CATHOLIC PACIFISM

My object in this small study is not to rework the conditions of the just war today; not whether, in an atomic age, war *de facto* can be fought in a just manner by the Christian.[1] My object is much more modest: it is simply to examine the general attitude of the Church towards war and peace particularly as this is set forth in the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of Vatican II*. I shall hope to show that the attitude of what I might call fundamental pacifism, that is, the conviction that recourse to violence in defense of even legitimate rights is everywhere forbidden to the Christian is not in conformity with the present teaching of the Church.[2] Consequently, the attempt to obligate the Christian unconditionally to a disuse of violence does not seem in conformity with this teaching and that, thus, a Christian virtue of disuse of violence that obliges every Christian in all situations simply does not exist. Yet, as I shall also hope to show, this does not preclude the possibility of an individual charismatic pacificist within the Catholic community.

The Scriptures are the favorite *loci* for fundamental pacificism. I do not wish—nor do I have the competence—to investigate the Scriptures *au fond*. It is, however, a grotesque misunderstanding to designate Jesus as a pacificist in the political sense, on account of his commandment of love for enemies. Jesus gives no direct answer to the question concerning the lawfulness of war.[3] He speaks realistically about approaching wars, but he does not give a moral evaluation of them. He requires a peaceable attitude and a love for enemies, but he does not enter upon the question how a nation should conduct itself in the exigency of a military threat. As Jerome Rausch has shown,

[1] R. J. Fox, *The Limitation of Warfare According to the Just War Theory* (University Microfilms, 1964), pp. 4-11.

[2] Among Protestant writers, Cf. J. Lasserre, *War and the Gospel* (Herald Press, 1962).

[3] K. Hörmann, *Peace and Modern War in the Judgment of the Church* (Newman, 1966), pp. 25-29.

> The *logia* of Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount are not to be seen as a repudiation of the Mosaic law of justice and self defense, but rather as its fulfillment. Christ did not wish to deny justice in the face of an unjust attack—but rather, that justice, unless it opens to love, cannot be ultimately justified.[4]

The demands of Christ are therefore an ideal toward which Christians must attempt to integrate their lives. There can be no other explanation of some very basic themes of the Gospel when Christ commands Christians: "You therefore be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5:39); or regarding anger: "Whoever says, 'Thou Fool!' shall be liable to the fire of Gehenna." Or in consequence of following Christ: "No one who does not renounce everything he has, can be my disciple." (Lk 14:33). These are impossible if they are taken as categorical law. They must be seen as imperative ideals towards which the Christian must orientate and integrate his whole life—inclusive of the ideal principles of non-violence given to us in the *logia* of the sermon on the mount. This, incidently, is also the reasoning of the whole last section of the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*[5] regarding war and peace. We have here an evolutionary process in which Christians by their constant efforts become more and more conscious of their obligation toward this ideal. This presupposes that there is some relationship between the heavenly and terrestial peace.[6] The Church has always seen such a relationship in which the social implications of the Gospel must—through the Christian—make its effect on the temporal structures of man. The whole social teaching of the Church is predicated on exactly this cardinal principle. In the social teachings she teaches in Christ's name, applying doctrinal principles to concrete situations of men of the present age.

The usual explanation—which is not incorrect in so far as it goes—is that since the order underlying political, social and economic order is moral in nature the Church has the right as well as the obligation of clarifying and teaching with divine authority the moral principles underlying these variant orders of the human community.

[4] "The Principles of Nonresistance and Love of Enemy in Mt 5:38," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 28 (January, 1966), p. 31.

[5] We use the translation of NCWC throughout our text.

[6] P. Riga, *Peace on Earth* (Herder and Herder, 1964), pp. 50-64.

This is clear and cannot be denied by any Catholic. Yet, the difficulty lies in applying these general principles to the concrete order of human activity and organization which is continuously in the flux of change and growth proper to all human endeavors. To what degree does the Church engage her authority, say, when she praises and recommends the UN to her faithful as a fitting instrument for peace in the modern world? Peace among men—as an extension of the inner peace between men and God and thence, from men to men—is a divine imperative for the Church. She would be amiss of duty before God if she failed to encourage, inspire and work for peace among men. This is clear. Yet what of the UN when the Church recommends it (as indeed she has, many times over in the past twenty years)? We can find no such revelation in the deposit of faith (taken here in its broadest sense). The UN is obviously not of divine origin and those who direct it are not graced with any kind of divine authority. To what degree, then, can we say that such a concretization of the divine principle of peace is "authoritative" and to be followed in conscience by Catholics in their struggle for peace? It is this complicated problem which we wish now to approach.

The Church's mission to the world is an essential part of her commission from Christ the Redeemer. The Church is not of the world neither in her origins, her end, her means and her unifying principle who is the Holy Spirit. But she does exist in time and is influenced by the history and events of men of all ages. Without this incarnational mission of the Church to the world in order to set in motion in human history the holy ferment of the Gospel principles of brotherhood, reconciliation and justice—the efficacy of her mission would be in grave jeopardy since for better or for worse, the moral tone of man's life is directly effected by and through his social life.[7] Man does not and cannot live apart from his fellows and what effects the social life and its operations, effects to a more or less greater extent, the lives of men within that society. It is a false and erroneous "disincarnationalism" which would substract the Church from the agonizing and sometimes dirty affairs of men here below.

The Gospel, then, can find its fulfillment only in human history

[7] D. Dubarle, *La Civilization et l'Atome* (Ed. du Cerf, 1962), pp. 18-24.

among men and by the work of the Church. It would then take time for these doctrines of the Gospel to find their fulfillment in the social cadres into which the Gospel is fixed and preached. This ferment acts as a yeast in the world and like a yeast it must grow into human fabric. Thus the themes of Christ being the "Light of the World," "the Yeast of the Dough," "the Mustard Seed that grows," "the Salt of the Earth." "the Good Works shining before men" the cosmic vision of St. Paul as he extends the salvation of Christ not only to men but to the whole of the created cosmos (Col 2:5-18) present to us with the fundamental and obligatory mission of the Church to all men. This has taken time for men even within the Church to fully realize and accomplish. It took time as well as the work of theologians and many times opposition for the Church to see the implications in the social order of her own doctrines of faith. It took a long time, for instance to see the fact that human dignity is denied (a fundamental Christian concept) by slavery, bondage of woman, child labor, lack of civil rights, war, etc. It is clear then that efforts to promote human dignity, harmony and peace, social and international justice, alleviation of hunger and poverty—are all a fulfillment of the Gospel injunctions and insights. It is from this fundamental evangelical insight that the Church today draws her right—under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is always with her—to speak authoritatively with the authority of the Gospel itself on social justice and social concerns of men here below. It is only those who fail to see this intimate connection between Gospel-social order who can deny this right to the Church. Thus Pope John XXIII states:

> Above all we affirm that the social teachings proclaimed by the Catholic Church cannot be separated from her traditional teaching regarding man's life, whereof it is our earnest wish that more and more attention be given to this branch of learning (*Mater et Magistra*).

And in *Pacem in Terris* the same Pope applies this:

> Men should endeavor, therefore, in the light of faith and with the strength of love, to insure that the various institutions—whether economic, social, cultural, or political in purpose—will be such as not to create obstacles, but rather to

facilitate the task of improving themselves both in the natural order as well as in the supernatural.

There is nothing really new in the history of the Church but it is a new application, a fuller and more solicitous application of the evangelical principles of love and justice to a new order and a new world in its modern evolution. Thus we have here a dynamic concept of the Church which is continuously evolving towards a better understanding of her deposit as well as its application to and application of the world into which she has been sent to save. She applies an evangelical insight but she must also be attentive to the developments of men in the world through whom God also works. She must be open to history and its lessons—as was so clearly Pope John in *Pacem in Terris;* open, too, to the aspect of change and evolution which the modern sciences have so clearly shown us; open as well to the questions of man, his struggles and agonies here below. It is only in the light of these facts, reflecting upon them, bringing the Gospel and its dynamic principles to bear upon them guided as she is by the Holy Spirit that she can make a contribution and become relevant to the men of the modern age—and to every future age for that matter. If she becomes too timid here, if her children either through fear or a false disincarnationalism withdraw into a parochial and ghetto system of their own, the apostolate of the Church is in grave danger and modern man is left to drift with no direction for his works. When this happens, man becomes a giant, blind and mad, traversing this earth under the guidance of false ideologies and philosophies. This, in the final analysis, can only lead to men's ultimate destruction by the misguided works of his hands. In this context, the apostolate of the layman to the world becomes not a topic for fancy discussion under religious auspices, but a vital function of the Church in and for the world; for, after all, it is they who are the Church in the world. It is only with this dynamic concept of her mission to the world that the Church can become meaningful to and for the world.

Hence, the Church's mission to the world is both internal and external. Internal in so far as she must continuously reform whatever in her structures which are anachronistic and meaningless to the modern world, that is, the cadres, which are changeable as distin-

guished from basic Christian doctrine, which is unchangeable; this is a delicate task to be done at the highest echelons of the Church's authority (Pope, Ecumenical Councils) but a task which must continuously be done. External in so far as she is in the world and learns from God's work among men in human history. Here her task is to purify and apply the Gospel principles to new and changing situations in history. In reality, it is Christ himself who guides his Church into all truth.

It is clear, here, that legitimate defense may indeed be necessary to avoid complete collapse or the ruin of civilization; it may be necessary to safeguard that measure of freedom that has been so dearly won by man. Recent history has shown us that this, in fact, has been the case. No fundamentalist pacificism stopped Hitler nor the Russian tanks in Hungary.[8] The Jews in Europe had no means to defend themselves—and six million of them should be enough to prove that absolute pacificism as a general imperative for men and nations cannot work in the brutal world of the twentieth century. The Christian must live between two worlds, one that is being born and one that is dying. He must work with his whole soul for peace and the conditions that make it possible—our ideal—and yet in a world which is imperfect, filled with ambiguities and with evil men on both sides of the iron curtain.[9]

Thus, it seems to me, we must reject pacifism as an absolute principle for the Christian in his conduct of international affairs for two reasons: the first is that no government responsible to an existing nation could adopt such a policy. To be sure, some efforts should and must be made in this direction as, for example, the partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963. Yet even this came about from the fact that the two super-nuclear powers confronted each other with an overkill deterrance, which, as we shall shortly see, has brought us, in the words of the Vatican, "peace of a sort," *pax quaedam*.[10] The very possibility of co-existence here was the result of nuclear stale-

[8] R. A. Falk, *Law, Morality, and War in the Contemporary World,* (Praeger, 1963), pp. 7-8.

[9] P. Ramsey, "The Vatican Council on Modern War," *Theological Studies,* 27 (June, 1966), pp. 198-200.

[10] *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* par. 81a.

mate. No nation today, in fact, will allow its political leaders to gamble with its security by unilateral disarmament, leaving it no alternative but to surrender to superior force. Such a policy in a very imperfect world would be immoral for the Christian. There are, in addition, small nations which must depend upon the larger for effective protection from unjust subversion and aggression by nuclear blackmail. The Indian government—which came close to a pacifist position—did in fact use military force to keep Hyderabad in the federal union and the same with Kashmir. When she was invaded by China, she renounced all pacifist pretensions. Pacifists, then, even in a country such as the United States, need to guard against the temptation to play down the degree of threat posed by another nation in order to persuade their nation to come as close as possible to a polity of non-violence. In so doing, we may make the nation weak and invite aggression. Pacifist groups may, however, with profit contribute an emphasis on constructive alternatives to military force and on efforts to re-establish relationships and to encourage reconciliation between nations. In this respect, they might well play as pioneers in seeing beyond the assumptions of the cold war. Pacifism, however, does not have a self-sufficient alternative to the government's dependance on military force.

The second reason is that, as recent history has shown, pacificism cannot deter nuclear attack or defend a people from invasion or political oppression. In the words of John Bennett,[11] prior to any Gospel saying that can be made into a particular law of non-violence, is the broader commandment of love for all neighbors. Thus love can demand in certain circumstances a defense of neighbors against aggressors and to rescue them from oppression. Christians must take into consideration, in the words of Pius XII, "Those dark powers that have always been at work in the course of history. For this reason, the Church distrusts all pacifistic propaganda which abuses the word 'peace' to mask its aims."[12] We must then leave the door open to the legitimate use of military force. When that

[11] J. Bennett, *Foreign Policy in Christian Perspective,* (C. Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 32-49.

[12] Radio Message, December 24, 1944 in V. A. Yzermans, ed., *The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII*, II (North Central, 1961), pp. 78-89.

door is once opened, the most harassing perplexities of foreign policy enter; we, as Christians, are in the midst of all the ambiguities of how to possess and even to use military force and yet to keep it limited and restrained as the servant of justice.[13] It is precisely at this point that Vatican II comes to our aid in the agonizing modern problem of war and peace.

It is perhaps this chapter of the Constitution which was awaited with the greatest anticipation by the whole world. Thus, in a sense, the expectations of the world both Catholic and non-Catholic were perhaps too great for any council to fulfill. The reason is clear: the council in any conciliar or ecclesiastical document cannot give men a ready made blueprint for its manifold ills. The most it can do is to give some general principles, encouragement and an intense hope that in these tasks and agonies of men Christians will cooperate to the fullest extent of their power. That is why the Council in its very first paragraph of this chapter was able to say that it "wishes passionately to summon Christians to cooperate, under the help of Christ, the author of peace, with all men in securing among themselves a peace based on justice and love and in setting up the instruments of peace" (77B). This whole chapter will be such an encouragement on the part of the Catholic Church.

We have here a type of practical and politico-religious realism which, in fact, is reflected in our present text. Not that the prophetical has been entirely eliminated for we shall see that many of their animadversions were incorporated into our present text (praise of non-violence, conscientious objection, condemnation of all forms of total war, etc.). In the final analysis, however, our present document has chosen to confront the world as it is, attempt to limit its present violence and by small gradations move towards the ideal which both groups agree should be the final object of this section: love and justice giving rise to true peace with a total proscription of war as a fit means of restoring violated rights (international agreements on prisoners and non-combatants, international organizations leading to stronger international political authority and above all, eliminating the causes of war such as poverty and misery to which the whole

[13] For a good treatment, see P. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, (Duke University Press, 1961).

last third of this chapter is dedicated). It was this type of moral persuasion which the Council Fathers hoped to accomplish with this chapter and to a great degree, it is reminiscent of the momentous talk of Paul VI before the UN on October 4, 1965 where the Pope outlined the same paradoxes contained in our document: anxiety and hope, the futility of war and the right of a nation to self defense, the poverty of millions which directly threatens the peace and the enormous sums spent on arms and means of destruction. Thus in the words of the Pope:

> You are a network of relations between states. We would almost say that your chief characteristic is a reflection as it were, in the temporal field, of what our Catholic Church aspires to be in the spiritual field: unique and universal. In the ideological construction of mankind, there is on the natural level nothing superior to this. Your vocation is to make brothers not only of some, but of all peoples. A difficult undertaking, indeed; but this it is, your most noble undertaking. Is there anyone who does not see the necessity of coming thus progressively to the establishment of a world authority, able to act effectively on the political and juridical levels? . . .
> Many words are not needed to proclaim this loftiest aim of your institution. It suffices to remember that the blood of millions of men, that numberless and unheard of sufferings, useless slaughter and frightful ruin are the sanction of the past which unites you, with an oath which must change the future history of the world. No more war, war never again. Peace, it is peace which must guide the destinies of people and of all mankind . . .
> Peace, as you know, is not built up only by means of politics, by the balance of forces and of interests. It is constructed with the mind, with ideas, with works of peace. You labor in this great construction. But you are still at the beginning. Will the world ever succeed in changing that selfish and bellicose mentality which, up to now, has been interwoven in so much history? It is hard to foresee; but it is easy to affirm that it is toward that new history, a peaceful, truly human history, as promised by God to all men of good will, that we must absolutely march. The roads there to are already well marked out for you; and the first is that of disarmament. If you wish to be brothers, let the arms fall from your hands. One cannot love while holding offensive arms. Those armaments, especially those terrible arms which modern science has

> given you, long before they produce victims and ruins, nourish bad feelings, create nightmares, distrust, and somber resolutions; they demand enormous expenditures; they obstruct projects of union and useful collaboration; they falsify the psychology of peoples . . .
> As long as man remains that weak, changeable and even wicked being that he often shows himself to be, defensive arms will, unfortunately, be necessary. You, however, in your courage and valiance, are studying the ways of guaranteeing the security of international life, without having recourse to arms.[14]

It is remarkable how our present text has taken each of these themes and woven them into this fifth section, and it is in the spirit of this talk of the Pope before the UN—practical but at once tending toward the ideal of elimination of all wars from the affairs of men—that this whole section is orientated. Practical and workable steps towards the ideal of total and universal peace. The mentality of men must change as a pre-condition of a sound peace and it must be towards this goal that the energies of all men of good will but especially of Christians, must be directed. Too often in the past, Catholic moral theology has been over-concerned with a limitation of violence (a good thing in itself which remains in our present document) and not enough on the constructions and progressive methods towards peace. It is this change of mentality and orientation which the present document hopes to accomplish by its moral persuasion.

The council then goes on to give us the constituent elements of peace (positive) and what peace is not (negative). It is noteworthy that the council's definition of peace is different from the traditional Augustinian definition as the "tranquility of order."[15] The reason is quite easy to understand, namely, the fact of the established disorder throughout the globe. That is despotic totalitarian regimes which rule vast areas of the world indeed have order after a sort, but not an order which respects true peace: the dignity and rights of man, political, social and economic freedom, etc. (the Communist

[14] Text in *New York Times,* October 5, 1965.

[15] For many references Cf. *De Civitate Dei,* bk. 19, Ch. 13 in A. Augustine, *The City of God,* trans. by M. Dods (New York, 1966), pp. 690 ff.; See also bk. 19, Ch. 4, p. 678; bk. 19, Ch. 12, p. 689; bk. 19, Ch. 17, pp. 695 ff.

countries, Iran, Taiwan, South Vietnam, Spain and many Latin dictatorships). In order to avoid this sort of ambiguity, the concept of peace as to its constituent parts is simply an order of justice and love. So our document defines it:

> 78. Peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice (Isa 32:7). Peace results from that order structured into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice. The common good of humanity finds its ultimate meaning in the eternal law. But since the concrete demands of this common good are constantly changing as time goes on, peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly. Moreover, since the human will is unsteady and wounded by sin, the achievement of peace requires a constant mastering of passions and the vigilance of lawful authority.
>
> But this is not enough. This peace on earth cannot be obtained unless personal well-being is safeguarded and men freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their inner spirits and their talents. A firm determination to respect other men and peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood are absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace. Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide.
>
> That earthly peace which arises from love of neighbor symbolizes and results from the peace of Christ which radiates from God the Father. For by the Cross the Incarnate Son, the Prince of Peace reconciled all men with God. By thus restoring all men to the unity of one people and one body, He slew hatred in his own flesh; and after being lifted on high by his resurrection, he poured forth the spirit of love into the hearts of men.
>
> For this reason, all Christians are urgently summoned to do in love what the truth requires (Eph 4:15), and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about.
>
> Motivated by this same spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights and who resort to methods of defense which are otherwise available to weaker parties too, provided this can

be done without injury to the rights and duties of others or of the community itself.

The Council starts on what peace is not. It is neither the absence of war as the cold war clearly shows with all of its suspicion, fear and mutual hate which endangers the very foundation of true peace. It is not a balance of forces or terror which the document will go into later in its discussion (81^{AB}). Nor can the order of peace be imposed from without by any type of despotism since—as the document was at pains to show throughout the first four chapters—men must freely take upon themselves their own responsibility for their own destiny. Peace is the order of love and of justice. 78^{A} and 78^{B} are both an equilibrium explaining the role of each in the attainment of peace. First, justice. The whole of chapter III of part II was consecrated to this objective. Men are not means of profit or tools of the state. Man's dignity demands that he be freed from the slaveries of poverty and destitution from which almost two-thirds of the world's population suffers. This is an international problem of justice and one of the greatest threats to peace in the world. That is why it is not strange that the document consecrates the whole last part of this chapter to the "causes of war" among the greatest being poverty, disease, underdevelopment on an international scale. Peace is an empty mockery as long as these conditions are allowed to exist in the world. It demands that we eliminate racism and nationalism as well and look upon all men and nations in the brotherhood of the human family. This task is not accomplished once and for all, but remains a continuous task, a dynamic concept of justice for all men. Each individual, each nation must continuously re-evaluate his actions to eliminate therefrom all forms of selfishness, racism, and egoism which affect all human actions and dealings.[16] This demands a continuous victory over individual and national passion and egoism. Thus the concept of justice is viewed in a dynamic rather than a static way as something which will never be fully achieved as well as an ideal for men to continuously strive for. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it: "Patriotism transmutes individual unselfishness into national

[16] R. Bose, "Les armements, la Guerre et la Paix" *Poject Revue d'Action Populaire* (Janvier, 1966), pp. 3-11.

egoism" and it is this danger which the Christian must be continuously on his guard against.[17]

Our document sees this love communicated by the Holy Spirit working in the world even among those who do not explicitly recognize him. The document sees a relationship once again between the peace of heaven and the peace on earth. Much in the same spirit of John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris,* there is an intrinsic relationship between the two with the result that they are not two but one. Our document here makes its own the thought of the Pope here. In the Pope's mind, peace is not merely the absence of war, a negative concept; rather, it is a positive concept whose component parts are "an order founded on truth, built according to justice, verified and integrated by charity, and put into practice in practice" (M. 167). Thus, peace is a thing attainable in this world. The terrestial peace is an imperfect but real participation in the one and unique peace which is God's.[18] In this concept of peace, the absence of war is a result not the the definition of peace. Peace is not man reconciled with himself as the Marxists would have it; it is not an optimistic self-evolution of humanity, as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thought; it is not a pseudo-Christian escape into a happy indifferentism which has no effect in the world; it is not the evasive illusion of some oriental religions. It is rather an order of justice and love that is animated by a true disinterested love of all men on both an individual and international level. Our present text adds the texts from Scripture (78C) where Christ reconciles all things to himself, destroying hatred and sin by his death and resurrection. No longer any distinction of Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, ignorant or intelligent, black or white, man or woman, American or Japanese—but Christ in all, reconciling all men in a true and deep bond of fraternity. This celestial peace must make its effect on the earthly city of man. In the measure that men are penetrated with the Spirit of this same love which truly unites them into a true family, a true community which they ontologically are, they will put to death the selfishness, egoism and sin which is at the root cause of violence

[17] *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (C. Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 91.
[18] Cf. H. W. Flannery, ed., *Patterns for Peace* (Newman, 1962), pp. 301-304.

and war among men. It is this fear of each other, this mutual distrust which spirals the arms race, which causes each side to spend fortunes on war and a pittance for the works of peace and development. Catholic thought along the above lines can make a great contribution towards this type of international morality. This implies a going beyond the limits of "just war," or balance of terror (a "trap" says our document) to create cooperation and communication between all men. The rest of the chapter will be dedicated to some concrete proposals on how this can be accomplished in the modern age.

Finally (78[E]) for the first time in an official ecclesiastical document we find explicit praise and approval for the use of the method of non-violence in the attainment of just goals and rights. The Council is thinking of such examples as Nobel prize-winner, Rev. Martin Luther King. This method has now found a place in Catholic theology in so far as the person who practices such a method follows the example of the cross of Christ ("motivated by this same spirit") which was, then and now, a "stupidity" to those men who lack faith in God's ways among men. In a sense, these men and women who practice such a method from this motive can be said to have attained the height of moral perfection which other men—inclusive of many Christians—have not yet attained, either because of fear or ignorance or malice or all three. Christ accomplished the works of God by absolute non-violence and this remains our ideal in human affairs as well. And yet, this world and men within it being sinful and imperfect, as they are, this method of "non-violence" cannot in fact be practiced everywhere "without injury to the rights and duties of others or of the community itself? (Cf. 79[D] where the Council says that "war has not been rooted out of human affairs").

Thus the principle of non-violence gains a solid theological foundation in the life of the Church—at least officially—for the first time, and must now enter into Christian thought as part and parcel of its doctrine on peace in our day. It must not be understood in a political sense but in conformity with the love of men motivated by the cross of Christ.[19]

[19] P. Regamey, *Non-Violence et Conscience Chrétienne* (Ed. du Cerf, 1957), pp. 75-98.

Section I: The Avoidance of War

The council document now proceeds in a logical fashion to outline, in progressive order, the situation now at hand (which is one of revolutionary wars and conflicts)[20] and how to at least attenuate much of its violence and inhumanity. Then on to the question of how to escape total war and then finally the ideal which is that of a total proscription of all wars as a means of redressing grievances. It is this logical order which the Council will follow in the four paragraphs of this section.

> 79. In spite of the fact that recent wars have wrought physical and moral havoc on our world, war produces its devastation day by day in some part of the world. Indeed, now that every kind of weapon produced by modern science is used in war, the fierce character of warfare threatens to lead the combatants to a savagery far surpassing that of the past. Furthermore, the complexity of the modern world and the intricacy of international relations allow guerrilla warfare to be carried on by new methods of deceit and subversion. In many cases the use of terrorism is regarded as a new way to wage war.
>
> Contemplating this melancholy state of humanity, the Council wishes, above all things else, to recall the permanent binding force of universal natural law and its all-embracing principles. Man's conscience itself gives ever more emphatic voice to these principles. Therefore, actions which deliberately conflict with these same principles, as well as orders commanding such actions are criminal, and blind obedience cannot excuse those who yield to them. The most infamous among these are actions designed for the methodical extermination of an entire people, nation or ethnic minority. Such actions must be vehemently condemned as horrendous crimes. The courage of those who fearlessly and openly resist those who issue such commands merits the highest commendation.
>
> On the subject of war, quite a large number of nations have subscribed to international agreements aimed at making military activity and its consequences less inhuman. Their stipulations deal with such matters as the treatment of wounded soldiers and prisoners. Agreements of this sort must

[20] For a description, see N. S. Timasheff, *War and Revolution* (Sheed and Ward, 1965).

> be honored. Indeed they should be improved upon so that the frightfulness of war can be better and more workably held in check. All men, especially government officials and experts in these matters, are bound to do everything they can to effect these improvements. Moreover, it seems right that laws make humane provisions for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, provided however, that they agree to serve the human community in some other way.
>
> Certainly, war has not been rooted out of human affairs. As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level, governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted. Government authorities and others who share public responsibility have the duty to conduct such grave matters soberly and to protect the welfare of the people entrusted to their care. But it is one thing to undertake military action for the just defense of the people, and something else again to seek the subjugation of other nations. Nor, by the same token, does the mere fact that war has unhappily begun mean that all is fair between the warring parties.
>
> Those too who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard themselves as the agents of security and freedom of peoples. As long as they fulfill this role properly, they are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace.

The paragraph starts with a description of the various types of violence which have been introduced in the modern age; the most obvious is that of nuclear weapons which far surpass any firepower the world has ever known. There are missiles presently armed which alone contain more destructive power than all of the bombs and bullets of all previous wars *combined*.[21] But aside from this, a new-method of warfare known as "guerrilla warfare" made popular in our century by the textbooks of a Mao Tse Tung and Guevara which by selective terrorism and mobility, can defeat an army many times its size.[22] This is above all the tactic presently in use in the third world conflict by both East and West alike which leaves the peoples

[21] J. H. Herz, "International Politics and the Nuclear Dilemma' " in J. C. Bennett, ed., *Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience* (C. Scribner's, Sons, 1962), pp. 24-25.

[22] C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (Vintage, 1957), p. 56.

of these countries the real victims of both sides of the conflict. This is the situation of fact which the Council describes as a "melancholy state of humanity."

What are the things to be done to promote some sort of humanity and limitation of violence in the modern age? There are first of all some tactics which are so immoral (the document mentions genocide of various shades) that nothing can excuse them—no matter what the reasons of state (79[B]). No "blind obedience" to the nation can excuse individuals from such crimes. Implicit within the text is that soldiers are responsible for their individual actions and when they are commanded to perform such crimes, they are to refuse to obey. The list of such crimes is admittedly very small and of an outstanding nature, but the principle of individual judgment on the actions of a state by civilian and soldier alike comes out clearly in the text. The Nuremberg trials against Nazi war crimes was based squarely on this principle, namely, that individuals are indeed responsible for their actions even in time of war and even when they are commanded to perform various actions in the name of a "higher authority" of the state.

For the first time in an official ecclesiastical document (79[C]) we have an approbation for those who, for reasons of conscience, are not willing to bear arms. They ought to be excused by civil law rather than be forced to do what is against their conscience. The text makes no distinction on who such a person may be—Catholic or non-Christian—and with one stroke the ancient argument about whether a Catholic can be a conscientious objector has been resolved. It was seriously argued in the past that such a thing could not be and that a Catholic as citizen, since he lacked full information, was bound to obey or "trust" the civil authority. The argument was fallacious for the simple reason that all the facts are never in nor do we need them all to make an honest judgment in these matters. The human person is always responsible because he is a moral person with intelligence and free will. The document does not say that the reasons for C.O. must be specifically "religious" but simply appeals to "conscience" which is sufficient—no matter what the reasons which prompt him to object to bearing arms. We must remember that the document is addressed to all men and conscience is sufficient to

cover this contingency for all. This aspect of the conciliar teaching must then be seen as an attempt to humanize the effects of modern war.

Catholic tradition has not been entirely silent on this subject as witness the writings of Francisco de Vittoria in the 16th Century who elaborated some very bold theses in this respect.[23] He claimed subjects of a state could not engage in war if they knew that the war was unjust and must refuse to serve the prince. His witness went unheaded and undeveloped by later theologians and our present document, in a sense, bridges this gap of some four hundred years. Many modern democracies have already made such provisions in their laws (United States, England, Canada) and it is hoped that all nations will follow suit. In the final analysis, it is the individual person, not the state, who must take himself in hand as morally responsible in such a terrible decision. This does not mean that they are excused from making their contribution to the common good of their country. They must be willing to serve in another capacity such as the Peace Corps, Papal Volunteers, CILA, VISTA, Job Corps and many other national and international organizations which promote the spiritual and temporal good of the human family. Conscientious objection has thus found its place in theological thought of many Protestant communities.

The Council, however, does see that war as yet can be a legitimate method—even today—to protect the rights of any particular country (79^{D}). Governments have the heavy moral obligation to protect the rights of its citizens even to the recourse of arms to do so. Those who serve in the army of such a cause (79^{E}) are to be considered as doing a good work for the protection of freedom. The Council will put some very stringent limitations on the conduct of such a war (80) but the possibility of a just war today has not yet been removed from the realm of possibilities. Thus the document indirectly rejects the theory of those who say that nations no longer have the right to have recourse to arms in the legitimate defense of their rights against unjust aggression. Absolute pacifism is thus forthrightly rejected by the Council. This follows the very same thought

[23] R. Coste, *Morale Internationale: l' Humanité à la Recherche de Son Ame* (Desclée, 1964), pp. 61-63; 489-490.

of Paul VI in his talk to the UN where he said: "As long as man remains that weak, changeable and even wicked being that he often shows himself to be, defensive arms will, unfortunately, be necessary." Complete disarmament and proscription of war becomes, then, a moral ideal which all men of good will must strive for but which as yet has not arrived. The first great limitation of war in the modern world is the Council's proscription of all types of total war:

> 80. The horror and perversity of war is immensely magnified by the increase in the number of scientific weapons. For acts of war involving these weapons can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction, thus going far beyond the bounds of legitimate defense. Indeed, if the kind of instruments which can now be found in the armories of the great nations were to be employed to their fullest, an almost total and altogether reciprocal slaughter of each side by the other would follow, not to mention the widespread devastation that would take place in the world and the deadly after effects that would be spawned by the use of weapons of this kind.
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> All of these considerations compel us to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude. The men of our time must realize that they will have to give a somber reckoning of their deeds of war for the course of the future will depend greatly on the decisions they make today.
>
> With these truths in mind, this most Holy Synod makes its own the condemnations of total war already pronounced by recent popes, and issues the following declaration:
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> Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.
>
> The unique hazard of modern warfare consists in this: it provides those who possess modern scientific weapons with a kind of occasion for perpetrating just such abominations; moreover, through a certain inexorable chain of events, it can catapult men into the most atrocious decisions. That such may never happen in the future, the bishops of the whole world gathered together, beg all men, especially government officials and military leaders, to give unremitting thought to their tremendous responsibility before God and the entire human race.

What is immediately evident in this paragraph is the manner in which the Council sets the limits to total war. It does not mention

just nuclear war as being indiscriminate (which it certainly is) but any kind of war—nuclear or conventional—which has as its object the total destruction of a whole village or city or a whole area. We have here re-affirmed very clearly the principle of non-combatant immunity—else this condemnation would make no sense whatever. The mere destruction of property could not elicit such a clear condemnation. The Council has clearly reaffirmed the moral immunity of non-combatants from direct attack. This is a cardinal point in the document's discussion on war and peace since it elevates this principle into a prominence not heretofore accorded it by recent pronouncements of the magisterium. In short, and this is paramount, the justice even of defensive war is now submitted to the test of discrimination without which even defensive war in a just cause is vitiated. This would seem to reject out of hand the opinion, for instance, of William O'Brien of Georgetown University and Chairman of its Institute of World Policy who claimed that the "intentional killing of non-combatants is not immoral."

It is evident that our present document reserves its moral censure for all types of indiscriminate warfare and conduct of war. The Council has in mind the examples of recent history: Dresden, London, Hiroshima (which Paul VI referred to as "that barbaric atrocity"). Nor is it here a question of "small" wars versus "big" wars (this indeed is relative to the people and place where a war is being fought). Nor between "clean" bombs and "dirty" bombs because neither respects the principle of non-combatant immunity. This type of warfare goes beyond all reasonable defense to a simple threat of "city destruction" (these are the words of a secretary of defense) to the total obliteration of the so called "enemy". This is, in military parlance, felicitously referred to as the "overkill"—that is, that the United States and Russia have enough power to destroy each other hundreds of times over. Here we are beyond good and evil to simple absurdity. Such war could never be initiated or conducted in any fashion whatsoever by any Christian. Proportion of means to ends, principle of non-combatant immunity and objectives all become one gigantic absurdity which no "reason of state" could ever possibly justify. The Council also notes that—whatever be the final judgment on the concept of deterrence (81)—the simple possession

of such weapons is in itself a constant temptation to bring about such a crime. The dangers which come from this sector have been repeated by both religious and secular authorities: proliferation of nuclear weapons to those nations who do not as yet possess them, war by accident or by a malicious third party and above all the dangers which come by "escalation" ("a certain inexorable chain of events," says our document). This latter aspect is perhaps the greatest of all, as one country feels it has gone back as far as it can and stands ready to employ any and all means for its defense. We need not look for an example: the war in Vietnam is a perfect case in point.[24] The document continues:

> 81. Scientific weapons, to be sure, are not amassed solely for use in war. Since the defensive strength of any nation is considered to be dependent upon its capacity for immediate retaliation, this accumulation of arms, which increases each year, likewise serves, in a way heretofore unknown, as a deterrent to possible enemy attack. Many regard this as the most effective way by which peace of a sort can be maintained between nations at the present time.
>
> Whatever be the facts about this method of deterence, men should be convinced that the arms race in which an already considerable number of countries are engaged is not a sage way to preserve a steady peace, nor is the so-called balance resulting from this race a sure and authentic peace. Rather than being eliminated thereby, the causes of war are in danger of being gradually aggravated. While extravagant sums are being spent for the furnishing of ever new weapons, an adequate remedy cannot be provided for the multiple miseries afflicting the whole modern world. Disagreements between nations are not really and radically healed; on the contrary, they spread the infection to other parts of the earth. New approaches based on reformed attitudes must be taken to remove this trap and to emancipate the world from its crushing anxiety through the restoration of genuine peace.
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> Therefore, we say it again: the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity, and one which ensnares the poor to an intolerable degree. It is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready. Warned by the calamities

[24] For a good political analysis, see J. Lacouture, *Vietnam: Between Two Truces* (Vintage, 1966).

> which the human race has made possible, let us make use of the interlude granted us from above and for which we are thankful, to become more conscious of our own responsibility and to find means for resolving our disputes in a manner more worthy of man. Divine Providence urgently demands of us that we free oursleves from the age-old slavery of war. If we refuse to make this effort, we do not know where we will be led by the evil road we have set upon.

We have now arrived at the most difficult aspect of this chapter which is that of disarmament about which so much has been said in present times and with such meager results. The Council must face the problem as it exists—not as we would perhaps like it to be: that is, the "balance of terror" particularly between the Soviet Union and the United States really exists and cannot be wished nor condemned away by the Council. Its main function is not to condemn (as many private groups of Catholics wanted them to do) for this would accomplish nothing as well as antagonize the great powers. Its moral voice must be raised as regards to concrete steps that can be taken by both sides to ward off the impending disaster for mankind if this spiral is allowed to go unchecked. The nations are in danger of committing the ultimate blasphemy: destruction of the human race if ever these instruments are unleashed. What is to be done in the face of this danger?

From one point of view, men see no other possibility of defending their freedom except to having recourse to such instruments of war; and on the other hand, such instruments can only lead to total world destruction if they are ever truly employed.

The reason that men accumulate this spiraling arms, says our document, is the fact that they fear each other for a variety of reasons, some historical, ethical or ideological. Whatever be the cause of the fear, it is the fear itself which is the cause and armaments the effect and not visa-versa. We must eliminate the causes of fear and mistrust under pain of illusion, thinking that we can eliminate war by simply condemning it. We must eliminate the causes of war and the Council will now give a whole series of arguments in this regard to act as a type of "moral persuasion." By gradual and measured steps one can slowly arrive at the moral elimination of fear and distrust. How does our document develop its reasonings?

It first of all gives a clear summary of the argument of those who say that peace can be accomplished only by a "balance of terror or armaments" (81^{A}). Then it goes on (81^{B}) to show the fallaciousness of such a method for accomplishing the peace ardently hoped for. It passes no moral judgment one way or the other on this argument from deterrence. It simply says that the situation is so and that we must use the time given to us now to promote by gradual steps the peace which we all seek. We cannot rely on this balance for true peace and the document goes out of its way to call it a "trap" twice in the same paragraph. The reasons for this seem quite clear to the Council. First, the evident argument that far from reducing the very causes of war, it simply continues to accentuate and increase mutual tensions and distrust one for another. For any one anti-missile system, the other side must build an anti-anti-missile system for fear of a "first strike" capability of the enemy.[25] Secondly, the waste of enormous sums of money are being spent on arms (e.g. the United States has spent over one trillion dollars on arms since the end of World War II, enough to develop the poor nations twice over) while two thirds of the population of the entire globe is either actually hungry or insufficiently fed. It is these latter conditions (which our document earlier described) which are among the major causes of disruption and war in the world today. This building of arms then is self-defeating since it takes away funds which must be spent on those conditions which are at the source of war itself. Thirdly, this preparation for war actually settles nothing from an ideological point of view but rather spreads the infection called "the cold war" throughout the globe, thus further enervating the world's difficult condition in our century (81^{B}). Thus the document concludes that this balance which comes from armaments is a fallacious "trap" and can lead finally only to war itself. We must adopt "new attitudes" which can slowly lead us away from the abyss. We must use the time which God has given us to do exactly this and the Council will spend the last third of this chapter to do precisely this. We must free ourselves from this "slavery" which has held man captive from the very beginning of his recorded history

25 T. C. Schelling and M. H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (The Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), pp. 4-5.

and especially, as we saw, at this critical juncture of history where man must either change this ancient attitude or be in grave danger of total loss of the human family (81[c]). The object of the Council is truly radical but then humanity has no real choice in the matter. We have here an indirect rebuke to all those who cling to the notion that the safest means of peace in our day is that of reliance on a balance of arms in any of its forms.

It is clear that the Church's doctrine here excludes absolute pacifism as an obligation on all Christians. Peace, says the Council, is always precarious since the roots of war are in the very souls of men: egotistical passions and pride. The Christian obligation is clear in this imperfect world where we can have but a "certain peace" (*pax quaedam*).

The Christian must judge in terms of moral order those concrete actions of his government for which, in a democracy, he is directly responsible. This is not simply a privilege but a grave responsibility since many actions of government are based not on moral principle, but on "practical and strategic" considerations.

To attempt such judgments requires not only a knowledge of twentieth-century life but for the Catholic it also requires a knowledge of the social teachings of his Church. The latter have much to say on the problem of peace and, within that generic concept, the constitutive elements which go to make up peace: human and civil rights, economic justice, equitable trade agreements, private property, the commonweal, etc. The Catholic who sincerely seeks to promote peace must start in these areas. The "uninvolved Catholic" is indeed an evangelical freak of the very first order, if not, in a sense, a baptized pagan.

On the other hand, we must, as Christians and as men, recognize the world as it is and exists, in 1966. Our aim must be that of Christ himself: peace and justice among men. It is an aim which each person, in his own way and manner, must seriously endeavor to bring about, under the gravest moral obligations.

This ideal, outlined in the social teachings of the Church, will always be imperfectly realized on earth; but even though this tension between the real and the ideal will always exist within the Christian community, we cannot get rid of it by opting for one or the

other. That is why the Pope, in the same speech to the UN, could indicate that it was not yet possible for nations to drop defensive weapons from their hands. But at least (and here we have the whole plea from Pius XII to Paul VI and Vatican II on the moral obligation of mutual and regulated disarmament) the offensive weapons of massive destruction could slowly be eliminated.

All men must, with great sorrow, admit that in the imperfect world in which we live, because of the malice or stupidity (or both) of some men (who do not all live in the East), the nations of the world must be ready—indeed they are obliged—to defend themselves from unjust attacks, internally and externally. As a Christian, man cannot stand aside and still reflect love while his neighbor is pummeled, robbed or murdered. Man must always do what is in his power to ward off injustice. That is what Paul VI meant recently when he said that his attitude was not one of sentimental pacifism which ignores the relative rights of whole peoples.

Does this exclude, then, a legitimate Catholic pacifism? I think not. We have already mentioned the tension which must exist between the ideal of peace and its sometimes agonizing implementations in an imperfect world. There is room also, then, in the Church for certain heroic and gifted men and women who are chosen by the Holy Spirit to bear special witness to non-violence—which, in a very special way, will be the condition of the final eschatological kingdom of Christ. These people are, as it were, reminders of the peace Christ wishes to pervade the community of man—in much the same way religious, by their vows, serve as reminders of the kingdom which is imperfectly present even here below, but whose full efflorescense will come only with the final establishment of Christ's kingdom.

So too with the Catholic pacifist. His vocation is not—and, as long as we remain in this imperfect world, it will not be—the vocation of the majority of Christians. But there are a few chosen by the Spirit, from the community and for the community, to bear this special witness.

The final peace and nonviolence of Christ's kingdom will always remain an ideal for all Christians to pursue, even if they are morally certain that it can never be fully achieved here below. Those who bear witness to this may be bishops (Pope John, Archbishop

Roberts), priests (Daniel Berrigan), or laymen (Dorothy Day). Christ will show them "what [they] must suffer for [his] name's sake" (Acts 9:16). We need these people in our midst to remind us always of our ideal of peace and non-violence, to remind us that men's ways are not God's ways and that God is not the God of war but of peace and brotherhood.

It is futile to think that the Catholic pacifist—chosen by the Spirit for this vocation of intense suffering and even rejection on the part of these—alas—Christians who confuse God with their nationalistic aspirations—will be able by his efforts to banish war forever. There is no assurance whatsoever from divine revelation that war will disappear until, perhaps, there is no viable earth from which to disappear. After all, Christ, the perfect witness of the Father among men, never succeeded in converting the world—not even a good part of it. But continuous witness he was, even to the "failure" of the Cross.

With the Catholic pacifist, the Christian must hope that peace is a possibility, and he must work for it optimistically. For if the Christian were only to hope for what man can do, he might indeed despair. But he has no such right, of course, for "what is impossible to men is possible to God."

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