

ence expands, and as our more exact understanding of the true laws of nature confronts us with new queries demanding new answers.

We may do well to posit some Natural Law which is or may be the ground of all our ethical thinking, the basis of whatever sense of justice we have, and which positive law seeks to approximate and incorporate in some way. But to understand in its fullness what that law is, why it is, and to set forth precisely what is its application to any specific and complex situation is probably beyond us and the limited store of right reason available to us as individuals or to us as members of a religious institution. The posture of infallibility is no longer tenable. We see through a glass darkly, and in many situations—in private life and in public policy—ambiguity is inevitable and we must fearlessly launch out into the deep, hoping for the best. But the confirmed Christian is not without confidence that whosoever seeks in all humility will find, and that when the Holy Spirit is come and visits the true believer, He will lead into all truth needful for the moment, however critical and confused the moment may be. For the rest, the issue remains with the Eternal.

CHARLES E. SILCOX

PACIFISM AS NATIONAL POLICY

Cheyney, Pa.

Sir: Your February editorial states that pacifism, "clearly, cannot be advocated as a matter of national policy." I wonder by what insight this becomes so clear. Maybe you refer only to the U.S. or U.S.S.R.

Newly emerging nations in Africa might well choose such a course, for eminently sound prudential reasons. Their armies are likely in some cases to resemble comic opera masquerades. Some such armies may serve, at least temporarily, as a focus of national stability, but they can also become marauding bands that terrorize the population, as in the Congo. If their leaders get serious about it, they must mortgage their freedom in order to get substantial arms from one of the adversaries in the Cold War.

In England there are those who advocate unilateral disarmament, well aware of the fact that American power would still loom behind them. Nevertheless, it is at least arguable that British security would be no less tenuous if it rested on unilateral withdrawal from the arms race and a new politico-economic peace offensive in cooperation with other "nations in between" similarly disposed. If it be claimed that this would signal progressive disengagement of Western, then Eastern, Europe, this may be true, and again it is arguable that the security of this area may thus be enhanced rather than jeopardized more than it is at present.

Japan is hesitantly moving toward rearmament, but it does not seem wise to insist a pacifist policy is irrelevant to Japan's plight. As Red China's power mounts, the American presence in Japan and related areas may prove to be a military liability. In any case the present perilous equilibrium at the truce points cannot be expected to last indefinitely. Japanese initiative in the direction of unilateral disarmament as part of a radical reorientation of policy may be the best alternative possible, rather than the eventual undermining of an untenable policy that would invite disorder with no viable base from which to build for the future.

India may one day be driven to choose between consciously returning to Gandhian non-violence or undertaking a disastrous arms race with China.

If any of these possibilities would be realized, and cooperative efforts among such nations gather momentum, such a "wedge of peace" between the two giants would precipitate a radically new situation and open the way for the emergence of new forces within the alliances and even in both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Then, in your words, "new directions [can be] taken, in light of the unprecedented dangers which the present direction of the world offers."

It seems to me entirely appropriate to attempt fresh conceptual approaches to the situation we confront, including the possibility of a world without war.

CHARLES C. WALKER

Just published: THE MORAL DILEMMA OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: ESSAYS FROM *Worldview* by John Courtney Murray, S. J., Julian N. Hartt, Steven S. Schwarzschild, John Cogley, Walter Millis, Stephen G. Cary, Ernest W. Lefever, John C. Bennett, Paul Ramsey and Kenneth W. Thompson.

78 pages • \$1 postpaid • Quantity rates available upon request