

Book Reviews

On War. Raymond Aron. Translated from the French by Terence Kilmartin. Doubleday, New York, 1959. Cloth, 163 pp. \$3.50; paper, 143 pp. \$0.95.

Raymond Aron is a brilliant French sociologist. He is also a talented publicist with a thesis, who writes less as a Frenchman than as a citizen of the West. His thesis is that as between preserving peace "by the threat of an increasingly horrible war" and minimizing unnecessary violence by distinguishing between the different types of war, "the second is right and the first fatal."

It is not as a sociologist but as a publicist that he has written this tract for the times. As Aron says, "the sociologist is neither more nor less entitled than anyone else to indulge in these hazardous but necessary speculations" to discover the other alternatives, "between peaceful discussion and mutual annihilation."

The scientist is specifically included in Aron's assertion that "no one is qualified to give a positive answer to such questions" as the discovery of "a way out of the terror stalemate." He refers at one point to "the physicists who have suddenly become aware of their responsibilities, though without acquiring a sense of history." At another, in dismissing world government as one of the alternatives between peaceful discussion and mutual annihilation, he declares that "the scientists who enjoin us to create the universal state or perish in a monstrous holocaust do not strengthen our will but drive us to despair."

The moral, then, is that no one—natural scientist, social scientist, or theologian, for that matter—can responsibly claim to derive broad policy from necessarily narrow *expertise*. When one parades his policy preferences, he should be meticulous and self-disciplined in asserting that the policies he favors are grounded in considerations into which he alone has insight. Experts' insights into political problems are necessarily partial insights; they clarify policy choice, but they do not obviate the necessity for

choice. In our society the statesman and the publicist have the task of synthesizing and integrating diverse technical, political, and moral considerations; the informed public, in turn, has the task of offering discriminating support to those whose policy prescriptions, so clarified, seem to make sense. Aron is the synthesizer, the integrator, and the man "with a sense of history" (which he thinks some experts lack).

For Aron, the middle way between peaceful discussion and mutual annihilation requires the development of a functional equivalent for periodic intergreat-power, general, total war, which in our day would also be two-way thermonuclear war. He gives short shrift to world-government proposals, sees limited use for, or possibility of, disarmament by international agreement, and dismisses appeasement on the ground that it seldom appeases. What, then, is left?

What is left is traditional diplomacy to achieve moderate objectives, backed by limited war capabilities—as well as by the retaliatory capability whose single purpose is to remove the temptation to the other side to embark on thermonuclear war. Moderation in diplomacy means fewer references to "massive retaliation" and "brinkmanship" on our side, less atomic blackmail on the other. It is not "use of a certain weapon" but "desire for too grandiose a victory" that poses the threat of unlimited war. Moderation, says Aron, would have called for a halt at the 38th parallel after the successful landing at Inchon, and the world would have called it an American victory; it would not have called for abandoning Korea without a fight. Today, in the era of approximate nuclear parity, moderation is a more obvious necessity than it was at the time of the Korean war. Massive retaliation and brinkmanship scared the allies of the United States far more than it scared our opponents.

What else would Aron do differently? He would, for one thing, have the United States give atom bombs to its European allies, in order, first, by giv-

ing these countries the power to retaliate, to strengthen the atomic deterrent to an attack on Western Europe, and second, to reduce the sense of inequality among NATO members which is a strain on the alliance. (Perhaps Raymond Aron is a Frenchman after all, as well as a citizen of the West with a sense of history.) Apparently, no one else is to have the bomb, for he writes that if the "Big Two" were to impose "a condominium on mankind," that "would be good luck indeed."

There are grounds for hope today. "The global balance," he writes, "is not at the mercy of any partial or temporary disparity." The "general balance of terror" is fairly stable, since surprise is unlikely to be so effective as to preclude retaliation. A diplomatic incident, *à la* Sarajevo, is no longer enough to set off the chain reaction of the general war. In the era of thermonuclear bipolarity, neither side is eager to use its H-bombs to force a small power to stand up and be counted on its side. Guerrilla war, meanwhile, is a type of local war in which the distant great power can coerce only with the greatest of difficulty. The economic causes of war have practically disappeared. Aron might have added that the strategic advantage to be gained by territorial expansion and the acquisition of a defensive glacis has practically disappeared too.

There are grounds for fear, too. Immoderate diplomacy, the acceptance of "war-as-destiny," the belief that all is lost unless world government is established, another psychopath at the head of one of the perhaps inevitably increasing number of atom-bomb-possessing powers—all these are real dangers. They cannot, he believes, be absolutely eliminated; they can be minimized.

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Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine.

Alvah W. Sulloway. Beacon Press, Boston, Mass., 1959. xxiii + 257 pp. \$3.95.

This is a challenging book, written by a Harvard-trained attorney, with an interesting preface by Aldous Huxley. Huxley points out the importance of the book and calls attention to the world-wide problem of overpopulation. He notes that uncontrolled fertility threatens thousands of millions of persons, now on earth and unborn, with