COMMISSION FOR PEACE

A New Approach . . by Bertrand Russell

MANKIND at the present time is faced by dangers to the whole species so great that the avoidance of them ought to be the common aim of all the powers. The facts are known to everybody who chooses to know them, but for reasons of propaganda they are not adequately emphasized on either side of the Iron Curtain. It is true that they have been stated in Western countries but not in such a manner as to influence policy. They have been stated more clearly and forcibly in America than in any other country, but they do not seem to have made any impact upon the average Congressman or the average American voter.

BERTRAND RUSSELL'S new book, "Human Society in Ethics and Politics," will be published next month.

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The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, month by month since Hiroshima, has published detailed and reasoned warnings, but this journal has a very small circulation since it appeals only to those who wish to know rather than to shout. It is true that some influential people who are not scientists have become aware of the situation brought about by the new methods of warfare. Ernest T. Weir, for example, who represents what is most intelligent in big business, has said at the end of an irrefutable piece of reasoning, "In short, even if we defeated Russia—communism would win." *

The supreme fact that governments cannot bring themselves to face is that their aims can no longer be achieved by war. This applies equally to Communist and anti-Communist powers. Perhaps Mr. Weir may be right in saying that if the United States were victorious in a great war communism would still win, but it should be added that there is no probability of anybody being victorious. Consider what is likely to happen in the first week of a world war. New York, Washington, London, and Moscow will probably be wiped out. A great deal of the Caucasus oil will be set a-blaze, and the whole of Rome will be replaced by anarchic violence. Such parts of the populations as survive the bombs will starve, and ordered government will be replaced by anarchic violence. All great states will disintegrate, as Rome disintegrated in the fifth cen-

Conservative Investors

Harry Bridges's militant I. L. W. U. is extremely conservative in handling its pension fund, according to Business Week. As of June of last year, the magazine reports, the union and the Pacific Maritime Association, the organization of employers which donates to the fund, had invested $8,000,000 in "high-grade bonds, debentures, and rail-equity trusts . . . National Steel, A. T. and T., Consolidated Edison, Aluminum Corporation of America, and more, all the fattest cats of Wall Street." Louis Goldblatt, author of the article which appears on these pages, is quoted as saying that the union, in choosing its investments, was concerned first with the security of the fund and second with its yield.

"Our bonds," said Mr. Goldblatt, according to Business Week, "are strictly a mortgage on buildings and equipment, not a vote of confidence in the management."
WHY is it that although this is obvious to anyone who takes even a little trouble to study the situation, governments and public alike continue to talk and think in terms of war? Among the Western powers this is largely due to the fact that any talk about the futility of war sounds like defection and may be regarded as an argument for appeasement. I suppose that the same considerations apply to the politically active part of the population of the Communist countries. It seems, on both sides, as if the only alternative to war were abject surrender. There is, however, another alternative. It is that both sides should recognize, and should be known to recognize sincerely, that war has become futile. Neither side alone can be vigorous in urging the futility of war since to do so gives an impression of weakness. It is here that neutrals can, if they will, save both camps from destruction.

Neutrals have two advantages over the powers in either camp. The first advantage is that they can urge the destructiveness and futility of war without incurring the odium of seeming to advocate cowardly submission. The second advantage is that they can speak to governments on both sides without being thought to be actuated merely by bias. This is especially important as regards Communist countries, for in them public discussion and controversy play no part. While relations between East and West remain as strained as they are at present nothing that the Western democracies can say to Russia or China has any weight if it is an appeal to reason rather than to force. Neutral governments, on the contrary, can speak in identical terms to both Communist and non-Communist powers, and can avoid the suspicion that they are concerned to promote the success of either side.

If I belonged to one of the neutral countries, I should urge my government, and any other neutral government that might be willing to listen, to take very active steps to persuade both sides simultaneously to abandon the threat of war as an instrument of policy. The first step should be to appoint a commission to investigate the probable effects upon neutrals of a world war. I should hope that a number of neutrals would join in this, but the work could be done by any one or two of them—for example, by India and Sweden, jointly or separately. Nobody can doubt that a world war would bring great hardships to neutrals, perhaps as great as those which would be suffered by belligerents. It would therefore be a rational act from a traditional point of view to investigate these possible hardships and to inquire whether they could be averted or mitigated by anything except the prevention of the war. I should hope that a commission, if appointed, would find that it could not confine its inquiries to the effects of war upon neutrals. I believe that it would very soon find the problems of neutrals inextricably bound up with those of potential belligerents, and that it would be forced into some kind of forecast of the course of war if one took place.

I do not mean that the neutrals should predict the victory of this side or that. I believe that a victory for either side is out of the question, and I think this would be evident to any intelligent neutral not blinded by the passions which are producing the East-West tension. The commission should preserve a most meticulous impartiality. Its inquiries should be technical and dispassionate. Its members should be few and should be eminent in various relevant directions. There would have to be military, naval, and air experts, a first-class nuclear physicist, a bacteriologist, an economist, and a man of experience in international politics. A body so composed could, I am convinced, draw up a report which would make the futility of world war undeniable by anybody who studied it.

The report should be presented to all governments likely to be belligerents in a world war. These governments should be invited to express their opinion of the report. If they concurred in its findings—and it would surely be very difficult for them to do otherwise—the powers on each side would be so informed. I do not believe that at the present moment either side desires a great war; Malenkov has expressed the opinion that it would be a disaster. But on each side there is a suspicion that the other side is not sincere. Neither Russia nor the United States is convinced that the other will not start aggressive war at any moment. It is this mutual suspicion which must be allayed if war is not to break out sooner or later through some rashness or some inadvertence. I think that this mutual suspicion could be very much diminished if both sides simultaneously expressed agreement with the findings of the neutral commission.

IT MAY be feared that neutral governments will shrink from a task which is likely to offend the most powerful nations of the world, for there is one matter on which all the powerful nations appear to be agreed, and that is that neutrality is an offense against morality and decency. For this reason any neutral nation undertaking such a task will need courage. But courage is needed in order to stay alive. Passive pacifism leads straight to death. Courage for war is common to the greater part of mankind. Is it utopian to hope that some neutral nation or nations may show a much smaller degree of courage in the interests of peace?

I have mentioned two nations which I think might possibly be induced to act in the sense that I have been advocating. They are Sweden and India. Neither is perhaps wholly neutral. Sweden's sympathies are Western and India's sympathies are Eastern; but both are legally neutral, and in cooperation they might display a genuine impartiality. I have encountered among Swedes a sentiment which, though irrational, is not unnatural. Sweden has not been at war since 1814, and there are not a few in Sweden who have a sort of shame in the thought that they have had no share in
the arduous heroisms of this turbulent century. But if Sweden were to undertake such a work for peace as the suggested commission could perform, it would appear at once in the very forefront of heroism, and of a heroism that would be constructive, non-violent, and in the service of humanity as a whole. I do not see that national self-respect could demand anything better.

The government of India, while not strictly pacifist, is profoundly affected by the doctrine of non-violence as preached by Mahatma Gandhi. To show to the world convincingly that war will not only be horrible and cruel and destructive but will also be futile from a governmental point of view would be a fitting tribute to the memory of Gandhi and one which would enhance the moral stature of India among the nations.

The scheme which I have been proposing, even if completely successful, would be only a first step. If each side were convinced that the other side realized the uselessness of war from the point of view of its own aims and ambitions, it would become possible to negotiate with some hope of reaching solutions. I do not venture to suggest what these solutions should be. There are problems which, in the present tempo of the world, appear insoluble. Perhaps the most intractable of these is the unification of Germany. But no problem is insoluble where there is mutual goodwill and where concessions are not regarded by one side as a triumph and by the other as a disgrace. The truth is so plain and simple that it seems as if governments must in time become aware of it: the Communist and non-Communist worlds can live together or die together. There is no other possibility. When both sides realize this, it may be hoped that they will choose to live rather than die.

Moscow-Belgrade Reunion

by Alexander Werth

of the liberation of Yugoslavia from the Germans eleven years ago, he stressed the heroic struggle of the Partisans and referred with moderation to the aid given them by the Soviet forces.

The appearance of this story in Pravda is of greater significance than might appear to the uninitiated. The account of events in 1943 and 1944 was in agreement by and large with the official Yugoslav contention that the country was mainly liberated by the Yugoslavs themselves, even if the intervention of the Red Army was of decisive help in the final stages of the war. The suggestion that the Red Army was an "auxiliary force," and not the other way round, was calculated to be a sop to Yugoslav pride.

As to what happened later, Kraminov was discretion personified. Without going into any details he simply said that relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia suddenly became "unfriendly." And in recent years this unfriendliness had "played into the hands of the enemies of both countries—those who hoped to exploit the situation with a view to pursuing their policy from positions of strength against the Soviet Union and the People’s Democracies and those who wanted to weaken and isolate Yugoslavia."

With respect to the recent overtures made by the Soviet Union toward "normalizing" Soviet-Yugoslav relations, Kraminov commented on the favorable response which these offers had met from the Yugoslav government and continued: "Trade between the two countries is now being developed, and there is a marked extension of cultural contacts. The two governments agree that friendly relations must be based on equal rights and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs."

What followed, Kraminov said, was written more in sorrow than in anger. On November 13 the Soviet government proposed a conference of all European countries with a view to establishing a system of collective security. The peace-loving peoples of Europe warmly approved of this proposal, and "a number of European governments accepted." But unfortunately not Yugoslavia. While the Yugoslav government "welcomed and supported the idea of the conference" and considered that it would "contribute greatly to the diminution of international tension," it felt that since numerous European countries had refused the Soviet invitation, it might be best to postpone the conference till some later date. At this point the Pravda article, having previously sunk all past differences, changed its tone and insisted that to postpone the all-European conference till after the ratification of German rearmament would "make such a conference aimless."

The article did not mention Tito or any other Yugoslav leader. It was calculated to appeal especially to ex-Partisans, who are prominent in the Yugoslav Communist Party, and to industrial workers, many of whom were "Cominformist" in 1948 when the break with Russia occurred and have continued to be so on the quiet. Even Serb peasants have a feeling of anti-German Slav solidarity and a soft spot for Russia.

There is no doubt that the Kremlin is doing its best—and with considerable success—to strengthen the bonds between Russia and all other Slav peoples, who may not love Russia very much but who do not love Germany at all. Is the ultimate object of its overtures a Soviet-Yugoslav military alliance?

ALEXANDER WERTH is The Nation’s Paris correspondent.

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