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## The Bishops and Nuclear Weapons: The Catholic Pastoral Letter on War and Peace

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war in general and nuclear war in particular. In two final chapters, he goes on to consider the bearing of his moral argument on declaratory policy and on disarmament policy.

*Morality and the Bomb* is heavy going in some places since it is written for a philosophically sophisticated audience, but it will repay careful study by any person interested in our developing a morally sound approach to deterrence. It is one book which explains both why deterrence makes a vital moral contribution to our society and why arms control is a morally urgent task. Its one major limitation is that the author's understandable preoccupation with the British debate, in which deterrence came under a stronger theoretical challenge, leads him to treat the American religious debate less fully than it deserves. But he has made a distinguished contribution to our common understanding of the deeper moral issues.

THE REVEREND JOHN LANGAN, S.J.  
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Dougherty, James E. *The Bishops and Nuclear Weapons: The Catholic Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1984. 245pp. \$22.50

This study provides the most thorough and balanced assessment to date of the American bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace issued in 1983. The study, published under the auspices of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Cambridge, describes the dominant theological and political forces influencing the drafting of the

letter, assesses the growing impact of pacifism on the American Catholic Church hierarchy, and reviews the teachings of the Catholic Church on the morality of nuclear weapons. A major strength of the book is that it provides a sympathetic, balanced yet critical assessment of the bishops' work. Dougherty probes beneath the simplistic slogans which have dominated the religious debate on nuclear arms by seeking to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the bishops' argument. "The bishops are to be admired," he writes, "for adopting a courageous prophetic stance, for raising some tough questions about their own government's policy and for introducing a strong moral tone into the national debate about nuclear strategies." At the same time, Dougherty questions many of the letter's emphases and policy recommendations which he believes ultimately tend to undermine U.S. strategic policy.

Dougherty observes that the problem of nuclear weapons cannot be easily encompassed within the traditions of pacifism and just war. Indeed, deterrence requires a wholly new type of moral analysis if it is to adequately come to terms with the problems posed by nuclear technology. The author suggests that many of the letter's limitations can be attributed to the absence of any well-developed body of moral theory or church teachings on deterrence. The bishops' effort to base a qualified endorsement of deterrence on a pacifist-just war dichotomy is, in Dougherty's view, wholly unsatisfactory.

According to the author, one of the major shortcomings in the letter is that it gives too much attention to the preservation of the world and insufficient attention to the problem of Soviet expansionism. As Dougherty rightly notes, nuclear weapons have served not only to prevent nuclear war, but to inhibit Soviet imperialism. A morally satisfactory approach to nuclear weapons must be inspired not only by the fear of annihilation, but also by the call for world justice. Indeed, as George Weigel has observed, the posing of survival as the highest moral good runs directly contrary to the church's teachings for two thousand years. Justice, not survival, must be the clarion call of the church. A moral nuclear strategy must not only seek to reduce the probability of nuclear war, but it must also promote the common good by inhibiting the expansion of totalitarian tyranny. A significant failure of the pastoral letter is its failure to adequately relate the nuclear dilemma to Soviet imperialism.

There are no easy answers to the moral paradox of deterrence. Deterrence provides a crude and morally troubling strategy of peacekeeping. To renounce deterrence would be irresponsible; to endorse it without qualification would result, in all probability, in grave injustices. James Finn has stated the problem well: "one must currently choose between the unsatisfactory and the still more unsatisfactory. Anyone who thinks otherwise has not grasped the strange and desperate quality of our situa-

tion." The bishops do of course give conditional endorsement to deterrence, but what troubles Dougherty is that the bishops call into question the instruments by which the United States has historically operationalized nuclear deterrence. As Dougherty notes, "there is no such thing as an effective nuclear deterrent force without an operational doctrine to govern its use. Yet what the bishops seem to be calling for is a morally acceptable deterrent without a militarily credible doctrine to support it." Dougherty thinks—and the reviewer agrees—that the pastoral letter would have been much stronger had the bishops explored in greater depth the meaning of traditional moral principles to the problems of nuclear strategy and devoted less attention to specific policy recommendations. By focusing on issues of operational character, the bishops venture into a highly complex arena in which they have limited technical competence.

Those who have followed the moral debate on nuclear strategy will find this book a stimulating and insightful study. While the book is written for those who are generally familiar with the bishops' letter and who have some background in the moral dilemma of nuclear weapons, it would have been helpful had the author presented a summary of the essential elements of the bishops' argument before examining key moral issues in the debate. Overall, however, this is a thoughtful, informed study which illuminates the

contribution of the pastoral letter to the nuclear moral debate.

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Koch, H.W., ed. *Aspects of the Third Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 611pp. \$29.95

No questions, no history. Huge chunks of the past are exempt from historical inquiry because no one wants to know about them. It is only when people ask questions, only where there is a problem, that a period, or an issue, will be addressed. In our time, for instance, formerly unexplored areas of our past have become relevant, and so there is now women's history, black history, world history, comparative history, the history of sexuality, the history of death. Investigation arises when people want the facts, and help in interpreting them.

The Third Reich never lacked for questions. This book of essays by German and British authors addresses the question: Are our customary views about Hitler's Germany still valid, or do we need to revise our conclusions in light of new evidence, new times, new problems? Was the Third Reich a modern, or an anti-modern phenomenon? Did it radically break with history, or can it be seen in terms of continuity? Did Hitler follow a master plan, or did he improvise? How much of the Third Reich is biography, and how much reflected broadly based contemporary wishes?

Ernest Nolte, dean of scholars of generic fascism, gives the overall answer: "the innermost core of the negative picture of the Third Reich needs no revision." What the essays in this book do mainly is to amplify, not alter, our knowledge of the period. Here are some points. *Mein Kampf* was a product of a particular time in Hitler's development. It is a fair indicator of the future, but Hitler was an improviser and new circumstances influenced him. Hitler's rise to power was helped by the absence in the Weimar constitution of any prohibition of parties whose explicit purpose was to overthrow the republic. Hitler could be, and was, entirely candid about his intention to take power legally in order legally to overthrow the democracy.

The organization of government was a management nightmare, with a confused, overlapping, and turf-obsessed hierarchy. Hitler alone stood as the integrating figure. His enormous popularity was decisive, and flowed from the skill and passion with which he expressed the deep longing for a classless, organic community that was, probably the most common characteristic of the Germans. It turns out that it was the leader of the army, dominated by this longing for *Volksgemeinschaft*, who took the initiative to establish the Fuehrer oath, hoping to establish a mystic relationship between the head of state and the armed forces as in the days of the emperors.

The genesis of the "final solution" is explained in terms of this unique authority of Hitler. A Fuehrer order,