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An alternative to war

Gordon C. Zahn

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OTHER TITLES IN THIS SERIES

FOREWORD

The general theme of the series in which this essay appears is "Ethics and Foreign Policy." This series represents no single point of view; it is designed, rather, to draw upon those various important strands, moral and political, which contribute to our common heritage. Underlying the diversity of views there is, however, a unity. All of the essays attempt to relate religious and moral insight to urgent problems of international affairs.

The proposition which Gordon Zahn examines and advocates runs counter to many commonly held beliefs and attitudes, but it too derives from a long tradition. Dr. Zahn has been one of the most persuasive and persistent advocates of non-violent action in this country. In this essay he examines the theory of non-violence against the background of threatened nuclear war.

Dr. Zahn is Professor of Sociology at Loyola University, Chicago. He was a Fulbright Research Scholar in Germany during 1956-7. In 1961 he received an American Philosophical Society Grant and in 1962, as the result of years of research, he published his widely acclaimed and debated study *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*. The discussion of the morality of modern war which he initiated in that book he further develops in this essay.

JAMES FINN
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The Problem

In the long-awaited conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere and in underwater and outer space environments, we may have reached a significant turning point in world history. The agreement, limited though it is, might be a sign that men are now ready to abandon the callous disregard for human life which might otherwise prove to be the final bitter fruit of human civilization. But, however much we may hope that this is the case, our optimism must be tempered by the memory that not too long ago leaders on both sides of the cold-war battle lines were proclaiming their readiness to match test with test regardless of the globe-circling pall of potentially lethal fall-out each new round of tests would have loosed. We have seen this callousness in operation before — in the technological triumphs of two murderous world wars and the atrocities made possible by these "advances," to cite an obvious example. We have seen it, too, in the horrifying spectacle of Hitler's "Final Solution of the Jewish Question," and its echoes are still encountered all too often when people, here or in Germany, quibble about the exact number of millions of persons so exterminated — as if the enormity of the crime lay in the calculation and not in the fact that there were men who were prepared to destroy *any* number of other men to achieve the goals set by their perverted ideals and dreams of a future and, in their eyes, better world.

There are men among us today, and they are legion, who are prepared to destroy other men in pursuit of other goals, admittedly more laudable and reasonable in our eyes. Some of them are ordinary men plagued by insecurity or fretful with impatience; others are distinguished political, military, and even scientific leaders. Dr. Edward Teller, for example, assures us that in a nuclear war it would be probable that no more than 10% of the American population would be wiped out; and Ernest Lefever, calculates the possible loss at 20% of the earth's population (with the additional note that most of this would occur north of the Equator). Converting these percentages to absolute numbers, we find therein a willingness, however reluctant, to prepare for a war that would, in one instance, kill approximately 18 million Americans and, in the other (a more meaningful expectation in that it apparently takes into account the enemies of a victorious America and any other nations which happen to be in the vicinity of combat), the even more impressive total of more than 700 million.

No one will question whether the aims and purposes motivating the nuclear optimists are more laudable than those of the Nazis — they

most certainly are. But one must ask whether or not *any aims and purposes* can justify the inhumanities these men are prepared to support. Christian Geissler, referring to the tragic history of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, made the point in these words: "Anyone whose mind is capable of developing (and this means, for future use) justifications in the presence of such calculated mass murder — or, to be more specific, for the planned and willed burning of 200,000 people; anyone whose mind can in any sense entertain justifications here instead of seeking to use these to effect the most stringent correction of our moral sensibilities by holding these happenings before our eyes as the horribly certain consequences of the organized misappropriation of better human capabilities — such a mind is corrupt, its thinking is infected by the genocidal habits of thought of the fascist."

Geissler's judgment lends chilling immediacy to Albert Schweitzer's warning: "Increasingly there is lost the consciousness that every man is an object of concern for us just because he is a man; civilization and morals are shaken and the advance to fully developed inhumanity is only a question of time."

Perhaps it is no longer "a question of time." Perhaps we have already "advanced" to "fully developed inhumanity" when we reach the point at which a nation's scientific genius foresees a weapon which will destroy all vestige of human life and leave undamaged the buildings and other material objects in its area of destruction — and when that nation's journalists and senators join in the chorus demanding that this be accomplished posthaste. What more ultimate expression of the disregard for human life can be imagined? What more ghastly reversal of values than this which proposes to destroy God's proudest creation and carefully preserve the passing creations of human technology?

It is all too clear that man's frantic pursuit of security through violence has led us to this dead end where, like the strange and unnamed animal of Kafka's *Burrow*, we find ourselves the captive of our own fear-created devices. Indeed, the simile is apt in more ways than one if we but consider the suburbanite hard at work digging the family fall-out shelter and loudly proclaiming (with the nodding approval of the professional theologian) his right and intention to man a machine gun at its entrance, if necessary, to repel any threatened invasion by his neighbor's children. We have mastered the arts of violence to the point that we now have it within our power to destroy the world and annihilate its population. And in the process have we not destroyed the very hope of security we had sought and jeopardized the continued existence of ourselves, our potential enemies (and friends), and — the cruelest injustice of all — the generations, if any, still to come?

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The Proposed Alternative

This total failure of total violence to provide the security we crave presents us with what is at once a pressing need and a great opportunity to develop some alternative means to achieve the security we desire and to preserve the values we hold dear. More than this, it provides us with a definite hint as to the direction this alternative must take if it is to offer any hope of success. Instead of contributing further to the denigration of man, a new approach to security must recognize and rest upon the concern for man — *any* man, including our potential enemy — just because he is a man. We must resolve that if, in the words of John XXIII, "individual human beings are and should be the foundation, the end and the subjects of all the institutions in which social life is carried on," these institutions can never be given absolute priority over the worth of these individual human beings. Therefore, our means of defense must be so organized and our policies so developed that they find their effectiveness in the identification and exploitation of the essentially human qualities and capacities in ourselves and the potential enemy and not in the continued effort to destroy the greatest possible number of "them" at the least possible cost to "us."

Such an alternative presents itself in the complex of ideals and techniques usually covered by the negative term, non-violence. At least one can say that a growing number of serious-minded men are beginning to consider it as a possible alternative. In his coldly analytical survey of the positions represented by the unilateralists and their opponents, who favor maintenance of nuclear parity, Walter Stein rejects both as ultimate answers to the problem facing us. The answer, he insists, is the creation of "a radically new international order"; but this merely raises for him the new problem of how such an order is to emerge from our present world state of "mutual anathema and terror." It is necessary, he insists, to *will* the means to make this possible, and he goes on to say:

> I have argued that to will the means of peace in our situation is to be ready to bear very great risks indeed (though we cannot, anyway, avoid very grave risks of one kind or another). In effect, we should have to be prepared for unilateral risk-taking (or the equivalent of unilateral risk-taking—whatever the diplomatic formalities) and so ultimately for non-violent resistance.

Thomas Merton, too, reaches the conclusion "that we must defend freedom and sanity against the bellicose fanaticism of all warmakers, whether 'ours' or 'theirs' and that we must strive to do so not with force but with the spiritual weapons of Christian prayer and action. But

this action must be at once non-violent and decisive. Good intentions and fond hopes are not enough."

Thus, through non-violence our real and absolute defenselessness in the face of the new instruments of total destruction can be converted into power, a kind of power which could prove far more effective in the final reckoning than any breakthrough in megaton potential or in the accuracy and range of the instruments of delivery.

Non-violence is not to be dismissed as a passive surrender to or a defeatist compliance with the putative violent aggressor; instead, it is a form of concerted activity which is intended to generate the power to compel an opponent, negatively, to desist from an actual or anticipated program of action ("passive resistance") or, positively, to institute a program of action desired by the party utilizing it. To risk a slight terminological difference with Merton as he is quoted above, I would insist that non-violence, like violence, constitutes *force* and should be so . regarded in any consideration of its merits as a policy alternative. It represents a contest of will and spirit in place of our present tests of the relative strength of the material resources and supporting technology of the combatants. As such, its advocates would insist, non-violence is a more ultimate kind of power, one which ranges above and beyond the more limited potentialities of violence. Gandhi and his followers called it "soul force"; the Christian pacifist speaks of the "power of love," of a "charity" that can overcome the world.

In its essence, non-violence, since it rests upon the force of the "soul" and the practice of the virtue of love, is a personal act. To this extent, then, one might object that it does not lend itself to the group activity such as would be required in the context of a national defense alternative. But this is at most a paradox and certainly not the disqualification such objections might suggest. The same paradox may be seen in the practice of violence: the "army" attacks or retreats, but in reality it is the individual members of that army who strike or fall back as the case may be. Yet one must admit that there is a vital difference between the two — the individual can be conditioned to perform unthinkingly acts of violence; the efficient practice of non-violence, however, must involve a deep personal commitment and, in its most perfect form, requires of its practitioners a degree of self-mastery and dedication customarily associated with religious immolation. Non-violence on the group level, then, does not arise from welding an assortment of separate individuals into a functioning collectivity but, instead, from creating a community of committed persons and inspiring them into concurrent but always responsible and intentioned patterns of behavior.

In its statement, this might suggest an impossible ideal. Admittedly,

it has rarely, if ever, been perfectly attained. Yet significant victories have been won through the application of non-violence by groups, and some of these victories have been quite recent.

The dramatic series of successful assaults upon long-standing patterns of racial discrimination and injustice which have taken the form of "sit-in", "kneel-in", and even "wade-in" demonstrations has demonstrated its effectiveness. Negroes are now eating at lunch counters from which they were formerly excluded; elsewhere they are now able to enjoy the use of the beach facilities from which they had been driven by hate-inspired mobs. Of course, the scope of these victories may be discounted in the context of a proposal that such techniques be tried on an international scale; but two important points must be noted.

In a very real sense, the "Freedom Riders" and other non-violent demonstrators have incited an astonishing degree of *fear* in those who seek to uphold the threatened patterns. This is reflected in the anxiety with which whole communities have organized to speed them out of town and in the haste with which the discriminating restauranteur closes up shop when word of their approach reaches him.

The other significant aspect is the as yet unmeasured gain — and the most essentially relevant to the underlying rationale of non-violence —the extent to which these visible accomplishments have been made possible because many of those who previously had accepted and defended the patterns of exclusion and discrimination have been forced to question and reject them. Such a re-assessment and conversion may usually be traced to the convert's inner reactions of admiration for the dedication and personal bravery of the demonstrators or of revulsion against the coarseness and brutality evidenced by the die-hard defenders of segregation. It is precisely these reactions *inspired in the other* that constitute the critical mass of the weapons of non-violence and which have made possible the earlier and more extensive victories recorded in the early Christians' conversion of the pagan Empire and Gandhi's successful campaign for Indian independence. The non-violence alternative is keyed to a universalistic identity with and concern for the humanity inherent in all men, including the potential aggressor. And this, in turn, is expected at some point to trigger a reciprocal response in the opposing party; to fan, so to speak, the spark of human decency which, no matter how low it may burn in individual men for a time, cannot be extinguished completely or forever.

With the fall-out from past series of bomb tests (some of which could have destroyed the world's greatest city in the flash of an instant) still presenting its lingering threat to mankind's health and well-being, it may seem utterly unreasonable to propose as a counter-measure a set

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of techniques associated in the public mind with a handful of college students at a drugstore counter or a few hundred fanatics sitting in a London street. Again, the barbed wire and the concrete blocks of the Berlin wall, not to mention the tanks and well-armed men behind it, seem to present a situation totally invulnerable to the fasts and spinning wheels of any number of frail old men. If these were indeed all that non-violence did propose, I fear that few, if any, reasonable men could be induced to give it even a passing moment's consideration as a possible alternative to the present quest for ever greater and ever more effective destructive potential which seeks to assure, if not the desired advantage over all likely enemies, at least a continuation of the balance of terror which today holds them (just as it holds us) in check.

The sad truth, however (and this too must be granted by our "reasonable men"), is that this balance of terror is only a sometime thing and, even when achieved, is self-defeating since, by definition, the enemy's terror finds its counterpart in our own. This situation necessarily provokes each to attempt to undo the balance, to gain superiority by some breakthrough. Or, failing this, it creates the kind of continuing tension and strain which could lead one party or the other into the panic of desperation in which the hidden terrors of tomorrow become far worse than the known terrors of today and the attempt is made to break out of the confining circle whatever it may cost.

To this point in time, of course, the balance has not been destroyed and everything has not, as yet, gone "boom." This fact has comforted many and has been interpreted by them as proof of the efficacy of the so-called "deterrence" policy. It is difficult to justify the comfort or to accept the interpretation. A far more plausible illustration might be that a favorable enough calculation has not yet been produced by the computers serving either of the potential combatants; if true, this would be more a matter of each "biding his time" instead of being effectively "deterred." At whatever point the expected gains can clearly and certainly promise to outweigh the expendables, the "deterrence" will vanish completely.

That the situation is one of each biding his time until he is in the more certainly advantageous position may be seen in the threats and counterthreats relative to atmospheric nuclear testing before the recent treaty was concluded. Both major atomic powers loudly proclaimed their concern over the effects of such tests — yet both maintained they were prepared to continue them to whatever point was necessary for each to gain or maintain the desired *advantage*. Thus, the United States boasted of its superiority but insisted it had to test because the Soviet tests threatened to reduce or remove that superiority; for their part, the Soviets insisted that the threatened resumption of American testing

would have obliged them to initiate a new series of tests to further perfect their monster bombs; and so on and so on. Even now, after the test-ban treaty has become a reality, it is significant that arguments for its ratification by the Senate had to stress the fact that the agreement will *preserve the advantage* we claim.

Seen in this light the maintenance and expansion of national nuclear arsenals is every bit as much — and, properly speaking, much more so — a policy of incitements as it is one of deterrence. Perhaps the most terrifying fact of all (and this is the final refutation of the deterrence thesis) is the manner in which the "expendable" allowance keeps pace with the annihilation capacity of the new weapons. There are already minds which are not only able to entertain justifications for the incineration of 200,000, 6 million, 18 million and 700 million, but have actually reached the point of justifying the possible extermination of human life altogether rather than expose future generations to the risk of Communist domination. This disordered theology—which is remarkable if only in the implied suggestion that God would be helpless in dealing with a Communist victory and the world order it would bring — certainly introduces a framework which would remove the last suggestion of "deterrence" as far as our own leaders and their policies are concerned.

Our situation is, therefore, one in which we have the *actuality* of total destruction at our command without the security it was to have brought us. It is in such a context that the *potentiality* of non-violence as an alternative deserves thoughtful consideration. And that potentiality is not to be measured in terms of scattered hundreds of people protesting air-raid tests in New York City or Polaris bases in Scotland. Instead, it offers a two-fold advantage: first, the immediate reduction in the fears of the potential enemy would make possible a relaxation of tensions and open the way to a new association based on confidence and, in time, trust; second, his recognition that any attempt to exploit the changed situation through violent aggression would be rendered futile by a nation mobilized and trained in the use of civil disobedience and total non-cooperation would impose a note of prudent restraint upon him.

At least such is the argument for non-violence. This is to say that a whole new set of "rules-of-the-game" would be developed for future tests of international power. As these rules now stand, the losers in wars, having matched violence with violence to the limit of their ability, are expected to acknowledge their defeat once it is accomplished and to accept the consequences of conforming to the demands imposed upon them by the victors. The new set of rules would be altogether different. They would envision a situation in which the violent aggressor would probably — though *not* automatically, nor even necessarily —win the initial victory over the opponent committed to non-violent defense.

But that victory would soon be revealed as a hollow and altogether meaningless prize in the face of a total and disciplined refusal on the part of the victim population to recognize the victor's power or conform to his will. For the victor there would be no "spoils."

Such a formulation effectively destroys the false dichotomy of the current "red-or-dead" controversies. It now becomes possible to conceive of a nation refusing to make the choice in favor of death for its population (and 700 million others!) and, at the same time, refusing to become "red" just because Communist officials supported by Communist troops attempt to take over. The answer lies in converting the tempting fruits of a violent victory into the bitter reality of an unmanageable liability.

In the process, of course, the refusal to conform or cooperate would cost the lives of many who would be sacrificed as victims of terror or reprisal actions. And this number would undoubtedly be far greater at the hands of soldiers who are products of a totalitarian regime and schooled in total obedience and total commitment to a perverted ideology than was the case, let us say, for imperial forces called into action to subdue and repress colonials who were only demanding rights similar to their own. Even so, however, there would be a limit, a limit set by the fact that no amount of indoctrination and no system of psychological formation, however intensive they may be, can completely unmake a man in the sense of changing his essential human nature. At some point, even the totalitarian automaton will have to react as a man; and this will be, for him, the breaking point. Only so many trains will run over so many bodies before the trains stop running altogether; only so many hostages will be executed before the executioners refuse to shed more innocent blood. Perhaps it is starry-eyed idealism to speak of such limits; but to deny that they exist and that they must ultimately be reached would be a denial of the very dignity and humanity of man, the recognition of which we claim as the hallmark of our way of life and the justification of its defense.

But does not the very willingness on the part of the advocates of non-violence to contemplate the possible toll in lives to be taken before this point is reached constitute a parallel to the callous disregard for human life for which the nuclear optimists have been censured? In purely quantitative terms, this objection might hold some semblance of validity, but it fades away when the comparison is set in qualitative terms. There is a vast difference between millions of lives destroyed by others in the pursuit of some objective and the readiness on the part of even an equal number to suffer the loss of their own lives rather than surrender the ideals to which they have committed themselves. The difference, and it is a critical one, arises from the recognition that it is

better to perish as the victim of the inhumanity of others than to save oneself (or one's nation) by making others the victims of our own inhuman acts.

Prerequisites for Non-violence

Thus non-violence, too, involves a test of breaking-points; but they are of a vastly different order than those now presented by war. Just as the militarist frames his plans in the assumption that a point can be reached at which his opponent will surrender because he can no longer endure the horrors visited upon him, so does the advocate of non-violence assume that a point exists at which the perpetrators of horror will break under the strain of the persecution they are ordered to prolong. The hypothetical all-out conflict between the violent aggressor and the non-violent resister would, in a very real sense, be a test of the upper and lower reaches of the human spirit. The advocate of non-violence is an optimist in that, trusting in the spiritual nature and destiny of man, he is confident that the capacity to love and to bear whatever sacrifices such love may entail is greater than the human capacity for evil — though, in his optimism, he will freely grant that as yet the full depths of that capacity for evil may not have been plumbed.

Because of this, the advocate of non-violence must not stop with his optimistic act of faith. Instead, he should recognize and insist upon a preparedness and training equal to that now devoted to transforming the ordinary man into a brutal killer who can callously perpetrate a Lidice or Hiroshima. Indeed, their importance is magnified and complicated by the fact that, whereas the perpetrators of such violence can be especially selected and trained for designated tasks, a successful demonstration of non-violence would rest upon the full-scale participation and support of the general population. True, the content and direction of the training program will be different: instead of developing the baser potentialities of human nature (the bayonet training with recruits encouraged to growl and snarl like animals as they assault the dummy is a case in point), the program will have to aim at developing the higher spiritual potentialities which will enable the individual to accept and withstand whatever suffering and terror his passive resistance might bring upon him. But in this effort, conscious organization and planning, firm discipline and a strenuous formation framed in terms of ethical and religious commitment are essential.

The preparedness programs now devoted to building and maintaining the highest possible level of violence potential would have to be duplicated to implement a non-violent defense policy. The arguments for conscription, for massive budget outlays — in short, for everything

associated with the preservation of today's balance of terror— are premised on the unchallengeable logic that a nation cannot wait until the enemy moves to organize a successful defense of its rights. The ordinary man, whether he be the friendly young clerk at the supermarket or the teacher called from his classroom, has to be "made over," has to be taught to understand and use the modern weapons of war and, most crucial of all, must be conditioned to a level of virtually automatic and certainly unquestioning acceptance of the fact that he is expected to kill other human beings — and risk being killed by them.

It is not much different for non-violence. The same clerk would have to be trained in the techniques of civil disobedience and non-cooperation; he would have to learn to submit to the orders of those given the responsibility for planning and directing the total campaign; and he would have to be prepared to endure not only the prospect of his own death but, much more difficult perhaps, the violent death of others about him without resorting to retaliatory violence and thereby betraying the cause to which he has been called. In the one case, a conscious and calculated effort is made to transmute the civilian into the professional killer by bringing to fullest flower the brutality latent in the animal nature of man and stunting or at least controlling the softer sensibilities and spiritual inclinations of human nature. In the other, the effort would be made to transmute the civilian into the non-violent "warrior" by bringing these latter capacities to the threshold of self-sacrificial fulfillment and controlling to the point of elimination, if possible, that part of man's nature which is ever too ready to repay evil with evil and answer each assault upon him with another and stronger assault on his own part.

The truly astonishing successes that have been scored in the struggle for racial equality, first on a limited scale in Montgomery but since then on a nation-wide scale, by individuals and groups who operated largely on a basis of personal commitment with no formal training and a minimum of organizational discipline and direction, show that it can be done. The larger scale success of the Gandhi revolution, with its *Vidvapiths* and *Ashramas* serving as training centers, offers even more impressive confirmation. The superficial dramatics of the fasts unto death and the marches to the sea should not be permitted to hide the hard core of theory and tactics, the planning and timing of each new move, and the inflexible insistence upon obedience that received its clearest illustration when effective demonstrations-in-progress were abruptly terminated because some of the demonstrators had sullied the entire effort by permitting themselves to be provoked into violence.

Nevertheless, even with its success, the Gandhi movement must be regarded as little more than a primitive experiment in the use of non-

violence. Since his time, startling discoveries have been made in the behavioral sciences which have unlocked many of the secrets of motivational control and provided many valuable insights into the dynamics of morale. Many of these findings were made (and employed) in the course of World War II when the nation's resources of psychological scholarship and talent were mobilized and given the task, among others, of selecting and preparing the candidates for the "special service" forces. There is no doubt but that this same professional experience and these same tools could be utilized in selecting the types of individuals best suited for positions of leadership in non-violence and in developing the educational and training programs through which the necessary mass participation in the civil disobedience and general non-cooperation demonstrations must be achieved.

Assuming that the radical shift in defense thinking implied in this proposal is possible, can one imagine that it is at all likely? The answer, once again, would appear to be a resounding negative if the issue is seen only in the context of the present situation. For it is not enough that non-violence be recognized as a kind of force which could be effectively organized and employed as an alternative to violence. It is quite clear that other prerequisites must be met before this possible alternative can be converted into a likely or preferred alternative.

These additional prerequisites consist, in the main, in a serious reexamination and revision of present value orientations. In some cases, the revision would involve downgrading and deemphasizing — even *eliminating* — some of our most revered values; in others, it would require the introduction of new values or the emphasizing of values already present but not given the priority they would have to have.

Foremost among the latter is a meaningful acknowledgment or reaffirmation of the personal competence and responsibility of the individual member of society to make a rational assessment of a situation and the behavior it requires of him. This is, of course, one of those values to which we in America regularly give lip service but which, when the chips are down, we all too regularly ignore. In issues involving international tensions or conflicts — or, for that matter, the policies and programs of the national leadership as they may contribute to those tensions and conflicts — this ideal image of the competent and responsible individual as citizen is not taken seriously by any significant segment of the population. On the contrary, an impressive body of arguments and rationalizations is developed to deny the applicability of this image in a time of stress.

It is taken for granted that the individual citizen must ride along with the decisions of his government and loyally and manfully do as he is told because, in the first place, he does not have access to all the

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relevant facts and, in the second, even if he *did* have such access and *did* come to a contrary conclusion, it would be futile if not treasonable for him to take an open stand against his government. How many men fought and died on the battlefields of World War II — on both sides — convinced, if they gave any thought at all to the question, that there was nothing else for them to do? How many cities were laid waste by bombs loosed by men who believed war to be immoral and inhuman but who "had their orders" and never gave a thought to the possibility of refusing to take part in an activity they judged sinful? I have talked to such men in America; and one of my most touching interviews in Germany was with a woman whose last recollection of her fallen son was the sorrow he expressed, not over the dangers he himself was leaving to face, but over the knowledge that he was leading the men under him into battle for an unjust cause.

The common denominator in both instances is the unchallenged assumption that once a citizen's duty is defined for him by his nation's leaders he has no valid choice but to obey. Somehow, if this pattern is ever to be broken, each individual must be convinced that he has the right and the competence to judge what is asked of him on the basis of the information that is available to him and that he can have some impact upon the course of events, even if he must stand alone. Until this more exalted image of man is incorporated into our thinking, it is futile to expect widespread support for a program of non-violence; for, in the last analysis, since the effectiveness of its means lies in the moral strength of the individual, the success of the whole program is always likely to depend upon that individual standing firm in a situation of extreme personal stress.

But this is only part of it. Once the individual is accorded the *competence* to observe, judge and act for himself, it must be just as forcefully affirmed that he has the *responsibility* to do so. Accepting this value and making it effective in shaping the behavior of men would eliminate the sad mockery of a prudence behind which so many have sought safe haven in times which should try men's souls. Too often merit is found and a false satisfaction taken in keeping one's own record clean by not performing (if we can help it) the actions we have judged adversely — but at the same time, making it possible for these same actions to be performed by others less scrupulous than we merely because we choose to "sit tight" in silence and avoid "sticking our necks out." One might suggest that it is this kind of thinking, much more than the fanaticism of the true believer, that ultimately provides the surest guarantee of success for our modern totalitarian tyrannies; certainly, to the extent that it represents a kind of elevated hypocrisy, it is the more reprehensible.

Yet, as recent history has shown, this is all too often the course of action that is excused, justified and even praised, while the unfortunate deviant who does stick his neck out is likely to be pitied at best, more probably scorned, and sometimes even resented by those who regard his deviance as a possible incitement to reprisal against the whole group.

Geissler, in the article quoted earlier, sees the hopes of mankind resting on just such an awareness of responsibility. "It is, however, to be strictly demanded of each man in the future that he, together with all other men and without any conditions whatsoever limiting their liabilities, make himself responsible for that which has happened upon this earth, which is happening today, and which is going to happen in the future." It is as simple as that; and he who tries to bow out or who counsels resignation to "the inevitable" in a very real sense betrays human solidarity, betrays mankind itself. And just as this personal responsibility devolves *upon* every man, it is a responsibility *for* every man. Hebrew religious literature contains a passage summarizing it nicely: For him who saves even one life, it is as if he saved the whole world; for him who destroys even one life, it is as if he destroyed the whole world.

These values are already present in the total system of democratic values to which we claim to adhere. Our belief in the dignity of the human person is regularly proclaimed and periodically defended by a resort to arms. But if this means anything at all, it should mean that we must grant to human reason the ability to make a sound and independent assessment of a given social situation and to the human will the freedom to consent to or reject the decision reached by others — even though these "others" be in the majority or occupy the positions of temporal authority and power. By the same token, our whole complex of values centering around and depending upon the concepts of universal human solidarity and the brotherhood of all men, the values from which we draw our image of ourselves as our brother's keeper, provide a foundation upon which a more effective appeal to personal responsibility could be based. The shameful fact that we usually modify and occasionally suppress these values in our surrender to a "prudent realism" which gives the benefit of every doubt, no matter how great, to those in authority; or that we tend to be concerned with the needs of our brothers only after we have made sure of generously providing for our own — these facts merely express a hierarchical ordering of values that must be changed if non-violence is to have any chance at all of developing into an acceptable alternative to violence and war.

Strangely enough, at this point in the argument the two contrasting systems of force tend to converge. The question must be raised whether, even with these recommended revisions in the present value system, it

would be possible to train our supermarket clerk to perform his assigned tasks in a non-violent program of resistance. Might he not, in the exercise of the competence which is his, decide in favor of some attempt, however hopeless, to beat back a threat against his own personal or his nation's rights and security? Might not his sense of responsibility make it impossible for him to witness the slaughter of others, including perhaps those most dear to him, without resorting to violence against the killers? Indeed, is it not unnatural to expect any other reaction from the ordinary man?

This is, again, the argument positing an automatic self-interest calculation on the part of the human animal inclining him to defensive or even retaliatory responses whenever those interests are threatened. It was countered before with something of an affirmation of faith in the higher capacities of the human spirit as being at least as "natural" to man as the brute capacities exploited in the training for and use of violence. It might be well to turn this argument about now and relate it to the more familiar war situation. For once we have granted to the individual a real measure of competence in making difficult (and not automatic) behavioral decisions, on what basis can we assume that he could ever be induced to abandon the quiet security of his civil pursuits and expose himself to the inconveniences and the grave and imminent dangers of war in defense of an abstract ideal when all that would be involved was a compliant surrender to the obviously lesser demands of the enemy? The "quislings," experience has shown, often have an easy and profitable time of it.

Even the consideration of his responsibility to others dependent upon him might argue that our clerk should avoid at all costs anything which would involve him and them in such apparently senseless risk and sacrifice. It should not be necessary to add, in this connection, that the growing certainty of mutual destruction in nuclear warfare strengthens both of these arguments considerably. The oft-cited law of self-preservation, if it is a "law" and if it applies at all to the question of war and peace (and I am not sure that it does) would have to work both ways; and, if anything, it can be maintained that it would operate most immediately in the form of preserving one's self by not getting involved in the dangerous business of war in the first place, by not fighting.

But, of course, it doesn't work that way. When the call goes out, the overwhelming majority of service-eligible men answer it. It is not enough to explain this by positing a pleasure-pain calculation in which the threatened sanctions of non-compliance are adjudged more certain or more painful than the risks involved in answering the call. Instead, the usual, and better, explanation is found in what might be called "the

ascetic ideal" as exemplified in the glorification of the soldierly life and the *Heldentod,* the heroic death in battle, and in the whole mythology of a nation united in dedicated sacrifice. The "convergence" referred to above lies in the fact that it is precisely this same ascetic ideal, albeit with an altogether different content, which lies at the heart of the theory of non-violence.

The ascetic ideal is manifested in the belief that sacrifice and suffering can be borne and even sought as a positive good, as a chosen means to a desired end. To say that it still has some currency in the military ideology is not to deny that its actual impact as a determinant of behavior has greatly weakened: the scramble for deferments or, failing this, for the safer assignments suggests that few men are really eager to offer their lives and substance for the nation's welfare or glory. Despite this, however, it still has status as a verbalized good; our clerk will almost certainly find much compensatory ego-satisfaction in the assurance (an assurance repeatedly confirmed for him by all his associates) that the risks he is forced to take, however hesitantly or unwillingly he takes them, are somehow associated with a cause so much bigger than he that it can ask even the supreme sacrifice of his life. There is no reason why this same process could not be employed to win his acceptance of the risks and hardships associated with the non-violence alternative once he were convinced that they would serve the same or even higher goods and offer a greater likelihood of success.

The same or even higher goods. Can national survival be assured by non-violent means? I would go beyond a merely affirmative answer to that question and suggest instead that, given the present stage of development of military technology coupled with the certainty that both the major potential enemies possess a lethal retaliatory or "second strike" capability, national survival is possible *only if* some such alternative is developed and soon. But are there higher goods that could be called into consideration? Again the answer must be yes, though this is admittedly a far more sensitive area of decision. One such higher good, the advocate of non-violence would insist, is the continued existence of mankind itself. The Teller-Lefever optimism notwithstanding, any course of action which contemplates the destruction of a major part of the world's population and most, if not all, of its greatest accomplishments simply can not be countenanced — even were it the only means by which the national good might be defended. And the human spirit itself must also be recognized as such a higher good. If it does not profit a man to gain the whole world at the cost of his immortal soul, it would certainly not profit him to gain or protect his claim to a fragment of the world at that price. Thus, any course of action that involves the de-

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humanizing of the actor or his victim or both (something modern war, even pre-nuclear war, clearly does involve and perhaps, if one follows Gandhi's formulation, even violence in general involves) may not be justified by the attainment or preservation of any material good or even of spiritual goods of a lesser order.

Political freedom and national sovereignty cannot be viewed as ultimate goods. Goods they are indeed, and goods that are to be sought and defended at every legitimate opportunity and by all legitimate means. But should the occasion ever arise that such defense would involve the sacrifice or surrender of these greater goods, such defense simply could not be justified. The advocate of non-violence would insist that the practice of violence has reached such a point, and it is for precisely this reason that he is so insistent upon the urgency of the need to consider the alternative he proposes as perhaps the last remaining hope for the effective defense of those lesser goods which might otherwise be lost because the only means available at the time of showdown are those which may not be utilized. That there is some support for his reasoning in recent events may be seen in the fact that the successes non-violence has registered and is registering today have all involved the winning or the preservation of political freedom and human rights in situations where a resort to violence could not have been successful.

But granting the legitimate claims of these higher spiritual goods to precedence over the material goods of national and physical well-being, might one not say that we are engaged in the preliminaries to an ideological conflict in which, should the Communist enemy gain predominance, these same spiritual goods would be ignored, denied, and ultimately crushed? The question is a troubling one in that it represents the most telling objection to the proposals for non-violence. Yet it, too, is in the end an unsound objection. The battles of the spirit will be waged most effectively by the weapons of the spirit, and certainly these battles are not to be won by surrendering or abandoning (or even suspending) the very spiritual goods and values we propose to defend. If we accept for ourselves the standards and the means advocated and maintained by the enemy, we will have become the enemy — and the battle for the spirit of man will have been lost. We cannot honestly claim to be engaged in a struggle for the preservation of human dignity and all the other ideals we proclaim if we are ready to treat the human beings who happen to live in the enemy cities or even wear the enemy uniforms as so many calculable and expendable units to be destroyed.

To this point, then, the argument can be summarized as follows: since the quest for national security through violence has worked us into a corner where a resort to the means of violence now available to

us would most likely provoke our own destruction and, with it, the destruction of a significant part of the world's population, the techniques of non-violence being proposed as an alternative would present — assuming, of course, they were given the benefit of a degree of acceptance and official support comparable to that lavished upon the techniques of violence — the only reasonable hope for escape from that dilemma. Such a change, however, would require certain crucial changes in our contemporary value structure, including, among others, a more exalted estimate of the personal competence and responsibility of the individual and a firmer commitment to the ascetic ideal which alone can sustain the kind of sacrifices non-violent resistance would probably demand. This would also imply a diminished emphasis upon the goods of political freedom and national sovereignty when these come into competition with or threaten the more universal goods of the human spirit and the continued existence of humankind upon the earth.

The Role of the Churches

In essence, non-violence rests upon individual commitment and individual readiness to act according to that commitment, regardless of the cost such action might entail. This is to say that any policy or program based upon its techniques must be personalist rather than collectivist in approach and actualization.

However, if non-violence is to succeed in winning respectful consideration as an alternative to the present pyramiding of means of total destruction which has produced nothing more than a highly tenuous balance of terror; and if, having won such acceptance, it is to have any prospects of victory in a future test of strength with an opponent using or threatening to use the means of violence, it must be organized and employed on a mass scale. This means that it is not enough to base the movement on the support won from deviant individuals who have been attracted to it. These people who are always ready to demonstrate their individuality and independence by "going against the stream" whatever personal sacrifice this may involve are often heroic figures and fully deserving of honor and support. But non-violence as an instrument of successful international policy requires something else, a situation in which the desired behavior is produced by conformity to, not deviance from, the value orientations of the general society. In short, the flow of the stream itself must be changed, and to accomplish this the movement must somehow avail itself of the influence and resources of one of the major social institutions charged with the task of creating and transmitting the values by which men live and act.

Of the several institutions of society which share this important

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function, it would appear that the religious institution would be the one most responsive to the appeals of non-violence. It alone is sufficiently detached, in theory at least, from the controls and the essentially worldly aspirations and concerns of general society. Unlike the school, for instance, which is always and almost completely the servant of whatever social order exists and, therefore, more resistive to any proposed value changes, the church — and this is stated in the Christian frame of reference with which the writer is most familiar though, he is confident, the same would hold true for the other world religions as well — regards itself as the servant of an Authority far superior to and independent of the particular secular order in which it operates at any given time or place. Furthermore, the religious institution declares its values to be the ultimate values, the fixed standards by which all others are to be judged and confirmed. It matters little that the social scientist might argue with this assertion and be able to demonstrate that, in actual practice, all religious organizations tend to be much more deeply bound to "the world" than their spokesmen are aware or care to admit and that even their value orientations (and certainly the application of them) are at times little more than reflections or rationalizations of the "social imperatives" as they are defined by the temporal authorities and by the human beings who constitute the living membership of these churches. Such findings — and they can be all too easily verified — merely show that the religious institution is not what it claims to be, not that it cannot become what it says it should be.

Its vulnerability to the appeals of non-violence relate to what this writer would propose as the true self-image of the churches and the correct definition of their proper role. For one thing, the value changes suggested here show a very close fit to the values proclaimed by virtually all religious bodies. There is, for example, the matter of demanding priority for spiritual goods and the concern for the supernatural rewards or punishments earned by one's daily acts. Such a position obviously offers a "built-in" advantage for a movement which would seek a new ordering of values in which the goods of political freedom and personal survival are replaced at the head of the list by a commitment to the welfare of all men, including the populations of "bystander" nations innocently drawn into the vortex of nuclear destruction and even those of enemy nations. The Christian churches need but turn to their own history to see such a value orientation in operation: their Founder was Himself a citizen of an occupied nation, and the Caesar whose image was on the coin was the foreign oppressor. In such a context the "give unto Caesar" instruction, which has since been elaborated into a blanket order to obey any national call to arms, could more convincingly be

interpreted as a call to resistance (to non-violent resistance when other Scriptural texts are taken into account) to those demands of Caesar which go beyond his rightful due. This is the interpretation which seems to have prevailed throughout the catacomb era of Christian history, a period in which the goods of personal and national survival — and political freedom as well — were nowhere near as ultimate as they have come to be in the thinking of the majority of Christians who now seem prepared to accept virtually any extremes of violence to preserve them.

Similarly, the universalism which would replace the particularist nationalism or other ethnocentric attachments is fully in keeping with the value systems of the major world religions. Christianity again provides a clear illustration. Structurally in some cases and historically in all, the Christian churches have been international and supranational in scope and appeal. They should, accordingly, be particularly sensitive to the destructive devisiveness of nationalism as a force in human affairs. Again, the verb form is important: one of the tragedies of the long history of Christianity is the scandalous degree to which the responsible leadership of most, if not all, of the Christian churches have been seduced by nationalistic ties and sentiments. This, too, is unfortunately a point of similarity with the other world religions; but the scandal is at its greatest when the vision of all men as the children of God redeemed through the saving graces of Christ's sacrifice is somehow forced into reconciliation with a situation in which the different nations and races of men stand poised behind barriers of prejudice, fear and hate, ready and all too willing to destroy one another.

The religious definition of man offers other points of agreement with the definition proposed by the advocates of non-violence. Perhaps more than is true for some of the other world religions, the Christian heritage has always stressed the overriding importance of the individual, seeing in him a creation in God's own image and the direct and personal object of divine concern. It is unfortunately true that this heritage has not always and unfailingly distinguished itself in its willingness to trust that individual to determine his own course of action according to the lights of his own conscience; but there are hopeful signs that religious leaders are becoming more aware of the need to accord the faithful such a broadened scope of competence. Such a trend obviously offers great encouragement to those in the non-violence movement. As far as the other crucial dimension of human action is concerned, the insistence upon personal moral responsibility for one's actions has been a much more consistent element in Christian teaching. It follows, then, that once the broadened scope of individual competence is granted, the re-

definition of individual responsibility included as one of the required changes in our present value orientation will be an almost automatic result.

But to complete the set of prerequisites offered above, this redefined responsibility would have to be expressed in terms of what has been called "the ascetic ideal." It is here that the religious institution should prove most vulnerable to the non-violence program and its rationale. To draw our illustration again from the Christian heritage, one finds repeated evidence not only of a readiness to suffer the loss of all earthly good in preference to losing or sacrificing spiritual goods; but, in addition, the more positive note is added that such hardships and sufferings, even unto death, are to be regarded as a privilege to be welcomed. From the early martyr who rejoiced that he might be ground by the teeth of lions into flour for the Bread of Life down to the Austrian peasant, Franz Jaegerstaetter, who just before he was beheaded in 1943 for refusal to serve in Hitler's unjust war effort thanked God that he was given such an opportunity to serve Him — between these two the ranks of Christianity's heroes or "saints" have always been filled by men and women who embraced the ascetic ideal with a sense of total commitment. Their names and deeds are given public honor in the feastdays of the liturgical year, in the inspirational tales used for the instruction of children, and in many other forms of special recognition and devotion by the faithful.

It should not be impossible, it should not be too difficult, to induce the leadership of the religious communities to place more explicit emphasis upon the ascetic ideal behind such hallowed martyrdom and to be much more rigorous in awakening in their membership the awareness that they, too, must be prepared to evidence that ideal in their own behavior when and if the occasion should ever arise. And let us be quite clear on this: the acceptance of non-violence as an alternative to war would undoubtedly present such an occasion to an untold number of these believers.

In the fullest sense of religious asceticism, however, this somewhat grim expectation becomes at once a token of endurance and confidence. The practice of non-violence as the only form of resistance to the unjust aggressor-oppressor may indeed require generations of sacrifice and suffering before the victory is achieved. Here again, only in terms of the religious promise with its duration confounding the short-term reckoning by which we mark the course of human history can we expect to make sense of the full potentiality of non-violence. The first great temporal victory of Christianity required centuries of persecution before it could be achieved; perhaps at least an equal period of trial and puri-

fication must be endured before that victory can be regained. Yet such endurance is possible because the victory is assured. Here, again, non-violence as an alternative to violent reactions rests upon a confidence born of a total act of faith in the ultimate vulnerability of evil and the certain invincibility of the good. We have been told that the gates of Hell will not prevail; and in this divine assurance the religious advocate of non-violence finds the rationale for the program he offers as the key to a moral and effective defense of the values we hold.

But men must believe that the gates of Hell will not prevail before they are willing to undergo the crucial test. In this connection, whatever difficulty will be encountered in inspiring the necessary depth and scope of awareness and conviction will lie not so much in the weakness of man but, more likely, in two self-imposed restraints that have served to undermine the influence of religion upon modern society. The first is a hesitancy on the part of responsible church leaders to formally and actively involve themselves in political or social questions which appear to be only indirectly or peripherally related to morality or in issues which do not touch upon the institutional interests of the church. Since the tendency has been to continually sharpen the distinction between sacred and secular concerns and force an ever-widening gap between them, we thus face a situation in which the religious institution is virtually isolated from those issues of paramount importance to mankind. As a result, we encounter the almost incomprehensible paradox of formal high level church pronouncements on relatively trivial matters (sex in movies or on book covers, financial assistance in the form of school bus or lunch programs, etc.) and a crashing silence on the proposed development of the neutron bomb.

The second restraint, in a sense the pragmatic extension of the first, is the frank unwillingness on the part of church leaders to impose what may be regarded as "too great a burden" or "impossible demands" upon their faithful lest such "excessive" expectations cause a drop in active membership or be reflected adversely in some of the other statistical indices of religious behavior. Actually this attitude may be the most serious problem of all in that it represents a betrayal or abandonment of the ascetic ideal — and with it the betrayal or abandonment of much of the Christian heritage. It suggests that, before the religious institution can assume its proper and leading role in converting the general population to the new value orientation required for the non-violence alternative, the institution must itself be re-converted — or, at least, re-awakened — to those value affirmations and beliefs which, in its time of origin and its times of greatest glory, have always made it an institution for the transformation of society and not what it has tended

to become, an instrument of accommodation and conformity to the secular *status quo*.

The tragically short reign of Pope John XXIII may have marked a major break with this tradition. If, as he declared in his momentous *Pacem in Terris,* "it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice" — obviously the only basis on which war could be a permissible option for the Christian — we may look for some effort on the part of the most powerful segment of the Christian Church to break away from its centuries-long and generally futile fascination by the so-called "just war" and lead the search for some effective and legitimate alternative to war itself.

The Prospects

Thus far this essay has outlined the nature of the defense alternative proposed by the advocate of non-violence, the new value orientation this alternative would require, and the part the religious institution — especially as it is represented by the Christian churches — could be expected to play in bringing about these essential value changes. One other question of central importance remains: even granting that the non-violence program would constitute a more *moral* form of defense policy, does it hold sufficient promise of being *effective* to warrant its adoption by practical men in preference to the more familiar defense polices based on violence?

It is immediately obvious that the proposed alternative can claim no victories on a scale comparable to the violent clashes of the major world powers. However, since it has never been put to such a test, one can say that it has a record of no failures at this level — a rather impressive recommendation for it when compared with the consistent and ever more devastating pattern of failure registered by violence and war. The issue, then, may be stated in terms of a choice between a possible failure and a proven failure in determining long-term security and survival possibilities. This statement would apply as much to the so-called "limited war" as it does to the world-consuming conflicts of the past two generations. In a real emergency, whatever "limits" may be set at the outset will always prove flexible enough to permit whatever course of action the military or political leaders may propose as the only remaining alternative to defeat, thereby reducing the "limited war" concept to little more than an attractive and conveniently disposable cloak for the nuclear holocaust it supposedly circumvents.

The argument is sometimes advanced that this is too pessimistic a presentation of the possibilities. After all, one might say, the period

since the close of World War II offers abundant illustration of violent engagements that did not escalate into full-blown nuclear war. Korea, Vietnam, Laos and even Berlin are often cited to prove this point. The argument is challenging — but not necessarily convincing. If we are right in viewing all of these as tentative probings and responses to probings on the part of the two major world powers (and their supporting blocs) in what has been termed "the cold war," it would seem that the fact that nuclear weapons have not been employed could be interpreted just as easily as a sign that neither power has found it appropriate *as yet* to take that step. The fact that these contacts have been "limited" up to this time merely testifies to the fact that neither contestant has yet been forced to the point of acknowledging defeat. The spokesmen for the radical Right have made it clear in their attacks upon the so-called "no win" policy that they, at least, are dissatisfied with this situation; should they succeed in winning a broader base of support, the emptiness of the "limited war" concept would soon become evident.

The policy of nuclear deterrence, too, while tempting in its formulation, holds no real promise as an alternative to the kind of World War III which would claim the horrifying toll contemplated in even the most optimistic estimates advanced by its proponents. An empty threat with no intent to follow through with the use of nuclear weapons under any conceivable circumstance simply will not deter. Yet once any such intent, however faint or however simulated, is admitted, it necessarily opens the way to the same grim progression described in connection with the limited war concept; for we cannot hope to convince a potential enemy that we will actually use the bombs "as a last resort" without convincing ourselves as well. And "the last resort" will always prove to be much more imminent than we thought.

The "close-call" at the time of the Cuba emergency, generally taken as incontestable proof that deterrence works, also illustrates the imminence of "the last resort." No one can deny, of course, that both major powers were forced to a level of circumspection in their actions because their leaders took the possible effects of a nuclear exchange into account; to this extent, it was a success for the advocates of deterrence. However, in another very important sense, it reveals a distinct failure — and a shocking measure of hypocrisy. The failure lies in the fact that the American action was specifically predicated on a readiness to escalate the limited Cuban threat into a full-scale and world-wide nuclear exchange. And there was no wave of horrified protest; on the contrary, it was generally taken for granted that our military forces would have no alternative but to use whatever means were available and might

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have been required to bring about the stated objective of dismantling and removing the missiles.

This is where the hypocrisy comes in. For that objective represented an official repudiation of the logic of deterrence *for others*. Weeks before the installation of the missiles, evidence had been accumulating of another projected invasion of Castro's Cuba with either direct or indirect American involvement. Under the circumstances, the defenders could have covered their island several times over with the kind of "defensive weapons" enumerated as permissible by the President; but, it should have been obvious to everyone, this would have merely delayed a foregone conclusion and made it somewhat more costly for the invasion forces. The only kind of weapon by which the Cuban government (and the Soviet ally committed to come to its assistance) could have hoped to deter its giant adversary would be precisely the kind of weapon involved in the controversy. If Polaris missiles in the Mediterranean are "defensive" against Soviet threats to "bury us" and our NATO allies, Soviet missiles in Cuba have to be recognized as "defensive" for that nation, subjected as it was (and still is) to the threat to its security from the North. Let this argument not be misinterpreted: I firmly oppose the installation of missiles *in Cuba or anywhere else;* and I was, as a result, most happy to see them dismantled and removed. And it is possible for me, as an opponent of the deterrence theory, to take this position and be consistent, whereas it should be something of a logical embarrassment for the advocates of such a policy to offer a convincing explanation of why sauce for the goose should not also serve as sauce for the gander.

Cuba was just one illustrative incident. Before and since then leading representatives of the military and those who have joined them in the frank espousal of pre-emptive war, or who see the nuclear bombing of North Vietnam military centers as a solution to our difficulties in the Near East, have given evidence enough by their impatience that "the last resort" is really always just around the corner. In one of his major policy addresses, President Kennedy warned against extremists who offer what he described as the false dichotomies of choice between "appeasement or war, suicide or surrender, humiliation or holocaust." One may agree with his warning and yet, at the same time, regret that his defense of his administration's foreign and defense policies reveals a comparable failure to recognize *any alternative to violence itself* in maintaining a strong position between these false dichotomies. It is proposed here that such an alternative must be found and that it does, in fact, exist. The alternative of non-violence represents neither weakness, nor appeasement, nor surrender, nor humiliation. Instead, it represents a new kind of force, a power to compel and to defend. Gandhi described

the difference in 1932 as he prepared to enter upon his famous fast unto death: "Violent pressure is felt on the physical being and it degrades him who uses it as it depresses the victim, but non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering, as by fasting, works in an entirely different way. It touches not the physical body, but it touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is directed."

Seen in this light, non-violence becomes a real option, the only option, its advocates would insist, holding promise of ultimate success; for if even one nation — our own — could be awakened to its promise and be prepared to pursue it, the world could finally be freed from the vicious circle of violence in which it is now locked and the way opened to a security based on those greater and surer kinds of force incorporating a power which until now we have not dared to consider, much less exploit. Instead of continuing our present descent to total inhumanity, we would be making a significant and long-overdue turning in the direction of a renewed act of faith in the humanity of our potential enemy — and ourselves.

For we are dealing with something far more profound than a mere difference in policy options. Our question ultimately concerns our basic conceptions of man. Is man, after all is said and done, a creature whose behavior is finally controlled through promises of physically satisfying rewards and threats of violently induced pain; or is he something greater, the deepest wellsprings of whose behavior contain forces responsive only to the power of love and recognition of common identity? If we deny the latter possibility, we deny many of the core values upon which we base our claims to a preferable way of life and, indeed, our hopes for any future advance for humankind. The non-violence alternative takes these values seriously enough to propose them as the foundation of our defense action. The belief that all men share a common humanity which cannot be totally or permanently suppressed; the corollary that every man (including the Roman tyrant, the Buchenwald guard, the Communist oppressor, yes, even the indifferent RAND theorist at his computer) has a "breaking point" beyond which his participation in patterned inhumanity cannot be forced; and, finally, the confidence that a disciplined, large-scale exercise of the moral power of sacrificial "love" or "soul force" will most surely bring him to that breaking point and thereby negate whatever power of violence he may have at his disposal: these deserve a far more receptive hearing than they have received from those supposedly committed to the defense of the West and its Judeo-Christian foundations.

If, as history has demonstrated, the way of violence demands an ever more thorough-going renunciation of this common humanity and

its implications for our own behavior, coupled with a callous ignoring of the humanity of the enemy, it should be rejected as a policy option not worthy of consideration. Otherwise, in the process of "defending" these most cherished values we may find ourselves forced to abandon and betray them in our total surrender to the inevitably destructive logic of violence.

Its advocates, then, regard non-violence as the most effective and most promising defense policy. There are, of course, no guarantees. The mounting of a well-conceived and disciplined campaign of civil disobedience and non-cooperation against an opponent using the means of violence might end with total victory for the latter. But grim as this prospect admittedly is, even it could be preferable to the kind of world promised us as the aftermath of a Third World War — for victor and vanquished alike. At least such a defeat would leave us with the hope that civilized mankind spared from the near-total destruction nuclear war would have brought will be able to make a new start toward the freedom and dignity that is temporarily suppressed. And throughout the "dark ages" imposed by the victor, they would find the way lighted for them in that upward struggle by the inspiring memory of the sacrifices made in heroic testimony to the imperishable and indestructible spark of goodness to be found in every man just because he is a man.

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