

A New Approach to Peace

by

Bertrand Russell

The nuclear age in which we have the misfortune to live is one which imposes new ways of thought and action and a new character in international relations. Ever since the creation of the H-bomb, it has been obvious to thoughtful people that there is now a danger of the extermination of mankind if a nuclear war between two powerful nations or blocs of nations should break out. Not only would such a war be a total disaster to human hopes, but, so long as past policies persist, a nuclear war may break out at any minute. This situation imposes upon those who desire the continuation of our species a very difficult duty. We have, first, to persuade Governments and populations of the disastrousness of nuclear war, and, when that has been achieved, we have to induce Governments to adopt such policies as will make the preservation of peace a possibility.

Of these two tasks, the first has been very largely accomplished. It has been accomplished by a combination of methods of agitation: peace marches, peace demonstrations, large public meetings, sit-downs, etc. These were conducted in Britain by the CND and the Committee of 100, and in other countries by more or less similar bodies. They have testified - and I am proud that I was amongst them - that nuclear war would be a calamity for the whole human race, and have pointed out its imminence and its dangers. They have succeeded in making very widely known, even to Governments, the dangers of nuclear war. But now it is time for a new approach. The dangers must not be forgotten, but now the next step must be taken. Ways and means of settling questions that might lead to nuclear war and other dangers to mankind must be sought and made known, and mankind must be persuaded to adopt those new and different means towards securing peace.

The culmination, so far, of the conflict between rival nuclear groups was the Cuban crisis. In this crisis, America and Russia confronted each other while the world waited for the destruction that seemed imminent. At the last moment, the contest was avoided and it appeared that neither side was willing to put an end to the human race because of disagreement as to the politics of those who would otherwise be living in Cuba. This was a moment of great importance. It showed that neither side considered it desirable to obliterate the human race.

We may, therefore, take it that the Governments of the world are prepared to avoid nuclear war. And it is not only Governments, but also vast sections, probably a majority, of the populations of most civilized countries which take this view.

The first part of the work for peace has thus been achieved. But a more difficult task remains. If there is not to be war, we have to find ways by which war will be avoided. This is no easy matter. There are many disputes which, though they may begin amicably, are likely to become more and more bitter, until at last, in a fury, they break out into open war.

There is also the risk of war by accident or misinformation. Furthermore, there are difficulties caused by the one-sided character of information as it reaches one side or the other in any dispute. It is clear that peace cannot come to the world without serious concessions, sometimes by one side, sometimes by the other, but generally by both. These difficulties in the pursuit of peace require a different technique from that of marches and demonstrations. The questions concerned are complex, the only possible solutions are distasteful to one side or both, and negotiators who discuss such questions will need to keep a firm hold of their tempers if they are to succeed.

All this should be the work of Governments. But Governments will not adequately do the necessary work unless they are pushed on by a body or bodies which have an international character and are especially concerned with a search for peaceful solutions. It is work of this kind that we hope to see performed by the new Foundations, which I hereby recommend to you.

Of the two Foundations one is called The Atlantic Peace Foundation. Being a Foundation for purposes of research in matters of war and peace, it has been registered as a charity and is recognized as such by the British Inland Revenue. Income tax at the standard rate is, therefore, recoverable on any subscription given to it under a seven-year contract, which means that such subscriptions are increased by about sixty percent. This Foundation works in co-operation with the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. The latter implements the purposes of the Atlantic Peace Foundation. For this reason, I shall refer to only a single Foundation in the rest of this discussion.

It may be said: "But such work as that is the work of the United Nations." I agree that it should be the work of the United Nations, and I hope that, in time, it will become so. But the United Nations has defects, some of them remediable, others essential in a body which represents an organization of States. Of the former kind of defect, the most notable is the exclusion of China; of the latter kind, the equality of States in the Assembly and the veto power of certain States in the Security Council. For such reasons the United Nations, alone, is not adequate to work for peace.

It is our hope that the Foundations which we have created will, in time, prove adequate to deal with all obstacles to peace and to propose such solutions of difficult questions as may commend themselves to the common sense of mankind. Perhaps this hope is too ambitious. Perhaps it will be some other body with similar objects that will achieve the final victory. But, however, that may be, the work of our Foundation will have ministered to a fortunate ending.

The problems which will have to be settled are of two kinds. The first kind is that which concerns mankind as a whole. Of this the most important are two: namely, disarmament and education. The second class

of problems are those concerning territorial adjustments, of which Germany is likely to prove the most difficult. Both kinds must be solved if peace is to be secure.

There have been congresses concerned with the subject of disarmament ever since nuclear weapons came into existence. Immediately after the ending of the Second War, America offered to the world the Baruch Proposal. This was intended to break the American monopoly of nuclear weapons and to place them in the hands of an international body. Its intentions were admirable, but Congress insisted upon the insertion of clauses which it was known that the Russians would not accept. Everything worked out as had been expected. Stalin rejected the Baruch Proposal, and Russia proceeded to create its own A-bomb and, then, its own H-bomb. The result was the Cold War, the blockade of Berlin, and the creation by both sides of H-bombs which first suggested the danger to mankind in general. After Stalin's death, a new attempt at complete disarmament was made. Eisenhower and Khrushchev met at Camp David. But warlike elements in the Pentagon continued their work of spying, and the Russian destruction of U-2 put an end to the brief attempt at friendship. Since that time, disarmament conferences have met constantly, but always, until after the Cuban Crisis, with the determination on both sides that no agreement should be reached. Since the Cuban Crisis there has again been a more friendly atmosphere, but, so far, without any tangible result except the Test-ban Treaty. This Treaty was valuable, also, as showing that agreement is possible between East and West. The success of the negotiations involved was largely due to Pugwash, an international association of scientists concerned with problems of peace and war.

The present situation in regard to disarmament is that both America and Russia have schemes for total nuclear disarmament, but their schemes differ, and no way has, so far, been discovered of bridging the differences. It should be one of the most urgent tasks of the Foundation to devise some scheme of disarmament to which both sides could agree. It is ominous, however, that the Pentagon has again allowed one of its planes to be shot down by the Russians over Communist territory.

If peace is ever to be secure, there will have to be great changes in education. At present, children are taught to love their country to the exclusion of other countries, and among their countrymen in history those whom they are specially taught to admire are usually those who have shown most skill in killing foreigners. An English child is taught to admire Nelson and Wellington; a French child, to admire Napoleon; and a German child, Barbarossa. These are not among those of the child's countrymen who have done most for the world. They are those who have served their country in ways that must be forever closed if man is to survive. The conception of Man as one family will have to be taught as carefully as the opposite is now taught. This will not be an easy transition. It will be said that boys under such a regimen will be soft and effeminate. It will be said that they will lose the manly virtues and will be destitute of courage. All this will be said by Christians in spite of Christ's teaching. But, dreadful as it may

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of the Russian zone and no adequate provision had been made to secure access to the Western sector of Berlin for the Western allies. Stalin took advantage of this situation in 1948 by the so-called "Berlin Blockade" which forbade all access to West Berlin by road or rail on the part of the Western allies. The Western allies retorted by the "Air Lift" which enabled them to supply West Berlin in spite of the Russian blockade. Throughout the period of the Berlin Blockade both sides were strictly legal. Access to West Berlin by air had been guaranteed in the peace settlement, and this the Russians never challenged. The whole episode ended with a somewhat ambiguous and reluctant agreement on the part of the Russians to allow free intercourse between West Berlin and West Germany. This settlement, however, did not satisfy the West. It was obvious that the Russians could at any moment occupy West Berlin and that the only answer open to the West would be nuclear war. Somewhat similar considerations applied, rather less forcibly, to the whole of Western Germany. In this way, the problem of Germany became linked with the problem of nuclear disarmament: if nuclear disarmament was accepted by the West without adequate assurances as to disarmament in regard to conventional weapons, then Germany's defence against the East would become difficult if not impossible.

The German problem also exists in regard to Eastern Germany - and here it presents new complexities. What had been the Eastern portion of the German Reich was divided into two parts. The Eastern half was given to Russia and Poland, while the Western half was given to a Communist regime in East Germany. In the part given to Russia and Poland all Germans were evicted. Old and young, men, women and children were ruthlessly sent in over-crowded trains to Berlin, where they had to walk from the Eastern terminus to the Western terminus in queues which were apt to take as much as thirty-six hours. Many Germans died in the trains and many in the Berlin queues, but for the survivors, there was no legal remedy.

And how about the part of Germany which was assigned to the East German Government? The East German Government was a Communist Government, while the population was overwhelming anti-Communist. The Government was established by the Russians and sustained by their armed forces against insurrection. Eastern Germany became a prison, escape from which, after the construction of the Berlin Wall, was only possible at imminent risk of death.

It cannot be expected that Germany will tamely accept this situation. The parts of the old German Reich which were given to Russia or Poland were, for the most part, inhabited by Poles and must be regarded as justly lost to Germany whatever may be thought of the hardships suffered by the excluded Germans. But the position of the Germans in what is now the Eastern portion of Germany is quite different. Eastern Germany is virtually a territory conquered by the Russians and governed by them as they see fit. This situation, combined with the natural nationalistic sympathy felt by the West Germans, is an unstable one. It depends upon military force and

nothing else.

So far, we have been concerned with the German case, but the Nazis, during their period in power, inspired in all non-Germans a deep-rooted fear of German power. There is reason to dread that, if Germany were re-united, there would be a repetition of the Nazi attempt to rule the world. This apprehension is apparently not shared by the Governments of the West, who have done everything in their power to strengthen West Germany and make it again capable of another disastrous attempt at world dominion. It cannot be said that this apprehension is unreasonable.

What can be done to secure a just and peaceful solution of this problem? The West might suggest that Germany should be free and re-united and the East might, conceivably, agree if Germany were disarmed. But the Germans would never agree to a punitive disarmament inflicted upon them alone. Only general disarmament would make German disarmament acceptable to the Germans. In this way, the question of Germany becomes entangled with the problem of disarmament. It is difficult to imagine any solution of the German problem which would be acceptable both to Germans and to the rest of the world, except re-unification combined with general disarmament.

The next most difficult of territorial disputes is that between Israel and the Arabs. Nasser has announced that it is his purpose to exterminate Israel and that, within two years, he will be in possession of missiles for this purpose. (Guardian, 16-3-64). The Western World is sure to feel that this cannot be allowed to happen, but most of Asia and, possibly, Russia would be prepared to look on passively so long as the Arabs continued to be victorious. There seems little hope of any accommodation between the two sides except as a result of outside pressure. The ideal solution in such a case is a decision by the United Nations which the countries concerned would be compelled to adopt. I am not prepared to suggest publicly the terms of such a decision, but only that it should come from the United Nations and be supported by the major Powers of East and West.

In general, when there is a dispute as to whether the Government of a country should favour the East or the West, the proper course would be for the United Nations to conduct a plebiscite in the country concerned and give the Government to whichever side obtained a majority. This is a principle which, at present, is not accepted by either side. Americans do not accept it in South Vietnam, though they conceal the reason for their anti-Communist activities by pretending that they are protecting the peasantry from the inroads of the Vietcong. The attitude of the United States to Castro's Government in Cuba is very ambiguous. Large sections of American opinion hold that throughout the Western Hemisphere no Government obnoxious to the United States is to be tolerated. But whether these sections of opinion will determine American action is, as yet, doubtful. Russia is, in this respect, equally to blame, having enforced Communist Governments in Hungary and Eastern Germany against the wishes of the inhabitants. In all parts of the world, self-determination

desirability of concessions by countries other than their own, are apt to shrink from advocating necessary concessions by their own country. Willingness for such concessions is a necessary qualification for membership of the Secretariat and for the Head of any subsidiary office. Each subsidiary office will have to collect information and first-hand knowledge on all local matters from both the ordinary population and the authorities. They will have to assess this knowledge with a view to its importance in work towards peace. And they will have to disseminate accurate knowledge and to educate both authorities and the public in attitudes and actions desirable in work towards peace. Each office will also have the task of finding suitable workers to support its own part of the general work and to collect money both for its own and the general work. It should be part of the work of the subsidiary offices to pass on information and advice so that the Central Secretariat can draw up soundly based schemes for the settlement of disputes that stand a good chance of being accepted by the disputants.

To accomplish these tasks will not be possible without a considerable expenditure in secretarial help, in offices, in means of travel, in means of publicizing findings and, ultimately, when and if funds permit, in establishing a radio and newspaper of our own. Until such funds permit, the exploration of possibilities and estimates of location plant and personnel for these needed means of publicity - in itself a mean task - must occupy the Foundation.

It will be seen that the Foundation as we hope it may become must be a gradual work. It cannot spring into being full-armoured like Athene. What exists at present is only a small seed of what we hope may come to be. We have a Head Office in London. We have a small Secretariat which is international, neutral and energetic, but too small for the work that has to be done. We have pamphlets and leaflets stating our views on various topical issues. These we supplement, when we can, by letters and articles in the Press. But what can be done in this way is, as yet, very limited since most newspapers are opposed to what must be done in this or that disturbed region if peace is to be secured there. Nevertheless, even now, we have found that there is much that we can accomplish. We can collect information, partly by means of already published facts, and partly by travels in the course of which we visit the Governments and learn their point of view. In the short five months of its existence, the Foundation has sent emissaries to various troubled spots and to the Governments concerned. We have already an enormous correspondence, partly with sympathizers in all parts of the world, and partly, also, with Heads of States. From all these we derive both information and advice. Partly, too, our correspondence has been concerned with appeals for the liberation of political prisoners and the amelioration of the lot of minorities in various countries, East and West, South and North. In these last respects, our work has already met with great and unexpected success. In recounting the success of the Foundation during these first five months, however, we labour under the handicap of being unable to be

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specific. Negotiations such as we are conducting, as will readily be understood, cannot be talked of, since to talk of them would nullify their efficacy.

As everybody who has ever attempted to create a large organization will understand, our chief effort during these early months has been concerned with obtaining funds, and this must continue for a considerable time since much of the work we wish to do involves very considerable expense. We are opening accounts in various countries to pay for local expenditure. We have done various things to raise money, such as a sale of paintings and sculpture generously donated to us by their creators. We are sponsoring a film. We have hope of money from various theatrical performances. But these alone will not suffice, unless supplemented by gifts from individuals and organizations. It is obvious that the more money we can collect the more nearly and adequately we can carry out our aims. We are firmly convinced that the Foundation can achieve the immense work that it has undertaken provided sufficient funds become available. We are working for a great cause - the preservation of Man. In this work one might expect to have the support of every human being. This, alas, is not yet the case. It is our hope that, in time, it will become so.

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There will, after all, be plenty of opportunity for adventure, even dangerous adventure. Boys can go to the Antarctic for their holidays, and young men can go to the moon. There are many ways of showing courage without having to kill other people, and it is such ways that should be encouraged.

In the teaching of history, there should be no undue emphasis upon one's own country. The history of wars should be a small part of what is taught. Much the more important part should be concerned with progress in the arts of civilization. War should be treated as murder is treated. It should be regarded with equal horror and with equal aversion. All this I fear, may not be pleasing to most present-day educationists. But, unless education is changed in some such way, it is to be feared that men's natural ferocity will, sooner or later, break out.

But it is not only children who need education. It is needed, also, by adults, both ordinary men and women and those who are important in government. Every technical advance in armaments has involved an increase in the size of States. Gunpowder made modern States possible at the time of the Renaissance by making castles obsolete. What castles were at that time, national States are now, since weapons of mass destruction have made even the greatest States liable to complete destruction. A new kind of outlook is, therefore, necessary. Communities, hitherto, have survived, when they have survived, by a combination of internal co-operation and external competition. The H-bomb has made the latter out of date. World-wide co-operation is now a condition of survival. But world-wide cooperation, if it is to succeed, requires co-operative feelings in individuals. It is difficult to imagine a World Government succeeding if the various countries of which it is composed continue to hate and suspect each other. To bring about more friendly feelings across the boundaries of nations is, to begin with, a matter of adult education. It is necessary to teach both individuals and Governments that as one family mankind may prosper as never before, but as many competing families there is no prospect before mankind except death. To teach this lesson will be a large part of the educative work of the Foundation.

There are throughout the world a number of territorial questions, most of which divide East from West. Some of these questions are very thorny and must be settled before peace can be secure. Let us begin with Germany.

At Yalta it was decided that Germany should be divided into four parts: American, English, French and Russian. A similar division was made of Berlin within Germany. It was hoped that all would, in time, come to agree and would submit to any conditions imposed by the victorious allies. Trouble, however, soon arose. The city of Berlin was in the midst

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