is flat in another; the tower which looks small from a distance is huge from close at hand. Similarly, a given act or event can seem both noble and hateful according to the perspective and the context. The temptation is either to cling tightly to a single perspective as *the* only correct one, or, if that seems arbitrary, to give no preference to any. The task of practical intelligence is to avoid both extremes, recognizing the diversity of perspectives and bringing them together into a pattern of definite but shifting correlations. There is no contradiction in saying, with General Sherman, that war is hell and at the same time allowing the positive value of the military virtues, as James did. Like most human activities, war and peace have many facets and they are more closely intertwined than we are habitually willing to allow. We do well to heed Alfred North Whitehead's maxim: Seek simplicity, and distrust it.

If militarism is double-faced, so is pacifism. Pacifism can reflect a high-minded and selfless commitment to the cause of peace. But it can also reflect a sense of personal outrage against the human predicament—what Camus described as metaphysical rebellion—or a desire to avoid individual responsibility for the common welfare by re-

If we fail to find new modes of thinking, a new rational orientation, disaster looms.

fusing to become involved. Or it may serve as a ground of political or ideological protest against authority. Even where it is conscientious, a commitment to nonviolence poses difficult questions. If I am bound not to defend myself when attacked but to turn the other cheek, must I stand aside when others are endangered? If so, the principle of nonviolence would justify, perhaps require, acceding to preventable wrongs without interference. It has always seemed to me that the biblical injunction to nonresistance rests not on the idea that resort to force is inherently wrong, but on the idea that since human judgments are fallible, especially where passions are involved, we should be slow to take the law into our own hands but leave the determination to the higher authority of God. Had the Good Samaritan of the parable arrived on the scene in time to prevent the robbery, it is hard to believe that he should have withheld assistance until after the victim had been struck down and left for dead. It would be a strange kind of love that said, "We must go out of our way to mend the wounds of others but never exert even minimal force to prevent their being wounded. Nor must we look to others ever to use force on our behalf." Love does not make distinctions of this sort.

As to the example of Gandhi, which is often cited to show that passive resistance is an effective tactic against oppression, it has been pointed out by several writers (including Jaspers again) that Gandhi's success was dependent on the restraint of the British authorities. It seems clear that passive resistance is wholly ineffective against terrorism, or against the calculated barbarisms of a Hitler or a Stalin, or against ruthless fanaticism bent on eliminating all dissent. The more implacable the threat to basic human rights, the less the protective power of nonresistance. Here again we face complexities, not clarities.

Six

After the development of the atom bomb, which he had favored for fear of its prior discovery by Hitler's forces, Albert Einstein wrote, "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward an unparalleled catastrophe." He fully recognized the dimensions of the threat, including the possible extinction of all life on earth, and expressed the conviction that only an essentially new way of thinking could meet the danger. Similar views were expressed by many others, yet there has been no agreement on what the new modes of thinking should be. Where do we begin? How do we proceed? The ideal of a world without war is not new. Nor is concern for the limitation or elimination of lethal weapons. Variant theories as to the causes of war are also familiar, along with suggested remedies of different—and often conflicting—types. Our problem does not arise, as some would have it, from persistent indifference to imminent peril but rather from the babel of many voices. For more than thirty years thoughtful people have had to live with anxiety, without being unnerved by it.

What Jaspers recommended was not an immediate solution but an approach. We cannot rely, he believed, on the techniques of scientific inquiry or of conventional academic philosophy to help us; they deal only with specific aspects of the problem, not with its full complexity. The basic question to be faced, he thought, was not how to preserve life against extinction but *what makes life itself worth living.* Such a question takes us back to the shadowy realms of religion, myth, and metaphysics, but we cannot meet the current crisis without sacrifice, he felt, and we cannot hope to determine wisely what sacrifice we could, or should, make to meet the threat of annihilation without understanding the true nature and value of human existence itself. For Jaspers, as previously indicated, it is wrong to assume that mankind is necessarily a cosmic or evolutionary success; we are presently challenged, as never before, to show that we can master the dangers to our survival posed by our own ingenious capacities for scientific and technical discoveries. The task requires a new breadth and depth of rationality capable of transcending limited cultural and ideological perspectives and of establishing a new basis of international communication and understanding. For this purpose, freedom of the human mind and human spirit is essential. Hence we cannot and must not endeavor to preserve human existence by submitting to totalitarianism. But at the same time we cannot and must not expect to be able to eliminate the threat of extinction while keeping our own ways of life otherwise unchanged. We are challenged to find new modes of thinking, a new rational orientation; if we fail, disaster looms.

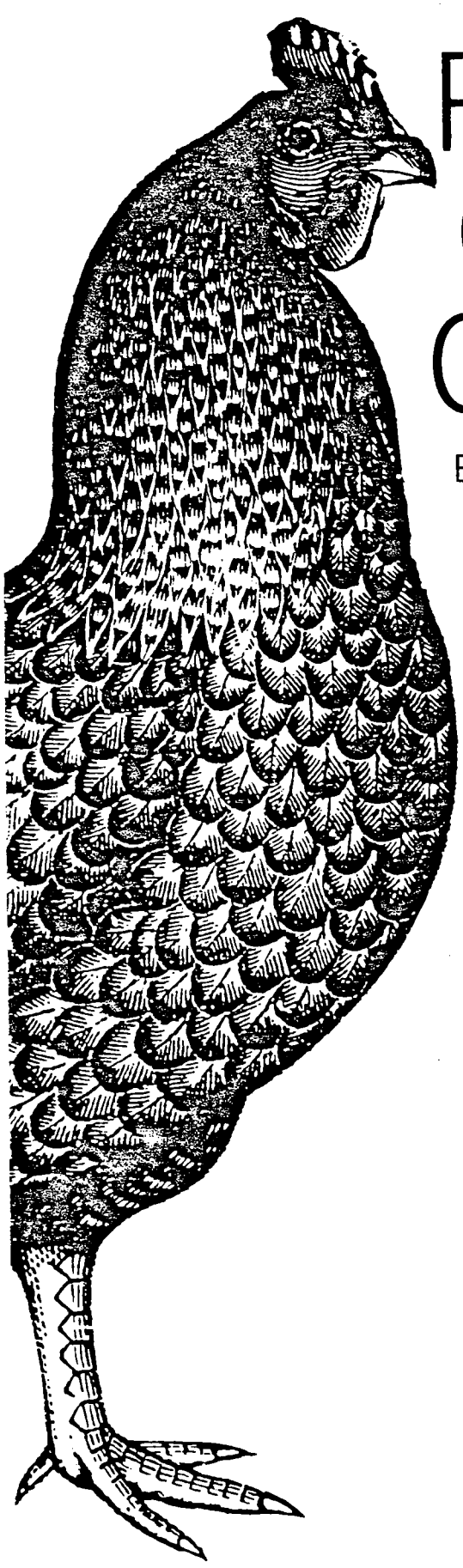
Jaspers's book is diffuse and difficult. It may well be that I have not done justice to his views. It may also be objected that the position outlined is too abstract to be useful. What is important, I think, is the insistence that we must seek to understand the many dimensions of the problem of peace and safety in today's world *before* we venture to propose specific answers or seek to rally support for them. The language of force is sharp and universally understood. So is the language of submission. But the language of trust, on which peace and security ultimately depend, is subtle and difficult especially where it is most urgently required.

Philip H. Rhinelander is the Olive H. Palmer Professor of Humanities and professor of philosophy, both emeritus, at Stanford.

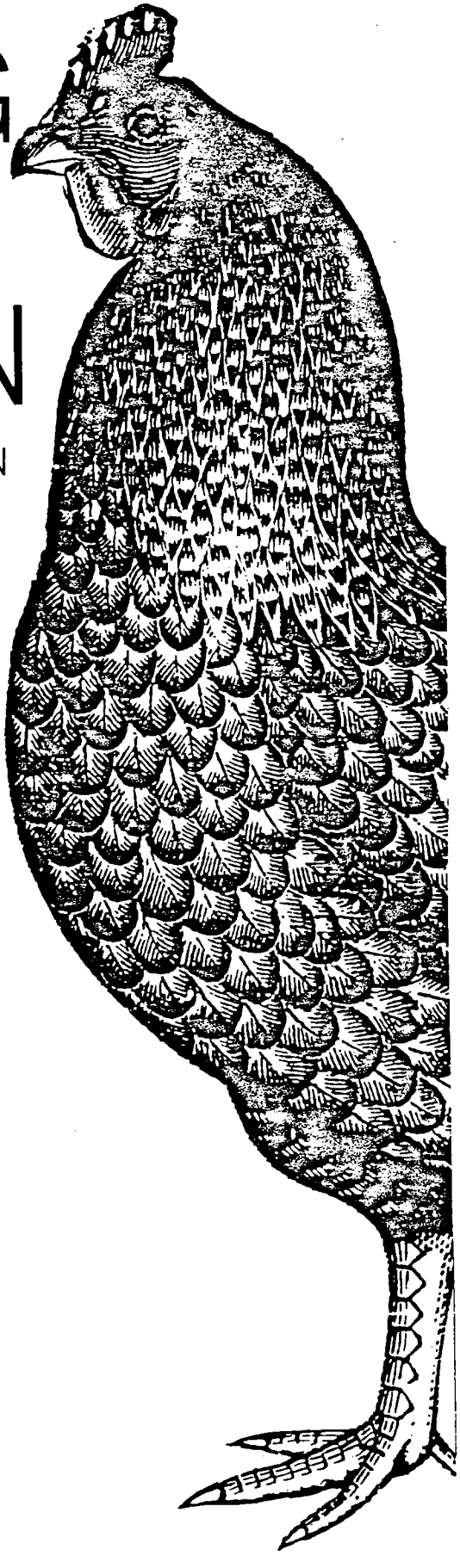
the Dial
Volume Four, Number Two
FEBRUARY 1983

PLAYING GLOBAL CHICKEN

BY MARSHALL I. GOLDMAN



The end of the arms race will happen:
☐ When both sides stop playing chicken
☐ When both sides admit they *are* chicken
☐ At Armageddon



No one has ever claimed that the world is a rational place, but the behavior of both the United States and the Soviet Union today is remarkably self-destructive. There is only the remotest chance in the wake of Brezhnev's death that either Andropov or Reagan will seek a softer and more conciliatory tone. Both talk about détente, but neither has done anything about it. Mutual distrust is so rampant that any statement concerning

Marshall I. Goldman is associate director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University and professor of economics at Wellesley College. He is the author of the recently published U.S.S.R. in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System.

weapons, no matter the drift, has the unfortunate result of accelerating the arms race. Not only has the rivalry strained the economies of these countries, but it is increasing the level of tension and the risk of conflagration.

Of even greater danger is the fact that each side has created an unrealistic image of the other, which only serves to fuel the intensity of the race. The lack of realism reflects not only passion but large doses of naïveté, which makes for an increasingly unstable situation. With the tension growing, some people seek release by calling for a halt to the arms buildup. That effort inflames those who argue that if the pressure can be maintained, the other side will collapse. We have the makings of an international game of chicken, with the consequence being global catastrophe.

Part of the problem is that each side has difficulty understanding why the other behaves as it does. The present round of American fears goes back to the mid-1970s, after détente began to stall. Because we assumed that détente implied more than it actually did, we felt betrayed when the Soviet Union started to interfere in such Third World countries as Angola and Ethiopia. This behavior was particularly disturbing because we had begun to reduce our own involvement in foreign countries. We had been traumatized by the war in Vietnam and had cut back sharply on military expenditures. At the same time we agreed, as part of the 1972 SALT negotiations, to let the Soviet Union build up its military and strategic capabilities so it could approach parity of power. By reducing military disproportions, the hope was that military stability in the world would be increased. It came as a rude awakening to discover that the Soviet Union seemed to be driving beyond parity, even to superiority, according to some observers. There was no need for such a massive buildup, they argued. In addition, the Soviet Union had increased the size of its military power in Central and Eastern Europe beyond what seemed to be necessary for security. Since no one was threatening Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union with invasion, there seemed to be no need for such an increase in tank strength on the Soviet borders.

The Soviet buildup increased American suspicions and set off a fierce debate over the second stage of the SALT negotiations. There was a sense that the Soviet Union had taken advantage of the United States. And the invasion of Afghanistan seemed to confirm most of these suspicions. We naïvely thought that after our experience in Vietnam, imperialism, no matter at whose hands, had no place in the twentieth century. But the sending of Soviet troops into Afghanistan served to show that imperialism was not dead at all, especially if you were prepared to disregard world opinion.

The Soviet Union saw things differently. I came to appreciate its point of view in 1977 at Moscow State University, where I was a Fulbright Hayes exchange professor. I knew that the Soviet people, particularly the Russians, had long suffered from a deep sense of inferiority and insecurity relative to the Western world caused in part by numerous invasions from the West and in part by the Soviet inability to catch up with Western technology. The Soviets find that just when they think they have outdistanced us, we make a breakthrough in military technology that pushes them back into second place again.

In the face of these frustrations, they find it difficult to cope. Was it necessary, they ask, that the United States even consider a neutron bomb, an MX missile, a Trident submarine, or a MIRV missile, with its multiple warheads? Nor is it just technology that threatens them. When they look at a map, they find themselves surrounded by hostile forces. Most of those forces, until recently, were equipped with American weapons and advisers. And we are upset because the Soviet Union has *one* outpost in Cuba.

Because of these perceived threats, the Soviet Union devotes a large percentage of its gross national product to military expenditures. The enormous losses suffered during World War II make it difficult for Soviet citizens or civilian leaders to protest such outlays even though the war ended over thirty-seven years ago. Because of that suffering and the ultimate victory, the army is one of the few institutions in the Soviet Union that are normally beyond criticism. Not surprisingly, the U.S.S.R.'s military-industrial complex plays a strong, almost unassailable role. And there is no sign that its importance is diminishing. Like that of military-industrial complexes all over the world, the Soviet version's appetite continues to grow. Each time a new military proj-

SOMETHING YOU CAN DO

In this article Marshall Goldman calls for "a higher plane of thought" about the arms race and the nuclear future, which sounds like a tough thing to bring about. For a start, though, *any* thought about the subject will do, and it might as well begin with you. There's plenty of good material around to get you going. From the early days of the nuclear age, books and films about the subject came in two main categories: the serious horror story variety (*Canticle for Leibowitz*, *On the Beach*) and the let's-kill-it-with-ridicule variety (*Dr. Strangelove*). The current wave of books and TV programs favors the serious-scary approach: Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* (Knopf, $11.95); George F. Kennan's *The Nuclear Delusion* (Pantheon Books, $13.95); public TV's recent *A Guide to Armageddon*; the *Nova* nuclear show this month; and an *American Playhouse* drama for April, *The Last Testament*, about nuclear war survivors. Then there is Robert Scheer's well-reviewed *With Enough Shovels* (Random House, $14.95). Its purpose is deadly serious, but it allows certain civil defense experts to spout zany theories that have been described as "lethal foolishness." Real nuclear laughs are still around too, principally in *Meet Mr. Bomb*, a twenty-eight-page parody of a government publication available from High Meadow Farm, in New London, New Hampshire, for $2.50. All this material takes a dim view of the arms race, but if you're looking for a book solidly from the other side, there's *The Third World War*, by General Sir John Hackett (Macmillan, $15.75). —D. E.

ect is undertaken, its power expands.

When Khrushchev tried in 1960 to reduce the scope of military expenditures, the size of the army, and the number of generals and their divisions, the generals rallied together and forced him to back down. Demobilization threatened not only generals but industrial managers as well. What would the Soviet Union do with all the steel it produced if there were no military sector to ship it to? Civilians certainly could not use it.

Brezhnev encountered the same opposition in the spring of 1982, when he called for a greater commitment of resources to agriculture in order to solve the Soviet Union's food problem. The military-industrial complex apparently interpreted this as a signal that those resources would be diverted at its expense. After the military issued what appeared to be some spirited warnings about the consequences of such a shift, Brezhnev apparently relented and, just before his death, called an extraordinary meeting of his senior military officials in which he promised enthusiastic support to the army.

Brezhnev's meeting seemed to be a direct consequence of the Reagan administration's increased hostility toward the Soviet Union. In the wake of Brezhnev's death, Reagan has made some effort to be more conciliatory, but nonetheless the rhetoric mounts as each side's resolve to be the last to give in strengthens. The Soviet Union's actions in Afghanistan and Poland only confirm Reagan's sense of the correctness of his course of action. This leads him to increase pressure (as with his decision to push for the MX missile), which of course leads the Russians to do the same.

This ratchetting process, Reagan has reiterated in speech after speech, will serve not only to boost the United States' strength relative to the Soviet Union's but ultimately to lead the Soviet Union to conclude that it should forsake the arms race and focus instead on internal economic and political reform. This view assumes that the Soviet economy is ill prepared to continue spending so much on weapons. Reagan and his advisers argue that if the West can cut off all trade to the East, the Soviets will eventually be forced to use their own resources just to feed and supply their people, never mind build up their military strength.

Others argue just the opposite. As they see it, the Soviet Union's need for imported grain and technology is to be encouraged, not frustrated. Increased interdependence will lead to greater stability, not more tension. After all, in 1981 the Soviet Union imported nearly $8 billion worth—almost one half its foreign-currency earnings—of food from the West because it was unable to grow enough of its own. If the Soviet Union continues to depend on others to feed its population and to supply it with spare parts, it is less likely to be disruptive. It is shortsighted, this argument goes, to pursue a policy that seeks to force Soviet citizens to tighten their belts and increase their degree of self-reliance.

However, if forced in this direction, it is well to remember that the Soviets can tolerate austere conditions. They proved that in World War II. Indeed until Reagan backed down on the pipeline issue, Soviet leaders had begun to use the Reagan administration's threats and sanctions as a tool to rally support. The reservations Soviet citizens might have had about the wisdom, the cost, and the difficulty of building the pipeline were all but forgotten as long as they were told that the United States was trying to prevent the construction of the pipeline. Soviet citizens appeared united in the belief that they were not dependent on American technology.

Reagan's harsh policy has had other unintended consequences. There is no doubt that the acceleration of the arms race has strained the Soviet Union. That, after all, was Reagan's intent. The Soviets apparently decided, however, that they could meet the challenge in a manner that we had not anticipated. One of the U.S.S.R.'s largest military burdens has been sustaining its large military presence on the Chinese border. Keeping troops there is essential, the Soviets feel. After all, blood was shed on the border only a few years ago, and the Russians are infected with a racist attitude toward the Chinese. Heretofore, the Chinese, who have had their own list of grievances against the Soviet Union, have reacted in a hostile way each time the Soviet Union has sought a reduction in border tension. More to the point, the Chinese insist that if the Soviets really are serious about improving relations, they should remove some of their troops from the frontier. Now, largely in response to the pressure generated by Reagan and what seemed to be his inflexibility over the pipeline, the Soviets have begun to reexamine their relations with the Chinese. If the Soviets do reduce their numbers along the border, it will not be because they have suddenly come to love the Chinese but because they have concluded that they would do better to focus their buildup against the United States rather than China. In that event, Reagan will have accomplished what at one point most observers would have thought was an impossibility: He will have brought about a relaxation of tension between China and the Soviet Union and, inconceivably, even a revival of at least a tepid form of Sino-Soviet friendship.

In the eyes of the beholder, the other side is always the evil one. Certainly Soviet intentions are not benign. But in Soviet eyes, neither are ours. Unfortunately, as each of us seeks to outpoint and outmaneuver the other not only do the tensions grow but so does our ability to destroy each other. It is not reassuring to see the Soviets put so much emphasis on civil defense and underground shelters, but neither is it reassuring for them to see, since 1981, the United States increase its military expenditures at a rate of 11 percent a year in real terms. Even more frightening, as we increase our spending Soviet generals increase their demands to keep up, which in turn leads Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to call for even higher American arms expenditures. But through a quirk of history, we now have a unique chance to halt the occurrence of what has looked like an inevitable collision. Brezhnev's death presents both sides with the rare opportunity to see whether or not it is possible to begin to talk in new terms. A certain amount of competitiveness is perhaps just as much a part of human nature as is the desire to save face. What has to be done now is to transcend these stereotypes of human nature and attempt to operate on a higher plane of thought, one in which the lure of cooperation is stronger than that of confrontation. ■

LAUCKS FOUNDATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 5012
SANTA BARBARA, CA., 93108

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