# A World Without Government

*(Editor's Note: Milton Mayer's essay, "A World Without Government," appeared in the March/April, 1983, issue of this magazine. Mr. Mayer argued that world peace is not possible without world government, but that world government seems impossible to achieve. A dialogue examining that argument was held at the Center. Here is a report of that dialogue, beginning with a statement by Mr. Mayer.)*

**MILTON MAYER** *(Writer and lecturer; consultant of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions)*: ***E pluribus unum.*** The most ancient of social doctrines, philosophically rooted in Athens, politically in Rome, and theologically in the church universal, established on the rock of Scripture, one flock, one shepherd. It was formulated in innocent detail in 1693, when William Penn proposed a government of Europe, to do away with war, which he found offensive to God, and with economic injustice, which he saw as the cause of war. Penn's Diet of Europe was a scheme of fair representation, designed to keep great powers from its domination. The Diet of Europe was to govern by secret ballot. It was to have an elaborate rotation of officers. And it was to be housed in a circular chamber with multiple doors, so that its members could enter from all directions without precedence. Neither the doctrine nor the practice of supranational government has made much progress since Penn's time. The most powerful nation on earth refused to join the League of Nations after the First World War. And the two most powerful nations on earth have made an effective mockery of the United Nations.

We have before us now an extremely dubious proportion. It asserts that the fifty states are to the United States as the 157 nation-states are to the world. The fifty states are rapidly dissolving into the nation. One month ago today, the Supreme Court drove yet another nail into the coffin of states' rights when it held that Wyoming may not retire its employees below the federal statutory age of seventy. The fifty states are, in all common sense, no more than administrative units, debarred from the exercise of either sovereignty or responsibility. They are administrative units of inferior jurisdiction in which the myth of heterogeneity is fading fast, while television, instead of diffusing communication, concentrates and homogenizes it. The new federalism of Ronald Reagan is dead in the womb, the states cannot begin to support the programs he

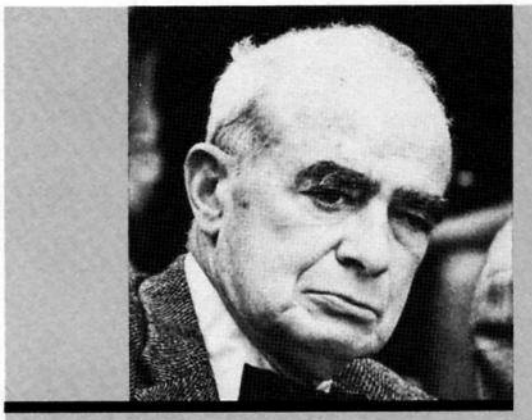
wishes on them, and will not try. In any case, the programs are, all of them, federal in nature.

The analogy with the 157 nation-states fails because the nation-states are as nationalistic as ever, and in many areas, more so. Nationalism yields, of course, to regional alliances — sometimes vast regional alliances — for the purpose of war. And war is as nonideological today as it was in 1914. I draw your attention to the fact that there is in this country no trace of the McCarthyite anti-Communism that had the country by the throat in the nineteen-fifties. The present great conflict is couched at every level in the nationalistic terms of the United States against Russia.

The object all sublime and imperative is to achieve for the world the unification that technology imposes on the fifty American states, and will inexorably impose in a hundred years, or five hundred, or a thousand, on the whole world. We must have a world state or perish in nuclear war. The proposition that war can be averted by international treaty is of course a pipe dream for nations that are divided by deep mistrust and by still deeper hostility. Treaties are viable as long as each of the high contracting parties finds them advantageous and no longer.

In the present disconsoling situation we have it on the highest secular authority that the Soviet Union is an evil empire. We have it further that the United States and the Soviet Union are "locked in a struggle between good and evil." We have it still further that it is better that children die now, I am quoting, "still believing in God than have them grow up under Communism, and one day die no longer believing in God." Our elderly President woud rather see our children dead than red.

Now, Mr. Reagan is a great kidder, and he may simply be kidding. But if there's anything at all serious about this sort of gross opprobrium, we see at once that there is no imaginable hope that negotiations between their empire and ours will eventuate in anything more than an inflammable scrap of paper, if that. It is metaphysically impermissible for good and evil to coexist peacefully. They are not negotiable commodities in Geneva, or anywhere else. Even if Mr. Reagan is kidding, the principle abides that two peoples who vilify each other in the most extravagant and persistent manner, who commit the terrible Christian heresy of monopolizing evil in one another, are always locked in mortal combat. One of them must die. In the atomic age, both must die.



*World government is clearly further away than it was thirty-five years ago.*

MILTON MAYER

Let us turn from Mr. Reagan, and his theological, religious, and moral mumbo jumbo in dividing people into the saved and the damned on the basis of their place of residence. Let us turn to the proposition that it will take nothing less than world government to save the race from fiery extinction. I take it that we may, in this company, dismiss deterrence as a will-o'-the-wisp, valid only as long as a precise balance of power is maintained or is believed to be maintained. Men who see the world locked in a struggle between good and evil should, and will, strike as soon as they can achieve a favorable balance of such magnitude as to preclude their opponents striking back. As for the question of a first strike in atomic war, that question was, as Henry Commager says, answered once and for all, and twice and for all, on August 6 and August 9, 1945.

The present presumed deterrent power of mutual assured destruction may persist for another month, another six weeks, another year, another decade. It will, of course, have ended in the not-too-distant future, if Mr. Reagan's new *Star Wars* strategy enables the United States to strike at the Soviet Union with impunity.

Meanwhile the high price of deterrence is not

confined to the resources which are poured into weaponry with absolute abandon, while half the world is hungry and a fourth of it is starving. The higher price of deterrence is the spiritual and emotional havoc it wreaks everywhere, beginning here. There is nothing anybody else can do to us that we are not doing to ourselves. Rome simply declined and fell.

World government is clearly further away than it was thirty-five years ago. It is no longer even talked about. The revision of the United Nations charter, which preserves intact the sovereignty of its members, each and several, has never taken place. Nobody now suggests that that charter revision ever will take place.

Robert Maynard Hutchins was an earnest advocate of world government early and late. He preached it before Hiroshima. After Hiroshima, he said we had to have it or die. He was not optimistic. He was not optimistic because he knew that it was not law but community that holds people together. The law has an ancillary and a tutelary role. The law is a teacher and a testament. It is a testament to community. The law, were it to place a policeman at the side of every citizen, would not hold the City of Santa Barbara together for ten minutes. What holds the City of Santa Barbara together is the willingness of its citizens to live in community. Without community as its cornerstone, it seems more than probable that the world state would almost immediately be engulfed in world civil war, ending in world tyranny, a more melancholy prospect than the world anarchy we have enjoyed until now.

After Hiroshima, Hutchins urged that the whole engine of education be directed toward the creation of community. He shifted his major focus from adolescent to adult education, because he foresaw that the Russians would have the atomic bomb within five years. They had it in four. There was no time left to teach community to the rising generation. It had to be taught to the already risen.

Hutchins' plea went unheeded, Hutchins' plea went unheard. Thirty-eight dreadful years later, we can only take a leaf from his book. Quoting Charles the Bold, or William the Silent — he could never remember which — he said, "It is not necessary to hope in order to undertake, or to succeed in order to persevere."

I put it to you that the confidence that began with the Renaissance ended somewhere around the first massive use of the rapid-fire gun at Verdun and the Somme. It persisted for another few years in an America far from the ruins of Europe. It exists no longer. The characteristic sentiment of the present age is the forlorn hope that things will grow worse no faster than they are growing worse now.

Francis Bacon was mortally wrong. Knowledge isn't power, knowledge is terror. Terror born of knowledge immobilizes the human race. It cannot in its terror contemplate the desperate choice between the world state built upon community and the certainty of agonized extinction in view of the fact that men or nations within reach of each other, and more or less evenly matched, will go to war when their differences are sufficiently critical and there is no sense of community, no judge to render judgment, no legislature to codify that judgment, and no single executive to enforce it.

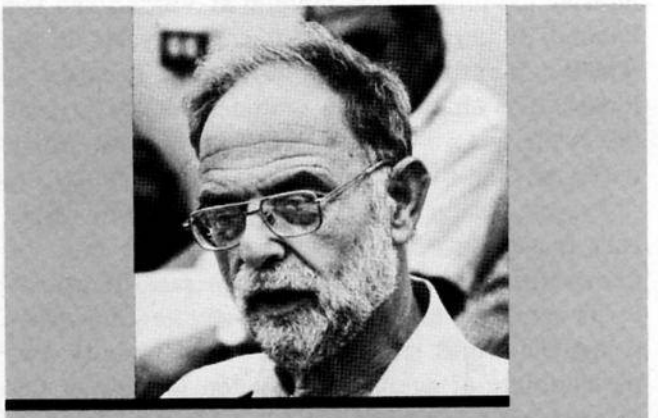
Our dilemma may be seen as classically tragic, confronted as we are with alternative choices, neither of which we can abide. Certainly the rich nations will not foreseeably be willing to pay the cost of a just world government with a progressive income tax. And the poor nations, which are even more chauvinistic than the rich, will resist it for fear of being crushed and recolonialized.

The preservation of peace appears to be impossible without world government. And world government appears to be impossible of achievement in the time that is likely left us. I submit — and none too tentatively — that we simply cannot get there from here.

## *Discussion*

**LEWIS H. GANN** *(Senior Fellow, the Hoover Institution, Stanford, California)*: World government, of course, will not necessarily eliminate conflict. The civil wars fought in the United States, in Nigeria, and in Spain were the bloodiest conflicts that these three nations have ever engaged in.

Also, we ought to consider the place of ideology. It is not merely a conflict between Americans and Russians; it is also a conflict between differing political philosophies. The Soviet Union is run by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which



*If the goal is peace, ideological differences must be addressed.*

LEWIS GANN

considers that while there can be peaceful coexistence between state systems, there cannot be peaceful coexistence between social systems; that, on the contrary, détente is a means of intensifying the international class struggle. So if your goal is international peace, you would certainly have to address these ideological differences as well.

Another criticism: you assume a political and moral symmetry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The latter is run by Gulag archipelagos; the former is not. The latter is marked by extensive emigration; our system is marked by extensive immigration.

Finally, your pessimistic accusation that the United States would certainly plan a first strike, given a destabilization in the means of warfare, is not borne out by the fact that when the Americans had a monopoly of nuclear weapons in the period immediately following World War II, they did not use those weapons.

**MAYER:** The question of political and moral symmetry, or lack of it, between the United States and the U.S.S.R. is one I cannot possibly answer. I am not a very good judge in my own case. Aristotle said that I wouldn't be, and I am not. I like it pretty well here. I have been to Russia, I liked it pretty well there. I like it better here. But I am not a very good judge in my own case. Politically Russia is a much more backward society than ours is. Economically, it's a much more just society than ours is, I think. I suppose, partly because of my native predilection and my own bias, I prefer the politically more advanced society, and prefer to put up with the horrendous economic injustice here.

As to ideological differences and the role that they play in our present situation, I am still hung up on what I take to be the incontrovertible fact that there is no trace of the horrifying phenomenon of McCarthyism in this country today; no sign or hint of it, apart from what Mr. Reagan reads in the *Reader's Digest*. I don't know if I am any more than just bewildered by that fact. But I take it that it is a self-evident fact.

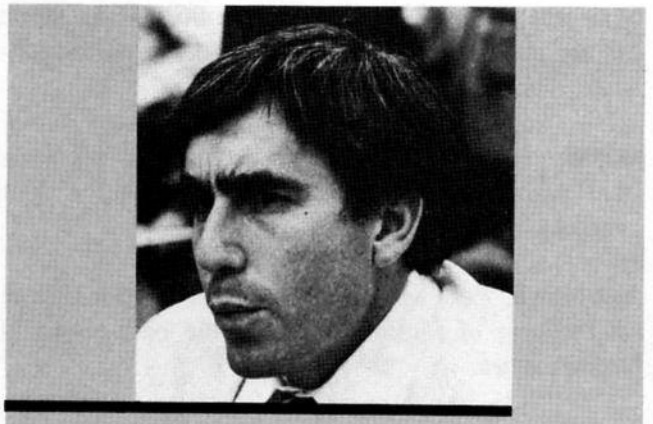
**DAVID KRIEGER** *(Director, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara, California)*: If there is an asymmetry, we are the ones who are to be held more accountable, because we have a democratic government. American citizens have some voice in the policy of their nation. Right now, our so-called defense policy is based upon the threat of murdering hundreds of millions of people. That isn't defense. It is no more and no less than a threat of massive destruction of human life. It's not that we aim exclusively at military or strategic targets. We aim our arsenal at large masses of individuals who live in cities.

We who live in a democratic society could do something to change this situation. The people in the Soviet Union do not have the same opportunity.

What Mr. Mayer is getting at is that nuclear weapons have created the imperative to change in our present world. We cannot go on indefinitely with a policy of deterrence. That policy will break down at some point in time. It is not useful to cite that short period of time when we alone had nuclear weapons and refrained from using them. The situation has changed. If either side thought it was invulnerable, the temptation would be strong to take advantage of that.

There has been an enormous abdication of moral and political responsibility in our country by not taking a leadership role and pulling back from the brink of destruction.

**MAYER:** There is a point of fact here. Mr. Gann said the Americans did not use the atomic bomb when



*There has been an enormous abdication of moral and political responsibility in the United States.*

DAVID KRIEGER

they had a nuclear monopoly. My recollection is that they did use it when they had a monopoly on it. Tell me if I'm wrong.

**GANN:** I meant against the Soviet Union.

**MAYER:** Against our ally? The Soviet Union was our ally.

**GANN:** I am talking about the period *after* the end of the war against Japan, when the Americans, according to many of their critics, started the cold war. Between 1945 and the early nineteen-sixties, the Americans had first-strike advantage against the Soviet Union without fear of retaliation. Western Europe would have been hit, but the United States, up until probably the late nineteen-fifties, would not have been hit.

**MAYER:** But you're talking now about our not using the bomb against the nation that had so recently been our glorious ally. I follow you.

**GANN:** I am establishing the fact that the Americans did not use the atomic bomb against the Soviet Union at a time when the Americans alone had the possibility of striking without being struck.

**MAYER:** That was between 1945 and September of 1949. I can't see our congratulating ourselves for not having atom-bombed the Soviet Union after 1945, when we had a monopoly of the bomb.

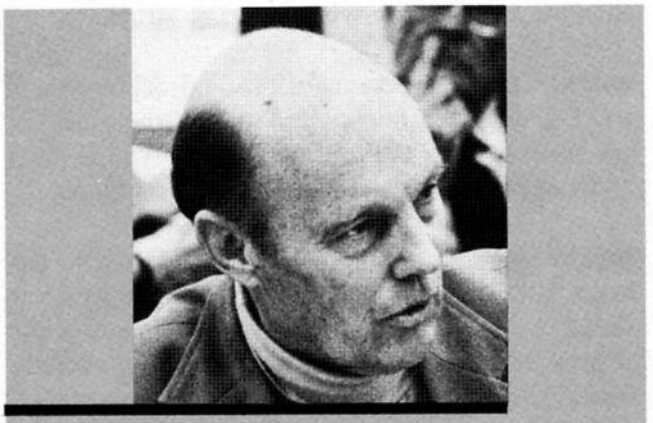
**ROBERT WESSON** *(Professor of Political Science, University of California at Santa Barbara; Senior Research Fellow, the Hoover Institution, Stanford, California)*: For at least a decade, we were in a cold war with the Soviet Union and we did not use these weapons. Whereas you say that now in an extremely dangerous situation, if we got some advantage, we would immediately annihilate that country. That is carrying things a little far.

I can't leave unmentioned the statement that there is a great deal of economic justice in the Soviet Union. If you look at the real facts of Soviet life, you will find more economic inequality in the Soviet Union than in the United States. I say that unequivocally. That is on top of a tremendous inequality of privilege. For example, some people receive all kinds of material; some people can see pornographic movies, which are denied to others; some people can see Westerns, when others can't. There is an effective nobility of privilege in the Soviet Union which does not exist in the United States.

Also, there is a fundamental error here in equating national sovereignty with the threat of war. In the Western world, there is national sovereignty, freedom, and so on. There is no serious quarrel between any two democratic countries. And there is no threat in the world of any two democratic countries throwing atomic bombs at each other. So, national sovereignty per se is not the cause of this tremendous danger.

The cause of the danger, as you made clear, is ideological, it is fear based upon different social forms, and the conviction on both sides that these forms are incompatible.

The obvious answer, if the trouble is not national sovereignty, is to build community, as Hutchins said. The answer to this problem is not a world government, which is totally impossible, a pipe dream if there ever was one, but world community. If we can bring peoples together, if we can develop common values in the world — and these, to a considerable extent, would have to include freedom, and respect for people — then there is no need for world government. World government would simply



*Not world government, but world community, is the answer.*

ROBERT WESSON

be a disastrous bureaucratic mess, and, in all probability, would lead to world tyranny. The existence of independent nations is important, if not essential, to maintain freedom, the ability to think and to progress in the future of civilization.

**MAYER:** A question of fact, again, this time with reference to Hutchins. I quote him, as of August 12, 1945, six days after the bomb dropped on Hiroshima: "Up until last Monday" — the day of Hiroshima — "I must confess that I did not have much hope for a world state. I believed that no moral basis for it existed, and that we had no world conscience and no sense of world community sufficient to keep a world state together. But the alternatives now seem clear. One is world suicide. Another is agreement among sovereign states to refrain from using the bomb. This agreement will not be effective. The only hope, therefore, of abolishing war is through the monopoly of atomic force by world organization."

**DONALD McDONALD** *(Editor of* The Center Magazine*)*: What in a world community will prevent people from engaging in civil war, from breaking the law, the unwritten law — the unwritten constitution, if you will — of this world community except some higher authority than that of the individual nation-state members?

**MAYER:** I would say that community is precisely that association of people which precludes their wanting to break the law.

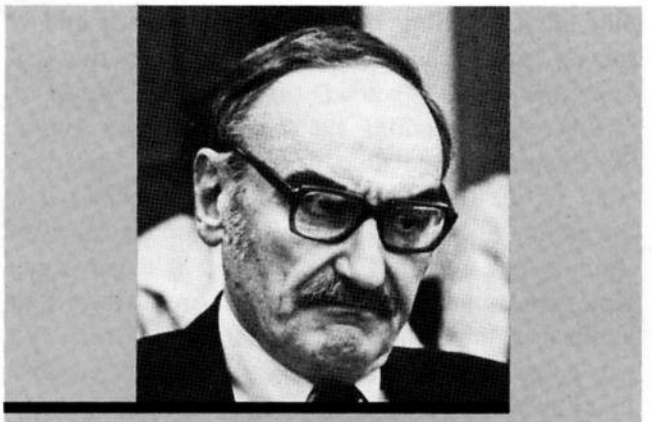
**McDONALD:** You will always have aberrations, even in the best of families, even in the best of world communities.

**JOACHIM REMAK** *(Professor and Chairman, Department of History, University of California at Santa Barbara)*: I'd like to get away from this question of who's more moral, they or we. In this context, that isn't really valuable. If there's a war in three years, it may not be caused by a clash of social systems. It may be over fishing rights in the Falklands. That's what scares me and some other people so much. This is something which did not start with the atomic bomb. It started in 1914 when there was an utter disproportion between means and ends. The wars were between similar states and similar systems.

Mr. Gann's question remains: Suppose we do get a world state, what will it net us? There have been civil wars in Nigeria, in Spain, in the United States. In Switzerland, where people of different languages live with a sense of community, there was a bitter civil war in the eighteen-forties over the issue of states' rights versus federal rights.

**MAYER:** Trying to look at this extremely narrowly, and recognizing that we are not going to have a world state or an American state, for that matter, without first achieving a high degree of community on which to build that state, it would seem to be self-evident that the situation with regard to atomic weaponry in particular and weaponry in general is such that there is no possibility of the weaponry being controlled, even with moderately good intentions. So that if we were to say we can go only this far as of 1983 in the direction of world government, namely, to transfer to a world organization with teeth exclusive sovereignty over the production, use, and deployment of nuclear devices, that might help move us in the direction of world law, even without community.

But what we are up against now is that there is no way for this military power to be controlled. There's a fair issue. It's one we might consider. The



*What scares me is the war that may begin over fishing rights in the Falklands.*

JOACHIM REMAK

balance of power, or, as Mr. Churchill used to call it, the balance of terror, which apparently alone keeps the peace, given what Mr. Reagan is saying about the Russians, and I suppose what many Russians who haven't read Dostoevsky are saying about the Americans, this balance of power would not seem to be adequate to prevent an explosion.

We are talking now about an explosion. The Second World War did not begin with atomic weapons, but it ended with atomic weapons. Presumably, the next one will begin with nuclear weapons. Or it will begin with a few potshots over fishing rights in the Falklands and will rapidly escalate.

Is there any way to achieve control over weaponry in general, and over nuclear weaponry in particular, without an imbalance of power as immense as the one that keeps the Luxembourgians from attacking the Americans? Is an actual balance, or supposed balance, an adequate safeguard against the explosion?

**RICHARD HARRIS** *(President, United Nations Association, Santa Barbara, California)*: In your essay in *The Center Magazine*, you refer to the United Nations as toothless. But that same issue of the magazine had a quote from Robert Muller of the United Nations, in which he says, "I am more enthusiastic than ever about the United Nations. Nothing is more important for our future than public understanding and support for the world's first universal organization."

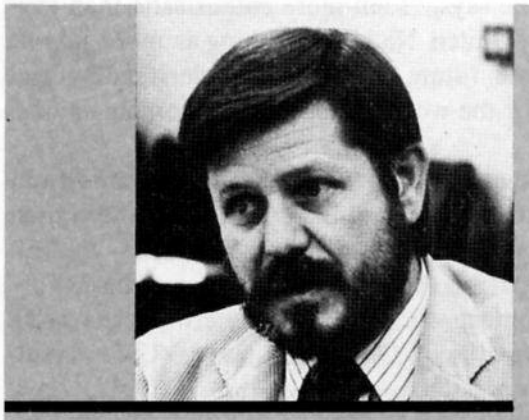
**MAYER:** I share the writer's optimism and enthusiasm with reference to a great many aspects of the United Nations. When I say the UN is toothless, I mean it is toothless in the context that we are discussing, in that context where the issues between the great powers are critical. On such issues, the UN is voiceless, and necessarily so.

**HARRIS:** I recently talked with retired Admiral Gene La Rocque at the Center for Defense Information in Washington. As long as we have such a center alongside the Department of Defense, we have a kind of balance, we have powerful spokespersons who are opposed to our getting involved in a nuclear holocaust.

**MAYER:** I would like to join in your optimism. My difficulty is that I pick up this morning's paper, and I discover that Mr. Reagan has met with Republican leaders on the House Budget Committee, and he told them, when I've got access to information that the people don't have, I have a duty to protect the national security. The people you are talking about, like retired Admiral La Rocque, do not have the information that nobody but Mr. Reagan has. Therefore, they, not to mention the rest of us, are in an extremely weak position. When a man talks like this, I can't imagine that he can think of himself as less than having to play God, because only he has the information. We have been hearing at this table that this is a free country and that we are a free people. But Mr. Reagan tells us that only he has the information on which the extinction of the human race might well turn.

**GANN:** One reason for optimism is that while France and Britain have had a history of long and bloody wars, and although both are nuclear powers, no one really expects an Anglo-French nuclear war today. That has nothing to do with the United Nations. It is linked to a more local sense of community. Similarly, nobody really expects a Franco-German war today, even though both nations have had a long history of bloody and bitter wars.

As regards the United Nations, I am not aware of any war that the United Nations has been able to stop. I am not just talking about conflicts among



*Perhaps nations fear one another because of the absence of a sense of community.*

PETER HASLUND

the superpowers. I am talking, about, say, three Indo-Pakistani wars.

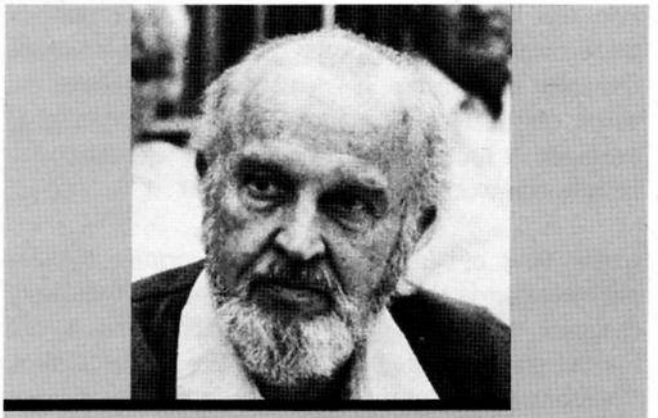
**PETER HASLUND** *(Professor of Political Science, Santa Barbara City College)*: Mr. Mayer, presumably that which leads you to your present concern about the world blowing itself up — and many of us share that concern — is that nations arm themselves because they fear one another. Perhaps the reason that they fear one another has to do with the absence of that sense of community that you talked about. There are many different types of community. One might say that Nazi Germany had a sense of community, but of the wrong kind. I am concerned about the development of community at the local level, which might prove ultimately to displace the need for the kind of community that you are searching for at a world level. It would create an environment that would make the kinds of weapons we are speaking about not necessary.

**MAYER:** To focus on the idea of community, to the extent that we have a community in the United States, it would seem to require a modicum of common principle and aspiration, commonly practiced in greater or less degree. It would require a common understanding of the nature of man and of society, so much so that in 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court decided the case of *Brown v. Board of Education,* the people of the United States were indeed able to comprehend that decision. At least they were able to comprehend it to the point where they did not rise up in rebellion against it. I cite that case because if there is one issue about community which is more divisive than another in this country, it is the issue of race. We can point optimistically to the stupendous progress that has been made against racism since *Brown.* We can cite the civil rights and voting rights acts that followed *Brown.* And we can see that there really is such a thing as a minimal sort of sentiment that does hold society together, keeps it from exploding. I think that in 1954 there were people in the South — and not only in the South — who must have regarded the Supreme Court, that unanimous Court in *Brown,* as an evil empire, or as the agency of an evil empire; who saw the struggle to maintain racism in public education as a struggle between good and evil, the good being on the side of those who wished to maintain racism. There certainly were such people; there may have been masses of such people. But they were not massive enough, or sure enough of themselves, or so deprived of a sense of community, that they would take up arms to oppose the consequences of the Court's decision.

**HALLOCK HOFFMAN** *(Vice-President, Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara, California)*: But the proposition you are making about community is that it is possible and workable within a political entity like the United States, where there is a monopoly of the control of the atom bombs. As your old mentor and mine, Robert Hutchins, used to say, if the Greeks had had the atom bomb at the time of their wars, they would have used it. I expect that if the white people in the South, or even those in the south of Chicago, had had the atom bomb at the time of the 1954 Court decision, they would have been tempted to use it.

**MAYER:** In that case, that would have been evidence that there wasn't enough community to hold the society together.

**HOFFMAN:** That's very true. It seems to me that a lot of our conversation has been irrelevant to your principal point, which is that we are on a ship that is sinking. We are in a confrontation from which



*I can't imagine the United States as a community if each state had its own army.*

HALLOCK HOFFMAN

there is no way out, except to get the major weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of everybody and into some kind of control system that will prohibit their use. I can't imagine a world community that would be a real community. I can't imagine the United States as a community if each individual state had its own army equipped with atom bombs. I don't think we would be united very long.

**GANN:** I can foresee one solution, a brutal one, but a practicable one. It is a Soviet-American condominium. There would be respective spheres of influence based on the assumption of the Bandung Conference formula: peaceful coexistence between social systems. You persecute your Poles; we persecute our Salvadorans. You don't interfere with us; we don't interfere with you. That is a workable system. I do not say it is a moral system. But the only alternative seems to me empire. The Soviets have successfully achieved that in Eastern Europe; there is no national warfare in Eastern Europe between Poles and Germans, Bulgarians and Yugoslavs, Hungarians and Romanians. Soviet imperial authority prevents it. That is the one great talking point the Soviets could use, although of course they don't.

**HOFFMAN:** The problem with that is that it is the same kind of truce we have now between the United States and Russia.

**GANN:** It would be more than that. For example, when Arabs and Israelis decide to fight a small local war with nuclear weapons, both superpowers would step in and stop it.

**HOFFMAN:** It still seems to me to be a truce, except that you are talking about a more explicit statement of the conditions under which the truce would be maintained. The problem with it is that it has no built-in durability.

**GANN:** Unfortunately condominium will not work as long as the Soviet Union sees itself not merely as a military power, but as a world missionary power, a church universal.

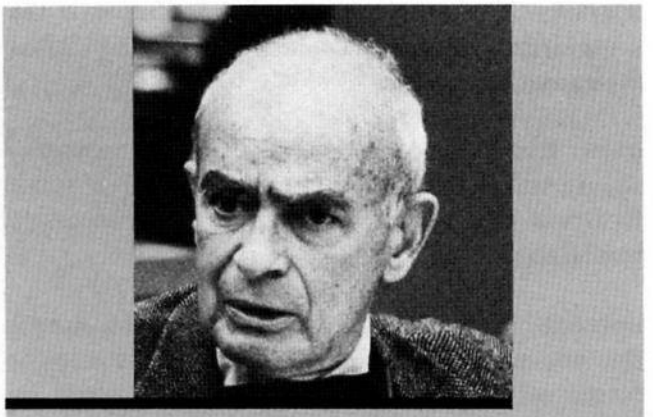
**REMAK:** I want to suggest something short of dividing the world with the Russians. When all is said and done, nuclear weapons are very stupid. What do you gain by bombing? When the Russian ambassador called on Charles de Gaulle sometime in the nineteen-sixties with a strong protest about some issue, the ambassador pointed out that, after all, Russia had the bomb. De Gaulle said, "Very well, we'll be dead and so will you." So the nuclear bomb is a dumb weapon. It's like poison gas. Maybe we'll have enough sense not to use it. What do we gain from it, if they are dead and we are dead?

**MAYER:** In the view of some people, that alone is a gain.

**REMAK:** You're taking Mr. Reagan's language too seriously.

**MAYER:** I had a little kid — I still have a little kid, although he's about eight feet tall now — who was in trouble at school. He was in the first or second or third grade, and he was going to sock another guy. I said, but the other guy is bigger than you; he'll kill you. My kid said, I don't care if he kills me, I'm going to sock him anyway. So, they're dead, and we're dead. And there are people who are willing to be dead rather than red. And others, I am sure, are willing to be dead rather than red, white, and blue.

**REMAK:** I am assuming we are voting for adults for



*There is no such thing as a fail-safe device to prevent an accidental war.*
MILTON MAYER

office, all respect to your kid.

**PETER MERKL** *(Professor of Political Science, University of California at Santa Barbara)*: The word "community" is used to cover such a wide range of phenomena. It's a different kind of community when we meet our neighbors face to face, than the world community in which there are a few other powers, far away, and we have to get along with them, otherwise they will throw bombs at us. The latter community rests on a much different kind of interaction.

**MAYER:** There are three or four nations whose people feel that the rest of the world is outer darkness. Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, Japan was such a nation. To the Japanese the rest of the world was outer darkness. The Russians are such a people today. Their area is so vast, they are so untraveled outside of their own country, that to them China simply cannot be imagined as being a part of their world. The Chinese are another such people. The Texans are a third. And the Americans are a fourth.

I am fairly serious here. When we tried to persuade my father-in-law in his old age to come to Europe with us — he'd never been anywhere outside the United States — he said, "Ain't nobody there owes me any money." This in itself contains the seeds of disaster. It is easy for us to believe the worst of the Russians, including the Russian government. It must be just as easy for the Russians to believe the worst of us.

**GANN:** One of the difficulties concerning nuclear proliferation is that technology is international and dynamic. Technology of the highest kind is not limited to the United States and the Soviet Union. Weapons alone do not cause war, otherwise France and Britain might have settled their differences by nuclear exchange, which they are not going to do. There are, however, political differences. It is not simply a question of Russians being ignorantly chauvinistic about Americans or Americans being ignorantly chauvinistic about Russians. The Soviet Union is not Russia. The Soviet Union is a political system based on the rule of a Marxist-Leninist party, built upon the principles of democratic centralism and the principles of world revolution. This provides a sense of legitimacy to the rulers. It also provides a guide to action. One cannot simply discount this as "Fourth of July" rhetoric.

If we were ever going to agree with the Soviet Union on a workable condominium, the Russians would have to modify their ideology, their sense that their system is all-embracing, omnipotent, the universal model. And in fact I think we would be more likely to be able to agree with a Russian military regime of a nonideological kind than a Communist regime of the present kind.

**MAYER:** We have not discussed the possibility, which I take it we all recognize as real, of nuclear war by accident. We are learning more about the additional Three Mile Islands that have occurred other than the one that was so spectacularly revealed. We also see that there is no such thing as a fail-safe device to prevent an accidental war, there is no such thing as a fail-safe device to prevent a kind of historical accident or an outburst of violence which could almost instantaneously escalate, as the assassination at Sarajevo did in 1914. As for the possibility of global populism on the nuclear war issue, if there can be such a thing, presumably it would occur in a country like ours first, and in a country like the Soviet Union last, where the citizens simply do not have a history and historical background of political self-expression.

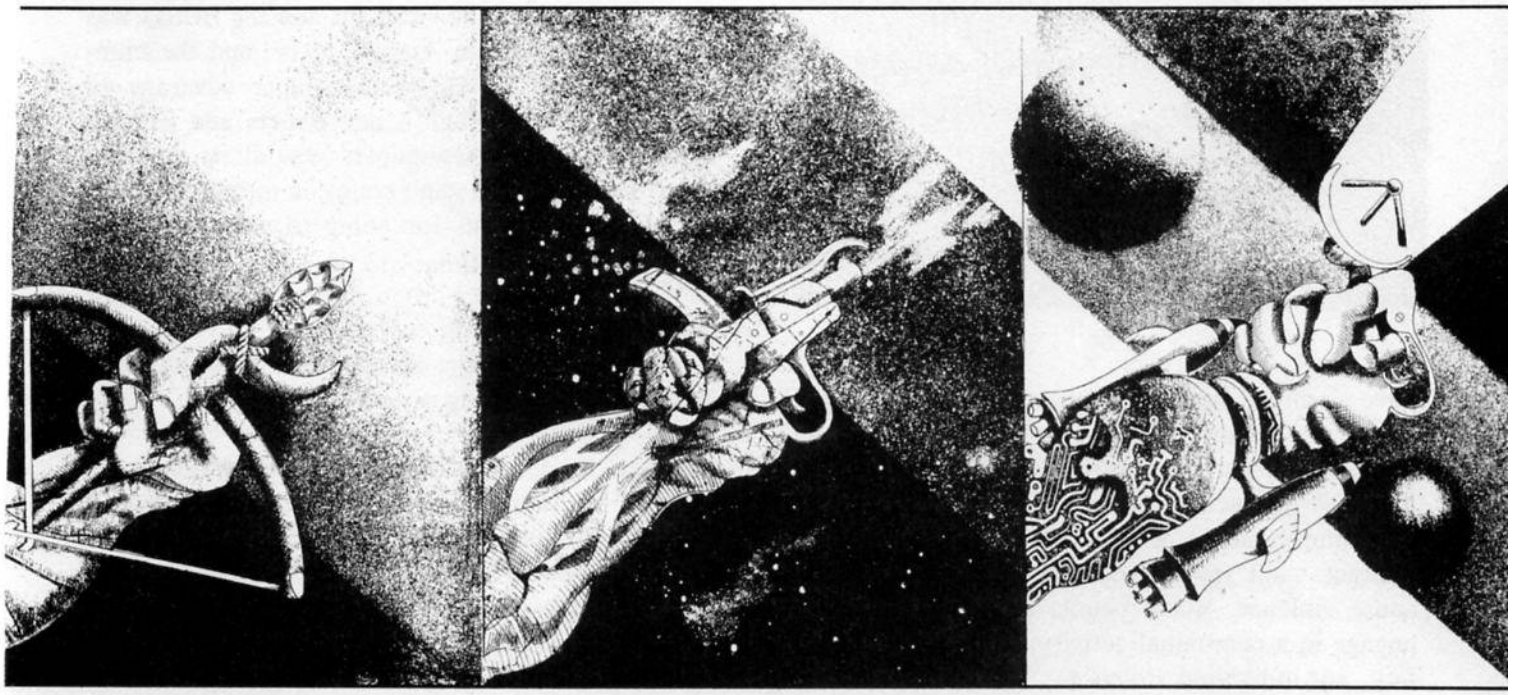
But the repository of nuclear weaponry is so re-

mote from the possibility of popular demonstration in America that we cannot figure out any way to reach it. This madness seems to have a life of its own.

**GANN:** The assumption that the Russian people are a race of serfs or slaves who are unused to democratic ideas is, of course, one that requires reconsideration. In 1917, the February revolution overthrew the Czarist regime, and established a liberal regime. In October, 1917, this regime, which was

freedom of trade unionism, you name it. They were suppressed. I am afraid I personally would not have the courage to lead a peace movement in the Soviet Union. I happen to be a native-born coward.

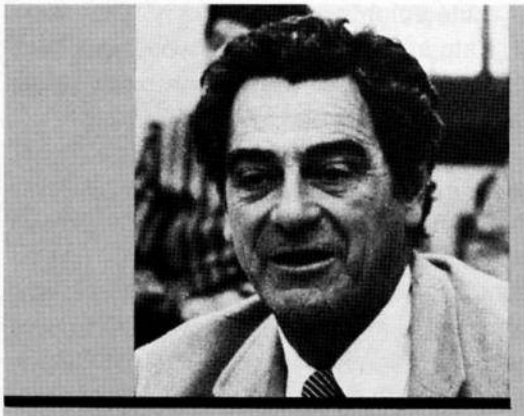
**ALEXANDER DE CONDE** *(Professor of History, University of California at Santa Barbara)*: The theme or the thesis of your paper, Mr. Mayer, is that peace is impossible without world government. And then Mr. Gann commented that you could have government and still have civil wars. I suggest that your thesis



about to supervise the election of a national assembly, was overthrown by a putsch on the part of the Communist Party. In 1921, the Soviet fleet at Kronstadt rose in rebellion against what the sailors regarded as the pretensions of the new class. In social terms, the Russian fleet represented the skilled Russian working class, boilermakers, platemakers, electricians. What kind of demands did these skilled workers, who were supposed to be ignorant of Western democracy, put forward? Well, they wanted all of the so-called bourgeois liberties — freedom of religion, freedom of association,

is fundamentally untenable, because from the beginning of recorded history there has been violence. Anthropologists tell us that communal groups have always fought each other, even in the period before recorded history. Strife has been a normal characteristic of human communities. Thomas Hobbes talks about strife: man raises his hand against man whenever the conditions are right. Moreover, war or some kind of violence has always been a means of acquiring wealth or of exploiting others in some way or other.

We say we can get away from violence if we



*Communities cause violence. When people engage in war, they engage in a communal activity.*

ALEXANDER DE CONDE

have a sense of world community. But as Mr. Merkl has pointed out, when you stretch the word community to cover the world, it becomes meaningless. There is no such thing as a world community. A community means a group whose members can interact. And yet communities are the things that cause violence. When people engage in war, they engage in a communal activity; it is organized warfare, not individual violence.

I don't have an answer for any of these problems. But there have been examples of societies in which communal groups have been antagonistic to each other, but somehow have managed to survive. In our own society we really do not have a community. In the original colonies, Protestants hated Catholics, Catholics and Protestants hated Jews, and so forth. But they got along because they had to survive. Constant violence was not profitable.

A world in which the benefits of peace and cooperation, such benefits as economic gains, would far outweigh whatever benefits would come through exploitation of other peoples, is what we should strive for.

**MERKL:** This, of course, has been the argument some of the Western European governments have had with the Reagan Administration over such questions as the gas pipeline between Russia and Western Europe. Mr. Reagan has felt that the Soviet Union should be economically starved in order to force the Russians to divert their resources from defense purposes. Western Europeans have countered by saying, let's create some mutual economic interests with Russia so that the Russians, too, would lose if we blow each other up.

**HOFFMAN:** But there was a Quaker meteorologist and scientist in the middle nineteen-thirties who did a careful study, trying to discover the likely conditions that would put countries close enough to each other to prevent war. The outcome of his study is that trade between the Germans and the British was at its highest point in August, 1914; and the number of column inches of newspaper coverage of German affairs in English newspapers and English affairs in German newspapers was at its greatest. So, it looks as if you can't count on mutual interests to defeat the reasons for going to war. They certainly can't hurt, but —

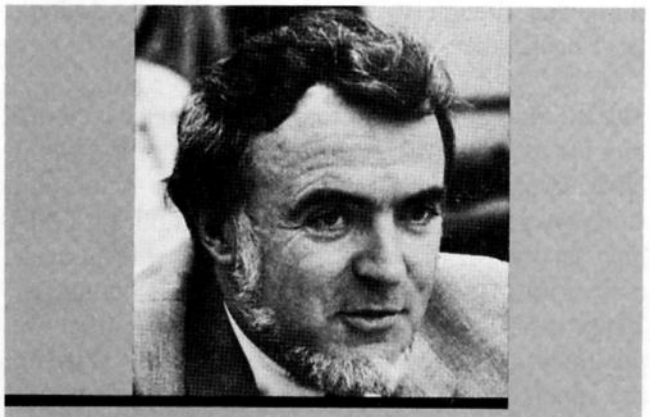
**McDONALD:** Would you say that mutually advantageous interests are the necessary but not sufficient conditions for keeping peace?

**HOFFMAN:** I don't even know that they are necessary. Jacques Maritain used to say about the American Constitution that the great invention of the founders was that they stopped short of trying to get any unity on values. What they found was a way to live together as groups of disparate people. That is what we need to find. The idea of looking for a community of values is extremely difficult.

**McDONALD:** Even the value of surviving?

**HOFFMAN:** The value of surviving might be one exception.

**GANN:** I am not so sure about the value of surviving. I just read a book about the battle of Stalingrad during World War II. Here you had a shattered German army, surrounded by the Russians, exposed to annihilation. All the while, letters from the soldiers were still being sent back to Germany through a tenuous air bridge. Dr. Goebbels had these letters analyzed, and found that only 3.5 per cent of them expressed anti-regime sentiments. So, man is not guided merely by the desire to live at all costs.



*There are commonalities of interest between the Soviet Union and the United States.*

PETER MERKL

There are hundreds and thousands of examples of armies, or nations, fighting to the very end.

**HOFFMAN:** If there is anything that history shows, it is the tendency we have to honor people who do not regard survival as an important value. But I also think if the world were suddenly transformed so that everybody thought that survival was the very best thing, that would be helpful.

**MERKL:** The problem with all these historical examples is that something has changed in the world. The present confrontation is unprecedented in some of its rationales. It cannot be likened to some of the statistics that the nineteen-thirties scholar came up with regarding Germany and Britain before World War I. One can argue that it is precisely because Germany and England were heading for war that they started to find out more about each other and carried a lot of press stories about each other.

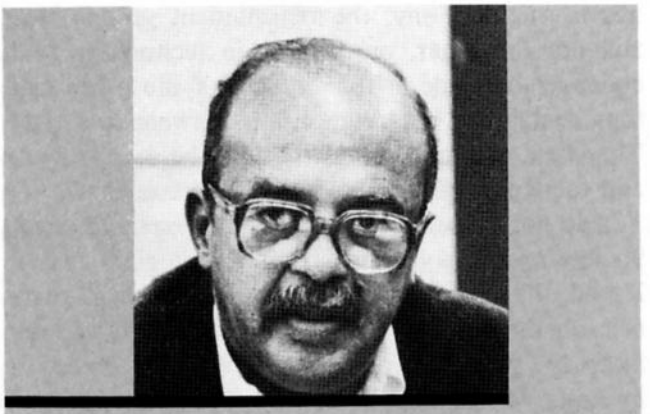
There are commonalities of interest that can be established or found between the Soviet Union and the United States, or the West. We have to concentrate on the things that are going on and, of course, try to counteract some of the less desirable trends, such as, say, the rearmament of one side and not the other, or changes in technology that endanger one side at the expense of the other and thus destabilize the relationship between the two. There are common things that can be emphasized, and the Russians are very much aware of that.

I do not subscribe to Mr. Gann's explanation of Soviet foreign policy in strictly ideological terms. I think that it is indeed a lot of "July Fourth" rhetoric on the Russian part. That rhetoric still leaves intact the possibility of mutually perceived common interests in survival, in future prosperity, future development.

**MICHELLE TOGUT** *(Research Associate, the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions)*: It seems to me that we are putting far too much emphasis on the difference between the Russians and the Americans. There is a whole other world out there whose nations are becoming more powerful and important. We are no longer a bipolar world. There are nations within the Third World that are going to insist on their own national sovereignty free from the influence of either the Americans or the Russians. That is what may add a new danger to the world situation.

**SETHARD FISHER** *(Professor of Sociology, University of California at Santa Barbara)*: I am not in agreement with a lot of the pessimism I have been hearing about the United Nations. One of the UN's possibilities comes pretty clearly to mind, and that is it could promote serious thought requiring each society to take a look at itself. I don't think that the Hoover Institution people take a close enough look at ourselves, and I am sure that similar think tanks in the Soviet Union do not see themselves very clearly, either. That kind of thinking, combined with dispassionateness about the ideology with which a given country is associated, would help us to begin to take a more critical view.

One idea that keeps cropping up here is that of community. As a sociologist, I know how difficult it is to achieve community in our own society, in which we are nurtured on individualism. We've been brought up on the ideal of the self-centered, self-sufficient individual. Now, somehow miraculously, we are supposed to achieve community. Some say it's capitalism per se that does not allow community to be developed. But if you look inside capitalism, you will find pockets where community exists.



*The United Nations could bring about the kind of thinking that could lead to community.*

SETHARD FISHER

The United Nations is uniquely suited to bring about the kind of hard clear thinking about ourselves that could lead to community.

**HASLUND:** The more we talk about community, the more I fear we are misleading ourselves. We are not saying the same thing when we say community. Community is different things to different people. The German soldiers' community to which Mr. Gann referred at the battle of Stalingrad is not the kind of community that leads people to set aside the tools of war and to set aside the forces of ultranationalism. If we are going to talk about community, we will have to redefine it.

What we are really trying to do is find some way of explaining under what circumstances the two major nuclear nations can live peacefully side by side and set aside their nuclear weapons. One way — miraculous — would be to develop a sense of mutual trust. I don't see that as possible.

A second way would be to rely on a sense of fear. That might be the great motivator. If we could see that the responsibility of the nation-state is to secure the safety of its citizens, we might also see that building additional nuclear bombs will not ensure security on either side. We might conclude that even though we hate each other, and don't trust each other, something has to be done.

**REMAK:** May I get away from this matter of community for a moment? I'm scared to death of the possibility of an accidental war, either the kind that starts with the sinking of a fishing boat off the Falkland Islands, or the kind caused by a technical accident, a misreading of or malfunction by a computer. There is no fail-safe. That scares me more than the possibility of an ultimate confrontation between the superpowers, because I hope a certain amount of common sense and logic will prevail among them. It may be easier to dismantle this whole insane nuclear war system than to achieve community.

**FISHER:** But that system is attached to social systems. Are you going to dismantle those, too?

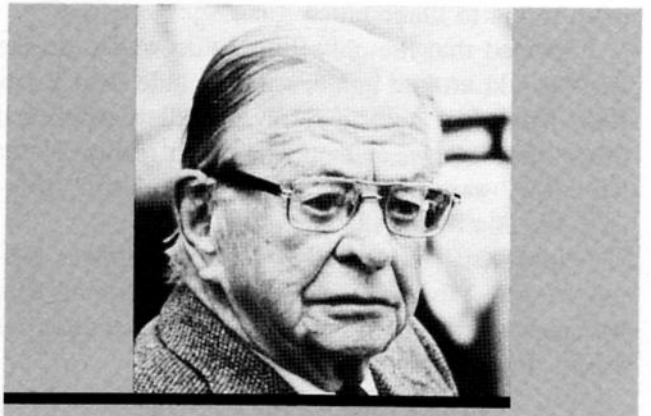
**REMAK:** Well, both sides must agree to forget about social systems.

**HASLUND:** But it is the social systems that generated the nuclear bombs in the first place.

**REMAK:** No, the nuclear engineers did it. You can read all of Karl Marx and not know how to build a bomb.

**MAYER:** In 1983, given the technological danger of the human situation, we have to concede that without government, peace is only accidental, and that we cannot afford to let the survival of the race hang on accident. If this is unarguable in theory, is there any way of coping with it? Can one go to the people who deal with it and persuade them of anything of this sort? Or — and this is my concern here — are we hysterical, we who are talking about extinction of the human race? Are we really only hysterical, and therefore failing to contribute anything useful to serious discussion? I don't know that that's a valid question. I don't know that anybody could answer it, except subjectively, and not very intelligently at that. I'll withdraw that question.

**JAMES H. DOUGLAS, JR.** *(Chicago attorney; former Secretary of the Air Force, 1957-59; former director, Fund for the Republic)*: Do you regard such peaceful intervals as mankind has known through all history as accidental? Do you get no encouragement out of the fact that now and then, for a hundred years or so, we have managed to get along with each other?



*The greatest incentive to go to war may be the fear that one is falling behind.*

JAMES DOUGLAS

That is one of the bases for hope.

**MAYER:** I agree except that the geographical distance between potential enemies five hundred years ago, or even a hundred years ago, probably played a role in contributing to the maintenance of peace. That separation has been destroyed by technology.

**DOUGLAS:** I think you dismissed deterrence as a factor in present policies, and the experience of the last thirty years, a little quickly, when you said that deterrence demands equality of strength. The thing that has really been hopeful is that a small inferior power now has a fair chance to deter aggression by a strong power, although that doesn't hold true for an indefinite period of time.

Also, we seem to take for granted that when one of two disagreeing and incompatible parties is strong enough, it will attack the one that is weaker. I don't think history proves that. Perhaps the greatest incentive to going to war has been the fear on the part of one side that it is slipping or falling behind, and its judgment is, we haven't much time left, we'd better do something. That is what is scary.

**WESSON:** Community is by no means impossible. For example, among the trading nations of the West, there is sufficient community so that there is no serious political quarrel between any two of those nations. They and Japan recognize their common interests. If they have questions over fishing rights, they may get a little uppity about that, but nobody really thinks of killing millions of people on that account.

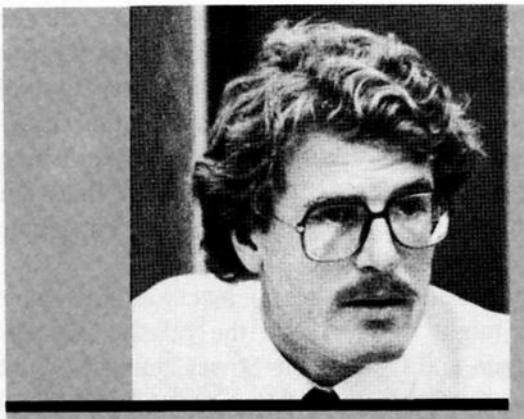
The inclination to wage nuclear war is weaker than one might think. I cite the relationship between Russia and China. The Soviet Union has had enormous nuclear superiority over China. It is afraid that China will get the bomb. There was also a time when the United States was extraordinarily hostile to Communist China. But neither we nor the Russians ever brought out the nuclear bomb.

Nations do know that nuclear weapons are horrible. We should not assume that at the drop of a hat they will use them. On the issue of nuclear proliferation, the phenomenal fact is that for many years quite a number of nations have had the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, but with the possible exception of Israel, and conceivably South Africa, they have not done so. I refer to Brazil, Sweden, and Argentina. India did explode a nuclear device for propagandistic purposes, but has never gone on to nuclear armaments. That is decidedly encouraging.

So utter disaster is not inevitable. Most people want to survive. Most leaders want to survive.

**MICHAEL CRANDELL** *(Editorial Associate,* The Center Magazine; *computer programmer)*: Philip H. Rhinelander, an emeritus professor of philosophy at Stanford University, commented recently on Jonathan Schell's book, *The Fate of the Earth*. He pointed out that Schell argues we owe it to ourselves and to the future generations of human beings to do something to avert nuclear war. Rhinelander's comment was that this assumed the very thing that was in question, the survivability of human beings. What he was getting at is that, from a detached, long-range perspective, human beings evolved, and they have continued to evolve culturally. Now they are at the point where if nuclear war is a real possibility, they have the potential to extinguish themselves, along with other species.

The question is, does the human species have what it takes to survive, or not? Mr. Mayer's argument is that peace is impossible without world government, but world government appears to be impossible to achieve. My brief, perhaps too sim-



*We may avert war, not through world government, but through other means.*

MICHAEL CRANDELL

plistic, response is, we are in a new situation; we may not resolve it; we may in fact become extinct. On the other hand, new ways of thinking may evolve; new ways of conceiving of our relationships with other societies may evolve. We may avert war, not through world government, but through other means.

**MAYER:** Mankind may find a way out. I must say, one doesn't see much in the way of political leadership in the West to provide any serious confidence in our capacity to do that.

**CRANDELL:** That may be the wrong place to look.

**MAYER:** Yes, the leadership may not come from politicians.

**HOFFMAN:** About ten years ago, I reached the conclusion, roughly speaking, where it seems to me Milton Mayer took us today; which is, you can't get there from here, and you don't know what to do next. I couldn't figure out what to do next, so I effectively dropped out of peace movements and all kinds of public-advocate-for-peace efforts. I did not advocate anything else, but advocating peace didn't seem to me to make much sense.

I decided that the only thing to do was to do the best I could around home, see if I could help a few folks figure out how to resolve conflicts with each other more nicely, and maybe get to feeling better while they were doing it. That's where I end up today. We don't have the answer.

I think Michael Crandell is just right. So is Milton Mayer. We are depending on something that we cannot perceive to get us out of the situation we are in. I do not know what to do.

**McDONALD:** Back in 1949, Robert Maynard Hutchins gave the annual Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University. It was called "St. Thomas Aquinas and the World State." Hutchins quoted Aquinas as saying that "since men must live in a group because they are not sufficient unto themselves to procure the necessities of life were they to remain solitary, it follows that a society will be the more perfect the more it is sufficient unto itself to procure the necessities of life."

According to Aquinas, "the higher a thing is, the more self-sufficient it is, since whatever needs another's help is by that fact proven inferior. . . . We must look then, for a political organization that does not need another's help if we are to discover the perfect community."

Hutchins added, "The perfect community is one that does not need the help of another, that is at peace, and that can, by its own will and resources remain so. Any other community must be an accidental or inadequate organization of power, for it cannot be self-sufficing. If we follow the example of St. Thomas and ask ourselves what is the perfect community today, we see by the light he has given us that not even on the economic level can any extant state be regarded as self-sufficing in the Thomistic, or even the Aristotelian, view of it. There is no state that does not need the help of another."

One can hope that leaders of nation-states will begin to see that the logical and ultimate next step in the direction of ensuring the security of all peoples has to be a world authority sufficiently empowered to make international war unprofitable, and, indeed, impossible. But I don't know how the leaders of all nations will see that unless the people themselves, the led, continue to try to think of ways out of the dilemma that Mr. Mayer has directed our attention to, and continue to exert pressure on those leaders. □

The morning of April 18, 1861, President Lincoln offered the command of the Union forces in the field to a cavalry officer named Lee, with the rank of major general. Lee was a Virginian, but he was a staunch Unionist and an opponent of both slavery and secession. He didn't hesitate: he declined the offer and resigned his commission in the U.S. Army.

That same afternoon, Virginia seceded and Robert E. Lee took command of its military and naval forces – and, ultimately, of the forces of the Confederate States of America.

Lee was a Virginian first; he believed that the nation had its authority from the several sovereign states. Four years and six hundred thousand lives later he accepted the authority of the nation at the point of the sword and became, outwardly, an American first; inwardly he never regretted his decision to "go with Virginia."

The idea of the separate sovereign state was crushed at Appomattox, but the archaic sovereignties lived on – fifty of them now, every day losing more of their reason for being. For the past year or so, the country has been subjected to a collapsing crusade by President Ronald Reagan to pump new life into these obsolete organs of public administration under the alias of the New Federalism. The New Federalism is neither new nor federal. It is a scheme not to distribute the powers of government but to do away with them by saddling the one-time sovereign states with them. But the states are (as we say in Virginia) too po' to tote them.

In the age of high-speed technology the states have no proper function left. Banking and finance, commerce and industry, law enforcement (corporate, criminal, and investment), basic taxation, civil rights and civil liberties, welfare,

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employment, job training, Social Security, conservation, pollution, drug and liquor control, pornography, public health, and, of course, long-distance transportation and communication are all self-evidently interstate (or, more precisely, transstate). The truck with a half-dozen license plates is just another only-in-America phenomenon.

The state no longer has a viable existence except as an obstacle to local government on the one hand and national government on the other. It locks town and country into an utterly misbegotten union. New York City and "upstate" have no more in common than Chicago and "downstate" or Atlanta and piney-woods Georgia. Both physiographically and demographically the United States does provide the occasion for regional associations with real but limited sovereignty within the national union where such areas have common problems, such as the ecology of the Great Lakes basin or the transportation needs of the Boston-Washington corridor. But the state regulatory bodies are as often as not regulated by the private enterprises they are supposed to regulate – notoriously in the case of the public utilities and transportation commissions.

The Virginia of today is not only a political nullity but an economic racket, as James Madison of Virginia warned that it would be. Madison argued on behalf of the new Constitution that the larger the geographical unit of government, the less susceptible it would be to all the evils of what he called faction (i.e., special interest), the less anarchical, and the less readily corrupted. The loss of the representatives' familiarity with local situations would be compensated by the greater likelihood of the selection of good men to govern from the ranks of the larger electorate. Having never dreamed of the railroad and the airplane, the telephone and the telegraph, the corporation and the trade union, Madison could not foresee the total obliteration of the state's usefulness.

The great lobbyist for a strong central government had before him the reduction of the thirteen ex-colonies to a condition of national anarchy after the Revolution. Already two centuries ago the state made little sense; already the new

Americans were wandering all over the land, transferring their geographical allegiances as they went. They would soon be interrupting their sentimental rendition of "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," to shout, "Eureka! I've found it!" when they crossed the mythical state line from the western territories into California.

Where is the Virginian today whose heart, like Lee's, bleeds for Virginia as he curses the morning traffic across the Potomac or shows his badge at the intercontinental spooks' entrance to the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, "VA."? Where is the Idahoan (or Idahan) who knows the state motto (unless it's on his license plates), the Iowan (or Iowayan) who doesn't gag when the band at the national convention strikes up for the fiftieth time with "That's where the tall corn grows," the crazy California delegate who doesn't whoop when the band plays "California, Here I Come" (which he mistakes for the state song)?

These people are Americans first and last except, possibly, for Lone Star Texans (but never was heard a discouraging word like "secession" when, last spring, the U.S. Supreme Court compelled the outraged heirs of the Alamo to provide public education for the children of Mexican wetbacks, much to the dismay of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who said in her dissent, "Each state is sovereign within its own domain, governing its citizens and providing for their general welfare. While the Constitution and federal statutes define the boundaries of that domain, they do not harness state power for national purposes").

The eighteenth-century role of the federal government, apart from the national defense, was to arbitrate the disputes between or among the states. It was soon extended to jurisdiction over any interest which affected more than one state directly. By the middle of the next century – when Lee went with Virginia – the Great Emancipator was holding that it was the proper business of the nation as such to do the things for people that people could not do for themselves. Steadily, at first, and then cornucopic with the development of the steam

engine and the telegraph, fewer and fewer public functions could be contained within the state. One by one almost every human action and reaction leaped across the union – VD, the gypsy moth, the fugitive criminal, the cigarette taxed high here and low there (and "imported" illegally).

Die-hard tradition alone reserved education to the states, and that began to crumble, but only after the Second World War when the illiteracy of the poor states was finally recognized as a threat to the survival of the Republic. (Forty per cent of the draftees in the three most deprived states of the South were rejected, in contrast with less than two per cent from Minnesota and Iowa.) The state was the bastion of public-school segregation until 1954, when the judicial arm of the nation held it unconstitutional. And it was only a year ago that the federal denial of tax exemption to segregated private schools was finally settled over the joint objection of the states *and* the national administration. After Pearl Harbor, the federal government (which had merely sponsored the Reserve Officers Training Corps before) as good as took over the state universities, along with the private ones, for research and training; and when the Soviet Union lofted Sputnik in 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower called for and got a stupendous appropriation for scientific and technological programs to be disbursed to the nation's high schools and colleges without regard to state lines.

The once sovereign state today provides the kind of pervasive corruption that enables Madison's "factions" to control the generality of state governments. The control is pervasive because there is so little glamour in state office, so little in the way of pay and perquisites, and, above all, so little noonday exposure to public assessment of either the candidate or the officeholder. (Local officials have much greater exposure.) However brutally it is boodled in Congress or in the agencies like the Pentagon, integrity is urged in Washington by the national spotlight; the state capital simply isn't newsworthy. Rare the congressman whose every constituent feels that he doesn't know at least a little something about the man; rare

the state legislator whose every constituent feels that he does. Progressive legislation nearly all originates at the federal level, opposition to it at the state.

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The motivation of Mr. Reagan's New Federalism, or Old Statism, was obvious as soon as it surfaced; it was obviously part and parcel of Reaganism. Our President – and his California friends, including Vice-President George Bush of Connecticut, Texas, and Connecticut again – has no consuming interest in maintaining government powers at any level, except, of course, defense so-called. They have every interest in eliminating them in favor of the trickle doctrine. The transfer of powers to the states is a transfer of costs. Those functions which cannot be got rid of altogether, when they have been dumped on the states will to that extent have got, not government, but Washington "off the people's backs." Less will be spent by the visible spender, Washington, and less will be taken (except for defense) by the visible taker, Washington. But the states will have to exercise in an ever-increasing degree the one real power remaining to them – the power of the kinds of levy, like the property, gasoline, and sales taxes, which fall most heavily on the poor because of the classic corruption of the legislatures by the special interests. Mr. Reagan's friends are content to see *that* power quietly expanded while the power of Washington (that is, the responsibility) is loudly reduced.

The worm in the vermiform apple is, of course, the Reagan depression, which has busted the states. Under the current welfare arrangement the federal government puts up ninety-three dollars and the state twenty-seven dollars for a total of one-seventh of poverty-level income for a family of four in Mississippi. "Simple logic and history," says Carl Rowan, "tell us that if the federal government walks away from welfare, through a programs 'swap' or any other means, Mississippi is not going to make up the lost ninety-three dollars." As the federal government walks away, the states have had to cut services to the counties, the counties to the municipalities. A recent survey by the National League of Cities reports that

ninety percent of the seventy-nine municipalities queried say they will not be able to make up with local funds the cuts in community and urban development grants planned by the Reagan Administration for fiscal 1984. The survey showed that seventy-one percent of the cities raised municipal fees last year while thirty-eight percent introduced fees for services formerly provided free. Courtesy of Reagan & Co. public services are going through the wringer the country over. The New Federalism is dead in the womb. The powers – that is, the costs – laid on the states are fast falling into desuetude.

But the stillborn New Federalism has had a certainly unintended effect that may be of some ultimate use to the nation, and, indeed, to the world. It has thrown additional light on the hopelessness of the federal arrangement at the end of the twentieth century. With fifty sets of conflicting and overlapping statutes civil and criminal, and with fifty appellate courts handing down a tumultuous succession of conflicting and overlapping decisions, it has long been impossible to reach a national determination on crucial issues like desegregation or abortion or capital punishment. Fifty sets of lawyers have got richer and richer. The country swarms with large and small offenders against the general welfare scurrying from state to state to get the best deal they can – be it tax exemption in Connecticut, murder in Oregon, or incorporation in Delaware. With the ascension and bursting of the New Federalism balloon, the case against states' rights mounts.

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So far has technology carried us beyond the reduction of the states to absurdities that the justification of the sovereign *nation*-state – except in the romantic terms advanced for Lee's Virginia in 1861 – comes into critical question as the red button awaits pressing to launch the intercontinental ballistic missiles with thermonuclear warheads and a ten-to-twenty-minute around-the-world delivery time. The transmission of missiles, and missives, people, and goods, is almost as instantaneous across national borders as it is across states – and in the case of electronic transmission exactly as instantaneous.

True, the manners of the Andaman Islanders, if they are still eating their grandparents, are still measurably different from those of the Parisians or the Peorians – but not as different as they were a century, or even a half-century, ago. It is only a matter of time – another century? – before the Andamanders and the Peorians are as interchangeable as the Wyominganders and the Connecticutters are today. With the ever-faster proliferation of nonpolitical institutions, commercial, industrial, financial, cultural, the ancient dictum of Marx that the workingmen have no country can be much more accurately applied to Coca-Cola, Sony, Volkswagen, and IBM (and McDonald's). The great cartels, growing always greater, huckster everybody everywhere (including the Andaman Islands).

The imminent question is insistent: as the United States is to Virginia, so the world is to the United States. What is, or soon will be, left to perpetuate the nation-state is a millennium or two of custom and one people's fanatical hatred of another (or of all others). But the Swiss confederation accommodates three sets of different – even inimical – customs and three and a half different languages. The American melting pot has accommodated a stupendous variety of ethnic usages, large and small, in the process absorbing provincial consciousness into emotional attachment to the nation. In the sixty-five years since the Great War of the old nations this national attachment has, on balance, subsided very considerably and, as technology proceeds apace, seems destined to go on subsiding, without, however, a corresponding transfer to a larger conceptual unit than the nation-state. (No "national" of any of the contracting parties seems greatly disposed to attach himself to, say, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the Warsaw Pact.) Provincial chauvinism was intractable in the case of Robert E. Lee. It seems to be equally intractable today on the national level, when it is aroused against a national enemy. With rare exceptions – France and Germany come to mind, but not Poland and Russia – nationalist hatreds flourish today as fiercely as they ever did.

Thirty-five years ago, the atomic bomb appeared to have

illuminated the human political condition almost as brilliantly as it had Hiroshima. Not only was no man an island; no island was an island. Previously sedate people were crying, "One world or none." Was President Harry Truman sounding the death knell of the nation-state when he said, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "There must never be another war"? (Five years later he decided to have one more for the road.) But if there was to be no more war, what would generate or regenerate the chauvinist passion? What would hold the nation-state together?

Before the year 1945 was out, everyone everywhere in the literate world was familiar, however vaguely, with the idea of world federalism or world government. In the United States the United World Federalists spread rapidly in intellectual circles and for a couple of seasons became the "in" thing socially. The lecturers were all lecturing for it except for the handful of world-government "maximalists" who rejected the federalists' minimal surrender of sovereignty; along with the minuscule Socialist Party, doughty little organizations like the Campaign for World Government maintained that a federated world which did not disturb the worldwide economic balance between rich and poor would collapse in civil war – or, likelier, never come to be. The UWF, or minimalist, position was presented as the only realism: since the rich Americans (and a few others similarly situated) would never join a world which taxed them to feed its starving hundreds of millions, federalism would have to freeze the world's stupendous economic imbalance. A world organization without the power to levy near-confiscatory income or capital taxes on the people of the rich nations was an impossibility, with it a hallucination.

Within five years, the world organizationalists – minimalist and maximalist alike – were succumbing to the joint pressures of the cold war abroad and McCarthyism at home. Within a decade of its birth, the world government movement was somewhere between dormant and dead, and a radically shrunken UWF had given up lobbying and undertaken long-term education instead. The toothless United Nations was

early made a laughingstock by the successive Security Council vetoes – first of the Soviet Union, then of the United States – and fast lost its hold on the public imagination. Naked cynicism characterized the unilateral moves of the several great powers in hot spots all over the world. When Mr. Reagan rejected the International Law of the Sea treaty he said blandly that "the 120" – the correct figure is 130 – "nations who voted for the pact represent only about 12.5 percent of the global gross national product."

Appomattox was the formal prelude to the conversion into one nation, indivisible, of the separate sovereign states dwelling together in more or less amiable anarchy until a crucial interest split them down the middle. But the substantive conversion had to wait until the adoption of the federal income tax recognized, at last, that it is not the states that constitute the nation but the people. State residence restrictions on welfare, employment, and electoral eligibility gave way, gradually, and with Lyndon Johnson's civil- and voting-rights legislation throwing the whole mantle of national protection over the politically disadvantaged blacks, it was tacitly conceded that the folly of the fifty states had to be ended.

The dismantlement (without a prior mantlement) of Mr. Reagan's New Federalism underscores the greatest single fact of the nation's political history and generates a faint spark of life in the moribund One World movement. As the anarchy of the New Federalism is intolerable in the nation, so the anarchy of the nations is intolerable in the world, intolerable among the hapless dwellers in the roofless house under the awful sky of the nuclear age. By now we ought to know what the ancients knew: that nations with no judge between them, no parliament to write the law that binds them both, and no executive to enforce that law, must fight when they cannot negotiate their differences. People talk about accidental war, but it is peace that is accidental. And there is only a modicum of hope that the accident of peace will long continue.

The swelling struggle in the European and American streets against the nuclear arms race betokens one of three alternative

outcomes – the end of the world in nuclear war; a truce or cease-fire (or "freeze") doomed to go the way of every unenforceable truce before it; or the abdication of the classic and unexceptional device for rallying chauvinist passion, the sovereign national power to make war for the sole purpose of preserving the nation-state. That state, like Lee's Virginia, is indefensible theoretically, indefensible historically, and in 1983 mortally indefensible in fact.

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Robert M. Hutchins used to say that what is necessary must be possible. Not necessarily. World government seems now to be urgently necessary to save the world. But it would not appear urgently possible to achieve. Most of the people of the world – the great preponderance of them – live as tribes ruled by chieftains or chieftainly apparatus. (Some of the tribes are vast, and many are anciently established as nation-states.) The members of these tribes have had little or no political experience or political responsibility. Their comprehension of government is limited, of self-government still more limited. A "democratic" world government would be dominated by those tribes or their chieftains and, if it did not succumb to civil war (which would leave us all where we are today), would certainly be a world tyranny. The best of the nation-states has both oppressive potentialities and oppressive tendencies. It is painful to make an argument for a still greater state than the one we know; the oppressive potentialities and tendencies of any and all states would be mightily magnified in the tribally dominated world state.

Not only would the rich members of that state be rabidly disinclined to support the poor, the civil liberties and civil rights inhering, by and large, in the rich nation-states would fall instantly in those same nation-states as the world political process supervened. As between tyranny and anarchy, on any scale, anarchy, when there is no third alternative, is the more palatable choice. But the likely tyranny of the world government, with the likely secessionist revolution against it by the one-time libertarian nation-states does not promise much

more relief from the nuclear threat than the present anarchy and imposes, while it lasts, the additional inconveniences of tyranny.

The civil and political liberties of the libertarian nations are insecure. Liberty is always and everywhere insecure. But the few nations which have had the good fortune – it is nothing but fortune – to be schooled in it are much more surely attached to it than those that have not had the schooling. These latter that are long established have to go through that schooling before world government is thinkable, while the others, the newly established nations, are just beginning to have the national experience and are still delirious in their virginal chauvinism. Like our own thirteen colonies, the new nations are rebellious, not revolutionary.

Historian William H. McNeill says that "when and whether a transition will be made from a system of states to an empire of the earth is the gravest question humanity confronts." It will be a quantum leap, but some such analogous leap has been made before, long, slow, tortuous, from the tribal city to the tribal state. The race has pretty well rid itself of chattel slavery, and a fair part of it has pretty well rid itself of the profit system; these too are quantum leaps. War abides, war and the plurality of sovereign states which causes war. In five hundred years the peoples of the earth may be able to think of themselves as the people of the earth and of one world, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Five hundred years. Say a hundred. Say fifty. But war does not seem likely to wait five hundred years, or a hundred, or fifty (or five?). We are between the urgent necessity and the historical impossibility of world government right now; between the devil and the deep.

# A World Without Government: Discussion

## Milton Mayer

[A follow-up discussion held at the Center for the Study of Democractic Institutions. Reprinted from *The Center Magazine*, July-August, 1983, pp.43-58. Participants included: Milton Mayer, Lewis H. Gann, David Krieger, Robert Wesson, Joachim Remak, Richard Harris, Peter Haslund, Hallock Hoffman, Peter Merkl, Alexander de Conde, Sethard Fisher, Michael Crandell, and James Douglas]