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War/Peace Issues and International Relations

The period between the two world wars was marked by a rising surge of optimistic pacifism. This in turn brought forth several highly articulate efforts by major theologians to counteract that optimism by taking note of Augustine's understanding of the behavior of the City of this World. Even the most realistic reading of events that could have been imagined in the period from 1919 to 1943 would never have contemplated the sustained tension, the embrace of military answers as the prime resort, and the reliance upon the ultimate destructiveness of a nuclear arsenal, all of which have increasingly come to furnish the context for thinking about issues of war and peace during the period from 1959-1983.

Thinking About the Morality of War in the Sixties

The year 1961 was the first year in which the program of the Society dealt with the moral problems raised by war. Paul Ramsey gave a paper entitled "The Just War and the Nuclear Dilemma." This paper came out of the work he was doing to prepare his chapter in *Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience*, John C. Bennett, ed., (Scribners, 1962), and contained a working version of the "Hatfield and McCoy's" parable that subsequently appeared in chapter eight of his own book, *The Just War* (Scribners, 1968). A year later, a panel consisting of Ernest W. Lefever, William A. Banner, and Gilbert Rutenber looked at "Christian Ethics and Foreign Policy." Lefever entitled his contribution "Basic Issues in Foreign Policy." Both Banner and Rutenber entitled their contributions "Criticisms of the Christian Realist Approach to Foreign Policy."

The presidential address for the next year was given by Paul Ramsey on "Deterrence During War: a Portion of a Paper on 'Thinking About the Do-able and the Un-do-able.'" Ramsey contended that the right of reprisal cannot be an all-embracing rule that legitimates the suspension of other criteria for determining what is just or unjust in war,

though he pointed out that in the past the very willingness to create an expectation that reprisals in kind will occur has often prevented grossly unjust actions by nation states from arising in the first place. Referring to the problems posed by massive stockpiling of nuclear weapons, Ramsey observed, "... the situation today is that the irrationally and purposelessness of pure punishment is laid bare before all eyes to see, together with the fact that the spiritualization of war into a contest of resolves is literally the most abysmal of all wars we could contemplate. One can still contemplate it, but it cannot be done except as an act that no longer has political purpose."

Ramsey's purpose in this address was to examine the immense moral problems created by weapons of mass destruction. While Ramsey clearly contended that nuclear weapons are not to be employed against civilian populations or other non-combatant targets, he resisted the logic that the nuclear pacifists were using to move from the moral unacceptability of counter-population retaliation to the repudiation of all forms of nuclear warfare. Ramsey seemed quite confident a fundamental distinction could be maintained in practice between threats to retaliate against whole populations and threats to retaliate only against nuclear forces.

Much of the 1964 meeting was given over to the discussion of the ways in which the development of nuclear weapons was affecting traditional thinking about the morality of war. The Friday afternoon plenary session was devoted to the general theme, "The 'Post-Christendom' Situation and Christian Ethics." Paul Peachey saw in the new situation an opportunity for Christians to legitimize a stance toward the culture not dissimilar to the stance of early Christians toward the political order in their time--a stance involving the repudiation of war as an act of conscience. Peachey later published "New Ethical Responsibility: The Task of Post-Christendom Ethics," *Interpretation* 19 (January 1965): 26-38. At this same meeting a Saturday morning plenary session involved four members of the Society in "A Re-examination of 'Realistic Ethics.'" Since Christian realism had become so central in providing the intellectual scaffolding with which these issues were framed in those days, this panel focused on foundational aspects of the problem. Dandel Rhoades, who spoke on "The Prophetic Insight and the Theoretical-Analytical Inadequacy of Christian Realism," directed much of his attention to Reinhold Niebuhr's thought, and Samuel Magill spoke about "Some Significant Contributions in the Political Realism of Hans Morgenthau." Rhoades suggested that Niebuhr's attempt to make the doctrine of human nature the clue to political thinking rendered his scheme blind to certain kinds of

social pathology. Magill, explicating Morgenthau's view of politics as the process of arriving at viable balances between conflicting claims, pointed to the contrasting ingredients in Morgenthau's thinking, ingredients that revealed a sensitivity to the need to control and direct power as well as the need to recognize its importance. "Morgenthau," noted Magill, "knows that shared organizational interest must always undergird a viable political organization." According to Magill, Morgenthau has not been merely a power philosopher, but a realist who has carefully weighed the rich possibilities as well as the inadequacies of the human capacity to create community. John Swomley responded to Rhoades with a remarkable sense of agreement and Wilmer Cooper responded to Magill by suggesting that Morgenthau's thinking posed far greater problems for a Christian ethic than Magill seemed to realize.

The programs in both 1966 and 1967 devoted a considerable proportion of time to the discussion of war/peace issues. An unprecedented program format was tried--one that depended upon everyone reading materials in advance. (It might be noted that this format was abandoned after those two years). In 1966, William V. O'Brien, Director of the Institute of World Policy, Georgetown University, was invited to share a position paper that he had previously given as part of a seminar for the Council on Religion and International Affairs. His paper was distributed in advance to all members of the Society, as were written responses from Quentin Quade, Paul Deats, Vernon Ferwerda, Robert Gessert, Paul Peachey, and Paul Ramsey. Nearly a hundred pages of single-spaced copy was thus made available to members before the meeting, but nothing in the record indicates how fully this material was read.

O'Brien's paper, dealing with the morality of counter-insurgency warfare, showed how utterly disruptive insurgency warfare can be. He characterized it as being primarily concerned with bringing down an existing order rather than working toward a constructive political alternative, and noted that persons of good will seeking constructive solutions are frequently assassinated or destroyed by such conflict. The moral problem raised by the appearance of this kind of warfare are enormous, since its unprecedented terrorism seems to call for reactive measures that are incompatible with the traditional standards of civilized behavior. O'Brien explored whether it was right to engage in the massive bombing of civilian and non-combatant targets if that seemed the only way to counter insurgency warfare, whether it would be just to employ torture to extract information about the tactics of insurgents if doing so were the only way to prevent them from inflicting

massive damage upon a society, and whether there is any possibility of achieving anything even remotely resembling traditional victory from entering into such unconventional conflicts.

While it is not clear how widely O'Brien's paper or the responses to it were read before the meeting, it is clear that Theodore Weber did read these materials with care as background for leading the session. He prepared a paper entitled "Wars of National Liberation: the Methodology of Christian Ethics." Weber's paper indicated how the various responses looked at the issues raised by O'Brien's presentation. It became the basis for the first hour of discussion at the annual meeting, and was subsequently published in two concurrent issues of *Worldview* 9 (June 1966): 7-12; and (July/August 1966): 15-19, where it can be consulted for a fuller report on Weber's findings.

Weber showed how the responses to O'Brien's paper lined up according to the long-standing (and unresolved) differences between Christians about their proper role in politics. His scale put eschatological fidelity to Jesus Christ at one end--occupied by Paul Peachey--and obligations to the political claim of the nation-state--represented by Robert Gessert--at the other end. Weber also examined each response to O'Brien's paper to discern its attitude to the morality of intervention in wars of national liberation. Here a similar spectrum turned up, with pacifists like Peachey and Deats very wary about such intervention, and others, like Quentin Quade and Robert Gessert, justifying it as part of the effort to contain Communist expansionism. Weber noted the absence from the panel of a significant nonpacifist opponent of intervention, which at that time would have included persons like Hans Morgenthau, Walter Lippmann, or John C. Bennett. Reading these papers and Weber's analysis many years later makes one realize how persistent are these issues.

A year later, the Society was again discussing the moral dilemmas of intervention, likewise in an unprecedented and never-repeated format. Five concurrent sessions were arranged under the general rubric, "Revolution and the Third World: Problems in Ethics." William J. Cook, who helped arrange this part of the program, began the Saturday afternoon period with a fifteen-minute introduction to the five different topics into which the subject had been divided. The five topics were: Revolution and Development; Revolution and Security in Developing Areas; Revolution and Ideology; Revolution and International Order; Revolution and U.S. Policy. Each of the concurrent sessions discussed from one to three previously prepared and previously distributed papers. All told, twenty-seven people

involved in leadership roles for this part of the program. Clearly the matter was of great concern to warrant so heavy an involvement on a topic for a second year in a row.

In the late nineteen sixties no group concerned with social issues could escape the impact of the Vietnam War. Deep differences of opinion concerning the legitimacy of American involvement in that conflict were racking the country and were likewise present in the membership of the Society. While there were no papers given before the Society that argued a particular position on the war in the same frontal way that action groups were calling attention to the issue in the society outside, many members of the Society would allude in one way or another to their own position on the matter. Ralph Potter's paper at the 1968 meeting did address the problems of the time, but more by taking a long serious look at the debate rather than jumping into one side of it. Under the title, "New Problems for Conscience in War," Potter explored the tests of adequacy that should be applied to discourse about the morality of war, and how moral considerations interrelate with policy decision-making in a complex and pluralistic society. Warning against political punditry and ethical journalism, Potter canvassed the theoretical frameworks provided by classic Christian explorations of these matters and indicated the conditions that would contribute to cogency and fairness in moral discourse about war. The kind of reflection Potter shared with the Society is further developed in the book which he published shortly thereafter, *War and Moral Discourse* (John Knox Press, 1969), and in an article, "The Moral Logic of War," *The McCormick Quarterly* 23 (May 1970): 203-33.

Two papers that were presented during the sixties cannot be properly described as discussions of the morality of war, but rather would be reported as discussions of the making of public policy about international relations. In 1963, William J. Cook, in a paper entitled "U.S. Publics and Foreign Policy Processes," examined how foreign policy gets made and the processes that Christian ethicists and church groups should take into account in seeking to have an influence over such policy. Cook proposed a theory of an "intervening elite" that includes policy makers, trained experts, and even the leaders of the Churches. This intervening elite has a significant role to play in exerting an influence upon the values and moods of the mass public as well as upon the thinking of those who do the governing. He stressed the importance of developing a sophisticated understanding of the processes by which foreign policy is formed, an understanding that would match the sophisticated grasp of moral issues already found among Christian ethicists.

In a quite different way, Theodore Weber was raising issues about the adequacy of the Christian political understanding of the international situation in the late 1960s. His paper at the 1968 meeting, entitled "Reconciliation and Foreign Policy," while disassociating itself from "theologies of messianism" which prod Christians to embrace revolutionary activities in the name of liberation, searched for a way of thinking about political life that offered a better hope than those realisms that see politics only as a means of administering force. Noting that the significance of reconciliation was neglected both by those privatized interpretations of the Gospel that make it a matter of individual salvation and by those theologians that deny the possibility of reconciliation in macro-relationships, Weber called for the civilizing of power as a means of making a more peaceful world. His reasoning, hardly well developed in either the sixties or the seventies, may yet be heard again if attention moves from thinking about war as a problem for the Christian conscience to thinking about the making of peace as a form of Christian stewardship.

Different Strands in the Discussions from 1970 to 1983

Thinking about issues related to war and peace in the period from 1970 to 1983 proceeded on several different tracks.

1) The discussion of pacifism. This topic continued to attract occasional attention. In 1977, Walter Bense gave a paper on "The Pacifism of Karl Barth: Some Questions for John H. Yoder." (Yoder was there to answer the questions.) Bense's paper is published in *The Selected Papers*. The same year, Glen Strassen gave a paper which examined the experiences of those who protested against the Vietnam War and showed the ways in which participating in those protests had been an educational experience for them. Given at the meeting as "Justice and the Debates Over Amnesty," this paper was published with the title "Amnesty and Fairness" in *Power and Empowerment in Higher Education*, D. B. Robertson, ed. (University of Kentucky Press, 1978): 107-133. In 1980 Duane Friesen looked at "Refusing to Pay Taxes as Protest Against Military Expenditures." In its own way, each of these papers enhanced the understanding of the problem of the private individual who finds participating in war morally impossible, but they are not indicative of the main directions that the presentations of war/peace issues at the programs of the Society took after 1970.

2) Arms Policy. Another strand in the discussion of war/peace issues and international affairs since 1970 focused on arms policy and disarmament questions, with a

In particular emphasis on the problems of nuclear weapons. In 1975 Bryan Hehir gave a paper with the title "The New Nuclear Debate: Political and Ethical Considerations," which was published in *The Selected Papers*. Hehir examined the debate about nuclear weapons as it was carried out from 1958-1968 and then detailed the new technological, political, and strategic factors that in his judgment had reshaped the moral issue to the point where the structural framework used for past discussions had become outdated. Hehir's paper was a skillful encapsulation, not only of the difference in the old debate between positions such as Paul Ramsey's (favoring a limited concept of deterrence) and the nuclear pacifism of the writers in W. Stein's *Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience*, but also of the differences discernable between Frederick Ikle and Herbert Scoville over the implications of Ballistic Missiles and Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs). Considering the intense moral issues raised by the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), Hehir advanced a position toward it that justified mounting a nuclear threat by developing such weapons while withholding moral sanction for their use. He acknowledged the problem of credibility in a position legitimizing the acquisition but not the use of weapons and admitted that he saw no way around the difficulty. He also decried the loss of interest in the debate and pleaded for the integration of the nuclear issue with a consideration of global justice and peace. Hehir's subsequent contribution to the discussion of these issues through his own writing and staff work for the Roman Catholic bishops has become widely known.

Five years later, in 1980, James Johnson gave a paper, "Weapons Limits and the Restraint of War: A Just War Critique." Like Hehir's paper, this was also printed in *The Selected Papers*. Johnson argued that the just war tradition furnishes the most fitting base on which to restrict the development and possession of weapons. He provided a running account of certain historical efforts to limit or restrain particular weapons--most of which were produced by an advancing technology--and he noted the similarities and the differences between efforts to ban gas and outlaw biological weapons and the efforts to arrive at carefully stated warrant for developing a nuclear capability strictly for its deterrent effect against attack *per se*, but could come up with no moral legitimization for the use of such a capability should it fall as a deterrent. The issues explored by both Hehir and Johnson in these papers were later to become the subject of greater public attention. In 1982 Theodore J. Koontz gave "An Ethical Analysis of

the Salt II Debate." At the time of its presentation this was a preliminary report on dissertation research. It looked at the general problem of Salt II, the views of the major powers, the sources of their disagreements about issues, and even more particularly, at the debate within the United States about the legitimacy and significance of the talks. It examined the thinking of three senators: Henry Jackson, Joseph Biden, and Mark Hatfield. Like the paper of William Cook in 1963, this study directed attention to the way foreign policy matters are dealt with in the American political process. The next year, Paul Bock, who had just returned from a stay in Europe, reported on "The Nuclear Debate within German Protestantism." His report was mainly about the discussion taking place in the West German church--a debate that was deeply dividing its membership. It was helpful to hear how the discussions of these matters are carried out by Christians in other nations.

The Problem of Violence in General. During the seventies attention came to be focused less upon international conflict by itself and more upon violence as a general problem for the Christian conscience. In 1970 both James Lawson and Franklin Sherman presented papers entitled "Violence and Nonviolence." Both of these papers were distributed in mimeographed form to the membership after the meeting. Lawson showed that both our history as a nation and the climate of opinion that was prevalent at the time so shaped our thinking that we seldom even began to think of alternatives to violence in seeking social change. Terming racism, poverty, and violence "the social trinity of evil," Lawson argued that these three systems of cruelty are welded to each other in an interlocking web that engulfs the whole world in its grip. He suggested that a less exploitative society might be able to overcome violence, but that the American war machine was blocking the development of such a society both at home and abroad. He criticized those who glibly support violent revolutionary movements and argued for the moral superiority of non-violent direct action as a means of securing social change. His presentation contains a list of similarities and contrasts between violence and nonviolence as instruments of conflict.

Sherman examined the issue in the light of two documents: 1) a lecture by John P. Spiegel, a Brandeis Professor of Social Psychiatry, and 2) the volume by H. D. Graham and T. R. Gurr prepared as a report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (the Eisenhower Commission). Sherman admitted that violence may be "normal" in the statistical sense, but held that it can

never be "normal" in the moral sense. He made a sharp distinction between an "expressive" type of violence that cannot have a moral purpose, and a "programmed" violence that can be brought under scrutiny and restraint. Any resort to violence that is to fit the second category (as a last resort in a just war, for example) must be undertaken with a sense of failure that prompts regret and contrition even while pleading its necessity. Arguing that just war teaching brings together a reading on empirical conditions with moral judgments as to when violence may possibly be justified, Sherman suggested that a similar process must be developed for judging when resort to violence might be warranted in other cases. While eschewing a pacifism that rules out all violence on a priori grounds, Sherman indicated that there are serious reasons for questioning the endorsements of violence as a means of social change that were prevalent in some church circles at the time he wrote. His paper refers the reader to a discussion of other aspects of the problem published as "Theological Reflections on Violence," *Dialog 8* (Winter, 1969): 25-32.

A year later, a panel on the subject "Violence as a Proper Means of Social Change: Historical Perspectives," provided another set of insights for thinking about this subject. C. Freeman Sleeper gave a presentation on "Perspectives on Violence in Early Christianity;" John E. Lynch, a paper on "Violence and Social Change in the Middle Ages;" and David Little, a paper on "Some Justifications for Violence in the Puritan Revolution." These papers were also distributed in mimeographed form to the membership of the Society after the meeting. Each of them illustrates how valuable it can be to examine a contemporary issue by noting historical precedents, providing one guards against simplistic parallels. It was Sleeper's main contention that the New Testament writers were facing the question of order in terms relating to the new Christian movement rather than the political order of the time, and that therefore their comments about violence cannot be used as guidance for contemporary political questions without a most imaginative (and therefore most hazardous) transpositioning of the framework. Lynch traced how the growth of the cities as locations for a new commercial class developed a new kind of voluntary association which gave rise to struggles (and attendant violence) against the old order. The peasants also became involved in these struggles against feudalism. Lynch asked, "How do we distinguish between a violence that liberates and a violence that enslaves?" He indicated the great difficulty of answering that question when one is very close to a conflict. David Little's paper took issue with the interpretation of the Puritan Revolution given by both

Roland Bainton and Michael Walzer, who saw it as the abandonment of just war doctrine and the embrace of a crusad ethic. Instead, Little showed that the shift is better described as a change in just war teaching to make the consent of the governed a central test of political justice—though he did acknowledge that some holy war rhetoric crept into the discourse of the time.

In 1976 Walter Muelder presented a discussion of the problem of violence with reference to discussions about this issue taking place in the World Council of Churches. Six years before *The Readers Digest* oversimplified the matter Muelder gave a careful analysis of the problems facing the World Council of Churches as it came to grips with the vast complexity of violence in modern society and the manifold ways in which the problem arises in different parts of the world. This paper, which was published in *The Selected Papers*, posed several questions that ought to be faced both by those espousing violence as a necessary means of social change and by those advocating nonviolence as a path of moral purity.

4) The World Situation. At the same 1976 meeting several other papers dealt with war/peace concerns from a variety of perspectives. Ernest Lefever dealt with "Intelligence, Secrecy, and a Free Society." Rena Karefa-Smart asked "Is Democracy Viable in the Third World?" These papers are not available to be reported upon. Donald W. Shriver, Jr. considered "Survival Ethics: The Question of Triage." His paper, which is available in *The Selected Papers* under the title "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case for Mainlanders," examined the logic of triage (which was worked out in wartime for dealing with the wounded in military hospitals) and showed that it does not provide an adequate basis for judging our moral responsibilities toward a hungry and impoverished world. Shriver saw triage as misleading because it is an ethic of what to settle for rather than an ethic of what to strive for, which therefore encourages a too ready acquiescence to harsh and inhumane realities that may not indeed be the final circumstance of persons on this planet. This paper was also published in *Soundings* 59 (Summer 1976): 234-243.

Twice in the middle seventies the Society devoted attention to problems of world poverty and development in plenary sessions with guest speakers. In 1974 Denis Goulet, the author of *The Cruel Choice* and *A New Moral Order*, was asked to address the membership on "Christian Ethics and World Development: A Critical Perspective." Jan Milic Loehman responded. Goulet's paper was distributed to the Society in mimeographed form with a request that it not be cited. Those who were there will remember

as a careful delineation of the value crisis produced by the thrust toward development and a plea that Christian ethicists not yield to any simplistic reductionism that takes politics, revolution, or economic well-being into the only touchstones for policy. In responding to Goulet's paper, Lochman indicated his own Sitz in Leben as a person living in the "Second World" and suggested that the inertia of people in that world is as great as in the "First World." Calling for Christian ethicists to break through the "consumer mentality" that dominates in both situations, Lochman asked that they develop a theological perspective that places the solidarity of all the human race at the center of concern, that they provide a critical prophetic vision opposing all naive or arrogant identification of the human with the patterns of any one culture, and that the values of an innerworldly restraint be rediscovered as a foundation for living in mutuality with others in the world. Lochman argued that the world must rediscover the way of self-restraint is the way of survival.

Two years after Goulet spoke to the Society, Professor Ronald Mueller of American University spoke to another Sunday morning plenary session on "Global Interdependence, Social Stability, and the Future of U.S. Democracy: The Dovelaiting of Ethics and the Human Sciences." As is true of too many of the guest presentations, this has not been made part of the record, and the benefits of having such a guest expert have been limited to those who attended the session. In 1977 a panel with James Will and James Finn was held on the subject, "The Future of East-West Relations: Is 'Detente' Dead?" There may have been more debate at that panel than there would be if these two individuals were to engage in the same discussion today, since the disagreements about the wisest way to deal with the polarized world situation have become considerably sharper in the intervening years.

Along the way two sessions have been devoted to the teaching of peace concerns. These will be reported on in the chapter dealing with teaching. Moreover, there has been a good deal of attention paid to human rights as an international concern. The papers dealing with that subject will be treated in the chapter on the Society's thinking about politics and law.

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Politics, Law, and Human Rights

Christian ethicists have generally made the study of political affairs an important focus of attention. Indeed, political considerations thread their way through many of the papers that have already been discussed in previous chapters, as for example, in those papers that examine how power is used as an instrument of oppression and in those papers that explore the relationships between Christian theology and Marxist thought. But a significant group of papers given before the Society has focused more directly on the nature and function of politics as a subject of exploration in its own right. These will be discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Another group of papers to be considered in this chapter has been concerned with the nature of law. There is a curious relationship between politics and law. Both are concerned with the ordering of society. Both are concerned with the achievement of justice. Both pay attention to how interactions between individuals and groups can be made to serve certain ends. Both can be instruments of corruption and be used in less than honorable ways, so that the terms "politicized" and "legalistic" have equally unsavory implications. Yet, the study of politics differs from the study of law. Politics is concerned with gaining and holding control over government for the attainment of specific ends. Law is concerned with establishing and maintaining legitimacy for the system of government in its entirety. The final appeal in politics is the election booth; in law, the courtroom. Politics depends on persuasion and coercion while law depends upon precedent and legitimation. Politics is more operational than law; law is more procedural than politics. In politics power is used as a means of control in law one of the more important concerns is to control power. In politics, partisanship is crucial and advocacy is the servant of causes; in law, advocacy is a means of obtaining justice and is considered a special trust that stands above partisanship. Thus, while political philosophy