

## BREAKING THE NUCLEAR FAITH: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS' LETTER ON WAR AND PEACE

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Politics and morality, in the twentieth century as much as at any other time in the modern era, have tended to be separate discourses. But on the occasions when each resonates sympathetically to the rhythms of the other the result, for better or worse, can be the creation of a new and transformed political space in which old definitions of the politically acceptable and feasible quite suddenly melt and are replaced by new senses of possibility armed with moral urgency.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response" is a document of the highest importance precisely because it holds the promise of just such a new political space. In moral terms, it is a sustained meditation on nuclear war from within the Catholic branch of just war theory. From this position, rather than a pacifist rejection of war *in toto*, the Bishops present in religious terms what should be seen as the underlying logic of moral opposition to nuclear war for most of the peace movement, which of course, is predominantly not pacifist.

Politically, the document is potentially extremely important for two main reasons. Firstly, in its timing, both in the sense of the development of the Freeze Campaign in the U.S. and the responses to it by the Reagan administration and the nuclear establishment (which are not at all the same beast), and in the fact the deployment of Pershing-2 and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe planned for late in 1983, if it is not prevented by the West European peace movements and its allies, will lock the nuclear confrontation into a qualitatively new round of escalation, quite possibly irreversibly.

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Proportionality. In fact, the bulk of the moral reasoning in the Pastoral does not invoke these doctrines but rather the two main principles governing the conduct of war, namely those of proportionality (in respect of particular actions and use of weapons and tactics) between the good expected to flow from taking up arms and the total damage and costs inflicted on all parties by such action, and discrimination of non-combatants and non-military targets from soldiers and their physical resources.

**The second premise is that nuclear war differs radically from all previous types of warfare and requires new categories of analysis, both morally and strategically.** The Bishops' position, adopted after both they and their five-person drafting committee had heard submission from a wide variety of military, scientific, political and moral standpoints, is unequivocal:

"As a people we must refuse to legitimate the idea of nuclear war. Such a refusal will require not only new ideas and new vision, but what the Gospel calls conversion of the heart."

The letter goes on to strike at the presumed normality and unquestioned acceptance of nuclear weapons that has dominated most public debate, to the extent that when there has been serious public debate it has been about control of nuclear arms rather than their abolition.

"We believe it is necessary, for sake of prevention, to build a barrier against the concept of nuclear war as a viable strategy of defense. There should be clear public resistance to the rhetoric of 'winnable' nuclear wars, or unrealistic expectations of 'surviving' nuclear exchanges, and the strategies of 'protracted nuclear war'."

Two aspects of United States (and on one count, Soviet) nuclear strategy are immediately rejected as "beyond the limits of moral justification." Under no circumstances can nuclear weapons be used to destroy centres of population. This prohibition on the slaughter of innocents is maintained even to retaliatory attacks, and more importantly, (given that, for example, Moscow is said to contain some 60 militarily significant targets), as an indirect consequence of counter-force targetting. The Bishops argue strongly for a No First Use Policy, but in doing so they lay great stress on the fact that they mean it to apply particularly to claims that a limited nuclear exchange is possible, and that as a consequence it would be acceptable to initiate a limited nuclear exchange. Their rejection of any initiation of nuclear war stresses the result of their prolonged inquiry into nuclear weaponry and strategy. Their argument is worth quoting at a little length, because of two extremely worrying developments: the development and proliferation of dual purpose weapons (capable of nuclear or conventional use), as well as both smaller yield nuclear weapons and larger yield conventional weapons; and on the other hand, the delegation of authority to use nuclear weapons to 'front-line' field commanders.

The second factor of great political importance is that **this powerful but normally politically conservative group, in its careful application of just war theory to nuclear weapons, has come within what one of the document's drafters called "a centimeter of ambiguity" of totally rejecting any legitimacy for nuclear weapons whatsoever.** The actual conclusion of the Pastoral is that the Bishops express "profound scepticism about the moral acceptability of any use of nuclear weapons" within "a strictly conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence." This apparently conventional formulation belies the real power of the letter in two senses. **Not only are the conditions that the Bishops set out in detail and some force so stringent as to be virtually abolitionist, but they are addressed not just to the re-emergence of doctrines of limited nuclear war and first-strike, but to the bedrock of consensual nuclear doctrine: deterrence.** If in the months to come the document does emerge as an effective vehicle for mobilization within the Catholic community, then for these two reasons it may very well be the catalyst for a transformation of the political space within which nuclear resistance is conducted in this country.

### The argument of the Pastoral

Let me briefly outline the main thrust of the pastoral letter, bearing in mind that the complete and authoritative version, based on a draft of some 150 pages as amended by more than two hundred resolutions, is not yet available. (All quotations are from the edited version published in *The New York Times*, May 5, 1983.)

The Pastoral Letter works from two premises. The first deals with the **appropriate framework for addressing war in human society in general**, and the second deals with the **question of the moral and strategic uniqueness of nuclear war.** Just war theory, both in religious discourse and the secular version known with harsh irony as international law, starts from the position that violence between states is in some respects inevitable and on occasion should be regarded as legitimate. But it also holds that the recourse to war should be strongly inhibited by moral principles, and should war break out regardless, its conduct must also be morally limited and regulated. It is a tradition of firm support for the state and seeks to address the points of intersection and divergence of duty to God and Caesar in terms relevant to both policy and the awesome character of decision in war. To summarize brutally, the Bishops set out the conditions of just war (*Jus ad bellum*), the conditions under which recourse to state violence is permissible, as seven principles: Just cause; Competent authority; Comparative justice; Right intention; Last resort; Probability of success and the avoidance of hopeless resistance; and

...the willingness to initiate nuclear war entails weighty moral responsibility: it involves transgressing a fragile barrier—political, psychological and moral. We express repeatedly in this letter our extreme scepticism about the prospects for controlling a nuclear exchange, however limited the first use might be. Precisely because of this scepticism, we judge resort to nuclear weapons to counter a conventional attack to be morally unjustifiable. Our support for a 'No First Use' policy must be seen in this light."

These arguments deal with the manner and circumstances in which nuclear weapons may be used. The most important part of the argument goes further to deal with "the heart of the U.S.-Soviet relationship"—deterrence. The Bishops' deliberations included consideration of the line of argument that emphasizes that since an effective deterrent must include a credible intention to use the weapons at hand, and since the use of those weapons can never be morally justified, then it must be equally morally unjustifiable to intend to use the weapons. This is not the position the letter finally adopts. Rather the Bishops were led to put forward "a strictly limited conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence." As I said above, this apparently conventional position is in fact anything but that. Firstly, it is clearly at the very most a transitional acceptance: "We cannot consider it a long-term basis for peace." The conditions, in addition to those outlawing counter-population warfare and initiation of nuclear warfare (and illusions of 'limited' nuclear war), are set out in detail in general and particular form. Three general restrictions to the prevailing notion of deterrence are immediately set down. Any weapons or strategies that in the name of deterrence go beyond the strict "minimum requirements necessary to insure credibility of deterrence at any level of conflict are unacceptable." Any plans for nuclear superiority that go beyond the acceptable objective deterring the use of nuclear weapons is also unacceptable. Finally, in what will prove to be extremely important for the course of the coming debate, the letter argues that any change in nuclear technology and strategy "must be assessed precisely in the light of whether it will render steps toward 'progressive disarmament' more or less likely."

In terms of the current debate surrounding recent policy of the Reagan administration, three specific prohibitions are set out. These include first strike weapons "that are likely to be vulnerable to attack, yet also possess a 'hard target kill' capability that threatens to make the other side's retaliatory forces vulnerable"; nuclear war fighting capability beyond the strictly limited notion of deterrence; and any steps whatsoever that have the effect of lowering the threshold between nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.

The letter then goes on to make six immediate recommendations in addition to those implied by the foregoing argument, but not actually spelled out. The most important of these in current U.S. politics is support for a

freeze on the production, testing and deployment of all new nuclear weapons systems on an immediate, bilateral and verifiable basis.

### Strategic implications

This sketch hardly does justice to a long and sophisticated document, but it does allow us to begin to think through the strategic implications of the Bishops' argument, and then to get some sense of the political possibilities. What kind of strategic posture is left to the United States under the arguments of the letter? It is in this respect that the Pastoral Letter is probably most radical. By applying just war theory to a concrete set of technologies and publicly proclaimed strategies for war, the letter affirms the ideology of deterrence but by taking it seriously then implicitly denies the moral acceptability of nine-tenths of what is done in the name of deterrence. This is the most subversive part of the document. We can start by thinking about the existing and planned weapons systems affected by the Bishops' approach. First, there are the weapons whose only use is to attack large targets such as population centres (with or without the rationale of their containing military targets). All the older generations of missile systems must be rejected because their inaccuracy means that all they can be used for is to attack cities: the Titan ICBMs in their mid-west silos and other ICBMs of similar vintage; the large number of Poseidon fleet ballistic missile submarines and the few remaining Polaris submarines; and the B-52s of the Strategic Air Command (at least those without air-launched cruise missiles). Secondly, there are the first strike weapons which are unacceptable both inasmuch as they go beyond deterrence and the search for active superiority, and also because they radically destabilize the existing relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union by threatening the Soviet Union's retaliatory capacity, and hence urge the arms race on to new vicious circles of escalation. These would certainly include the MX ICBM, the Trident-2 SLBM and the Pershing-2 intermediate range ballistic missile. Ground-launched cruise missiles are difficult to detect either on the ground or in the air and hence destabilize the possibilities of arms limitation and control. Weapons in the planning stages such as the Stealth bomber and the B-1 bomber would be rejected for a mixture of these reasons.

The battlefield use of nuclear weapons was given particular attention in the rejection of any weapons or tactics that tended to breakdown the distinction between nuclear weapons and conventional weapons. This has been a very clear intention of U.S. battlefield policy in the last two decades, with three main components. Firstly, nuclear weapons and conventional weapons are

becoming more like each other in terms of destructiveness and battlefield flexibility. As the example of the neutron bomb showed, new weapons are being placed in the nuclear arsenal which are smaller, less materially destructive and usable in a wider range of local battlefield situations than earlier generations of nuclear weapons. The neutron bomb is far from the only example: nuclear depth charges and nuclear anti-aircraft missiles have the military virtue of being effective even when not wholly accurate. At the same time, "conventional weapons" have become more and more to resemble the older nuclear weapons in their destructiveness: for example, the cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives developed by the U.S. and used so devastatingly by the Israel Defense Force in Beirut. More worrying still, these battlefield nuclear weapons are deployed in front-line situations where under the pressure of enemy attacks there will be pressure to "use them or lose them." These decisions will be taken in all probability by junior officers who have been trained to think in terms of an "integrated battlefield" using an "appropriate" mix of conventional, nuclear and chemical and biological weapons. The blurring of the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, the tactics that support such a blurring, the deployment of nuclear weapons in front-line, 'trip-wire' situations, and the delegation of nuclear command downwards are all specifically condemned under the Bishops' argument.

Of course, this is a rough and ready way of interpreting the implications of the document, particularly when we have not seen all of it. It is also clear that in accord with the long line of just war theory, particularly in the Catholic church, the document stresses the ambiguities in practice arising from conflicting moral concerns as well as the calls of military and political practicalities. **But I do so to stress the fundamental character of the Bishops' challenge to the heart of the national security state: the unquestioned policy of deterrence.** While the new doctrines (or at least newly successful) of first strike, limited nuclear war and protracted nuclear war are monstrous, they are obviously so. **For many people, deterrence in a simple, unexamined sense seems a safe harbour when faced with the stridency of the nuclear hawks.** While at first sight they appear to endorse such a position, the Bishops do so only in the most limited manner and in such a way that withholds moral approbation from virtually all existing U.S. nuclear weapons and doctrines (and for that matter, all in the past to the extent that they were founded on superiority and gave rise to nuclear blackmail). Robert Johansen has pointed out that under the logic of the Bishops' position the only acceptable form of deterrence in the nuclear arsenal would be a limited number of counter-force weapons, themselves not easily destroyed, but which would not threaten the survivability of the Soviet deterrent.' This is an extremely narrow option.

And given existing delivery systems, a non-nuclear weapon may be just as good. It is most unlikely that the Bishops did not think this through despite their silence on the subject.

### Political implications

In thinking about the political space that may open up as a consequence of the publication of the Bishops' letter, I don't want to give the impression that it will in some direct or immediate way translate into a political shift amongst America's fifty-odd million Catholics, all armed with the correct moral and political line. Far from it. But the content, timing and firmness of the Bishops' stand give it considerable potential not only amongst U.S. Catholics, but also in the Protestant churches and in wider political circles. The likelihood that this chance will be seized is enhanced by the obvious political acumen of the conference and its advisers. There are a series of tensions embedded within the document, necessarily and deliberately retained. A great deal will depend on the vigour and skill with which the Pastoral Letter is discussed within the Catholic community. There is every reason to think that, after labouring for over a year to produce this document, the Bishops will set to the main task with determination. This is not a document for the moment, but for the long haul. It's also reasonable to expect that, on their track record so far, the Bishops will show considerable political skill in steering the discussion. It is, as one would expect, an intensely *political* document, seeking to apply a politically informed moral perspective to achieve political effects within a relatively short time.

The timing is central, both in a positive and negative sense. Like most Catholic resistance to nuclear weapons, the Bishops' letter is part of a long haul. But it also comes at a remarkable time. **Two years ago it would have fallen into a largely unsympathetic political arena. Today in the United States there is a radically transformed public awareness of nuclear war, and in many respects a democratization of foreign and military policy discussion beyond anything in the country's recent history.** Markers of this democratization are most obviously the Freeze Campaign, the emergence of action-oriented concerned professional groups such as Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the June 12 rally in New York in 1982. Less obvious harbingers of change are the largely unorganized resistance to the military draft (over a half-million young men reportedly have not registered), the increasingly successful grassroots-level Jobs With Peace campaign which is linking nuclear issues with economic crisis, and in a negative sense, the fragmentation and lack of consensus amongst elite state managers over nuclear and military issues. The

Robert MacNamara, Gerald Smith and George Kennan. The threat from this group is that the political momentum behind the Freeze campaign, particularly in a coming election year, will be leached out by a series of moves that give the appearance of abandoning the worst aspects of the nuclear arms race, but which actually serve to entrench it more deeply. Thus a 'No First Use' policy is highly desirable as an American commitment, but as the Bishops' letter emphasizes, only if it is firmly set in a rejection of both nuclear war-fighting doctrines and doctrines of limited nuclear war.

Moreover, this group is inclined to interpret the document itself for more modest ends amounting to a continued legitimization of nuclear deterrence. **McGeorge Bundy's** review of the Bishops' letter is instructive in this regard. Bundy writes: "The deterrence I have been describing is not as good as a world without nuclear weapons and the bishops emphasize they 'cannot consider it adequate as a long-term basis for peace.' But what is only the short term for men with a sense of history rooted in the immense age of their church can be quite a while for the rest of us. It would be wrong to suppose that the bishops are telling us we can quickly escape from a world of deterrence."<sup>22</sup>

In addition, the distress that is surfacing in the business community over the economic consequences of Reagan's spending plans nicely fits with the proposals to cut Reagan's planned military budget increases to half their planned levels. The Freeze energies would be electoral fodder in moves to legitimate massive increases in military spending, but with a cooler rhetoric and the military accepting a little less than Reagan had promised—increases of five percent rather than ten percent.

Into this context the Bishops' letter is welcome both for the likely commitment of new groups of Americans to the peace movement, but also because it takes the analysis of the movement's objectives in a potentially more sophisticated direction.

All this and much more will be necessary in the coming years. The nuclear resistance movement in the U.S. needs victories, but if it is to avoid defeat from these threats, it has to make three crucial shifts and the Catholic Bishops' letter could be helpful in all three cases. Firstly, the disarmament wing of the peace movement which is concerned primarily with the immediate threat of nuclear extinction must find ways of linking with the anti-interventionist wing of the movement. In recent months, leaders of the Freeze Campaign such as Randall Forsberg have been acknowledging this and emphasizing the links between nuclear weapons and the third world. The Reagan administration's policies in Central America and the continuing risk of nuclear war starting in the Middle East are helping to make these links seem more urgent and, as the concern over U.S. interventionism increases, more feasible.

Bishops' letter, from a community immune to whispers of Reds under their beds, is likely to have a powerful influence on continuing and deepening this trend, both within and beyond the Catholic community.

But the time at which the letter has emerged is also one which could prove decisive for the peace movement, both in the United States and elsewhere. For Europe, the next year is everything. In the autumn and winter, Pershing-2 intermediate range ballistic missiles are to be introduced into West Germany, and ground-launched cruise missiles into England and Sicily. As someone put it, Europe will become Cuba in reverse. For the West European peace movement the U.S. Bishops' letter could not have come at a better time, since it will provide a strong source of pressure on the more conservative parts of the European Catholic hierarchy. The West German bishops, for example, will find themselves outflanked and undermined by their American counterparts. The fact that the Pastoral Letter comes from the major nuclear state, that it attacks the prevailing interpretation of nuclearism so deeply and in a number of ways directly affecting U.S. policy in Western Europe, cannot fail to contribute to the broad re-thinking of the Atlanticist position in Europe.

In the United States the peace movement is in an ambiguous position. The strengths are clear, the weaknesses a little less so, but they are extremely serious. The key question is whether or not the peace movement here will develop sufficient political sophistication to simultaneously continue to grow as a political force that must intervene in the unquestioned core of American consensual politics and at the same time avoid being co-opted or outflanked and undercut in the process. The Freeze Campaign is the best example here. Its success has come in large part from its simplicity and its ability to step aside from an earlier, older set of ideological traps for the peace movement. Its leadership is firmly committed to a continuing grassroots campaign. But its main threats, which do not come from President Reagan, would seek to capitalize on precisely this. The first threat comes from members of Congress and Democratic presidential candidates who hope to yoke the freeze energy to their mainstream political vehicles. In this respect the real contest in Congress is not between Reagan supporters and the Congressional Freeze supporters, but between those who see the Freeze campaign within Congressional and mainstream media terms, and those who see the Congressional arena as simply one more weapon in a much more broadly-based, essentially extra-parliamentary struggle against the national security state. The Freeze Campaign holds both tendencies within it.

The second threat is more deeply-rooted and comes from within the permanent national security managers, best represented by the group now known (with supreme self-confidence) as the Gang of Four—McGeorge Bundy,

Secondly, the U.S. peace movement must increasingly see itself as a part of a global movement of resistance. The threat of nuclear war from the projection of United States military power abroad may well be an even greater incentive to transnational political cooperation and integration than transnational corporations and American cultural imperialism. The U.S. movement tends, more than its allies in Japan, Western Europe, Australia and the Pacific, to be inward-looking, as insular as American political culture in general. Yet the reality of worldwide American military power and declining political and economic potency, and the global character of U.S. and Soviet preparations for nuclear war deeply implicate the rest of the world. Those on the periphery have always had to know more about the empire than the centre—if only to try and keep out of the way, to survive. But if the nuclear resistance is to succeed, then both the opportunity and the threat can come from any nuclear quarter.

Thirdly, the U.S. peace movement will have to come to see that its real opponent is not just President Reagan or his administration, whether or not he runs again in 1984. Rather it is the national security state which must be the target, the slow accretion of institutional changes which since 1945 (and earlier) have established a parallel government that at every turn parodies and subverts the constitutional forms of liberal democracy. If the United States is to be turned from considering nuclear weapons a normal military and political and diplomatic tool, then only a complete re-appropriation of democracy in foreign policy and military policy, never democratic provinces, will suffice.

In the second half of 1983 the West European peace movement will begin to turn more militant in its resistance to the deployment of new U.S. weapons. Their struggle will encapsulate each of these three shifts, and it will be some test of the future direction of the U.S. peace movement as a whole. It is the possibility that the Bishops' Pastoral Letter could possibly contribute in these senses that makes it such a potentially important document.

All this is not to say that the document is without fault. It is not a pacifist document, but to my mind that is actually to its credit. At this stage most people in the broad mass of the peace movement are not able to entertain a pacifist position. Certainly most on the left are anything but systematic pacifists. The Bishops speak of "resistance" to nuclear war but not of the form of resistance most associated with Catholicism, namely militant civil disobedience. In fact, this association is recent in origin and is very much a minority strain in Catholic thinking. The position associated most recently with Daniel and Philip Berrigan and others in the Plowshares Eight may well be the future, but it is not the Bishops' position, at least for now.

The political strength of the document, as I have stressed, is that it does

come from the just war tradition, the legitimation of state violence for purposes of self-defense. Yet, as the Bishops themselves show, that tradition in its uncritical secular form (and aided by a good dose of moralistic rhetoric from President Reagan on the "focus of evil") could be the death of us. There is no just nuclear war and it is time that that intellectual tradition itself was put away. The Bishops come close to recognizing another dimension of this problem when they follow the lead from Pope John XXIII's *Pacem In Terris* where he speaks of the need to question the existing framework of national authorities. The Bishops stress the need for such a reconsideration of the institutional frameworks of global politics—and yet the directions in which such rethinking must proceed need urgent debate. The clear trend is towards centralized authority both within existing nation states and beyond them on a global scale. Under existing arrangements, such as those that have produced the nuclearist state nationally, we could expect nothing less at a global scale unless the democratic alternative was secured at lower levels of authority—and that is not of interest to either of the two ruling national security states. The issue of the retrieval of democracy must be a central plank in the anti-nuclear resistance.

In giving their very tenuous acceptance of nuclear deterrence, the Bishops accept, with far less public reluctance, the claim of a real and immediate Soviet threat to the United States. At least this is so in the excerpts published to date. While there can be little doubt about the Soviet government's threat to its own population and to its immediate neighbors, there is real doubt about the accepted wisdom that it presents a mortal threat to the capitalist democracies. At first glance it would appear that the Bishops, possibly for sound political reasons, have decided not to dissent from the prevailing nuclearist consensus that equates the Soviet *capacity* to attack the United States and Western Europe and Japan with the *intention* to do so. In this consensus it is never publicly assumed that because the United States has the capacity to inflict even greater damage on the Soviet Union (and with less chance of successful retaliation) that it intends to do so forthwith. The letter's discussion of the Soviet Union is less belligerent than that emanating from Washington these days, but the next step after establishing a new moral discourse about the place of deterrence is to enlarge that discourse to eradicate the unreflective acceptance of threat from which nuclear deterrence offers terrifying but necessary protection. Again, one of the most benign effects of the Pastoral Letter is to enlarge the possibilities of doing so. Similarly, while the letter does not connect its analysis of the nuclear threat to U.S. intervention in the Third World, a non-interventionist foreign policy springs logically from the Bishops' argument.

I run the risk of reading too much into the Pastoral Letter, hoping for too

much, being too generous in interpretation. That's probably true. It remains a religious meditation which I admire and from which I can accept inspiration, but in which, finally I cannot share. It is a religious meditation that carries the authority of a body of men—men who for all their capacity to resist the moral perversion of nuclearism still deny women, and hence remain within the social and psychological frameworks that survive only on fantasies of destruction amongst men and the denial of reason and history to women.

When I first read the letter, my feeling was one of shame, as a socialist, that not only was there not any comparable socialist meditation on nuclear extinction, but that the terms socialist and meditation seemed to rest appallingly uneasy with each other. One thinks of Edward Thompson's remarkable passages on exterminism, but only in flashes does it seem he is writing from the socialist core that animates the rest of his work. Almost alone, there is the German novelist Christa Wolf in her speech, "The Citadel of Reason" (*Socialist Register*, 1982), written for her acceptance of the Buchner Prize.

It is Wolf who reminds me, persuades me, that the contradiction I felt is not there for all time. In a meditation on the brief and incandescent example of Georg Buchner's life and writings, Wolf reaches beyond the forgotten commonplaces of Christian teaching to explore the lived contradictions of a "time out of joint," where even the simplest words are no longer secure in their meanings. Faced with the psychological horrors of the new age in the nineteenth century, Buchner's characters, or at least the men, could at best, she said, "retreat to the citadel of reason," leaving the women without the walls.

"People were unable to read him. They did not want to know that the progress they were in the process of launching on a grand scale comprised the stuff of new myths. That it could provide pleasure, but not love. And that its most powerful motivating force would be fear of its own inner emptiness. Buchner realized so very early—and I think with horror—that the pleasure the new age derived from itself was fundamentally linked with pleasure in destruction. But he did not live to see the fully-formed caricature of the paradox coupling creation with destruction. He was not acquainted with a word like 'megadeaths' . . . For the fear of death grips them . . . the instant there is no mirror—a woman's eyes or body, a theater, a corporation, a state of apparatus, the globe, the universe!—to throw back a larger than life reflection of them."

I am unfair to bring this up after the Bishops' letter has done so much, struggling within the harsh realities of daily politics. But there are yet further buttresses to the cathedral of nuclearism.

<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Johansen, "The Strategic Implications of the Bishops' Letter," presented at the "Conference on the Nuclear Arms Debate," Princeton University, May 5, 1983.

<sup>2</sup>McGeorge Bundy, "The Bishops and the Bomb," *New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1983, p. 8.

## THE AFRICAN CRISIS: ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE CONTINENT\*

Timothy M. SHAW†

Africa is currently undergoing a crisis characterized by economic recession, political decline, and social tension which will have grave international as well as national and regional consequences. The World Bank and the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) have proposed divergent development paths for the continent that must be evaluated in light of this crisis. The World Bank, as outlined in its *Agenda for Action*, favors externally-oriented development whereas the OAU in its *Lagos Plan of Action* calls for collective self reliance. This article reviews the debate framed by these two alternative strategies and examines the implications for both Africa and the industrialized world. In doing so, it discusses which African and Northern interests are likely to favor increased external interaction and continued dependence (the World Bank *Agenda*) and which prefer dis-

engagement and increased intra-regional relationships (OAU *Lagos Plan*).

The author draws distinctions between the development priorities of the minority "semi-peripheral" countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt and the majority "peripheral" states such as Zambia and Senegal: the former being more externally-oriented than the latter. The countries also differ on the degree of self-reliance they seek. Another important factor is related to the recent emergence of a variety of bourgeois classes—national, bureaucratic, military—who, having more propertied interests than the disadvantaged proletarian classes, may prefer the *laissez-faire Agenda* over the more structured *Plan*. This divisive dynamic is in turn exacerbated by rivalries between various Center factions.

\*. . . Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate, or satisfactory index of general well-being, in the past 20 years. Faced with this situation, and determined to undertake measures for the basic restructuring of the economic base of our continent, we resolved to adopt a far-reaching regional approach based primarily on *collective self-reliance*."

—OAU *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000*.<sup>1</sup>

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