

FIVE VENTURES FOR PEACE

By WILLIAM H. ROBERTS

ABOVE Niagara Falls guides call visitors' attention to "the point of no return." Below that point no rescue has ever been effected of persons caught in the fearful current.

In the stream of history there are points of no return. It may be that we¹, together with all the other nations of the world, have passed such a point. Perhaps nothing whatever can save the world from a war of which the only outcome must be world-wide ruin. The usual rescue operations will not suffice. Concessions and attempts at conciliation will almost certainly be interpreted as confessions of fear and weakness. A show of force is more likely to exasperate than to intimidate those against whom it is directed.

A helicopter, we can at least imagine, might be able to effect a rescue from the very brink of the Falls. If our world is to be saved from a Third World War, it must be by ventures into a new dimension. It must be by measures in diplomacy and international policy that are new, without precedent, daring, imaginative, even fantastic according to our present ways of thinking.

With the development of the submarine and the airplane, war moved from two dimensions into three. With the development of *psychological warfare*, it is making hesitant ventures into a fourth. Underlying, supporting and supplementing daring new ventures in diplomacy or international policy, there must be adventures in thought, no less daring. Such ventures are not for diplomats and departments of state alone. They are ventures in which whole peoples must engage.

Five such ventures would be:

- I A determined effort to think realistically.
- II Confession.
- III A pledge.
- IV Directing Revolution.
- V A Holy War.

The first may not seem an adventure at all. What risks do we run, so long as we only think?

The Japanese were right, though, in characterizing certain thoughts as dangerous." Even hydrogen bombs are less danger-

(1) Dr. Roberts is writing, as a citizen of the United States, primarily to his fellow citizens. As will be seen, however, much of his argument is directed to the nations of the West in general.—Ed.

ous than ideas. Ideas may render a century or even a millenium radioactive. If we undertake to think realistically upon the results to be expected of war, upon the strength and weakness of Communism, and upon the meaning of Americanism, we shall not escape danger or lack excitement.

I. REALISM

1. The Results to be Expected of War.

When we think about a Third World War, most of us stop when we have figured that we have a sufficient number of bombs, planes, tanks and divisions of ground troops to ensure victory. That is much too soon. We must go on to consider the conditions that will probably prevail, both abroad and in our own country, after the victory has been won.

Defeat, of course, would mean utter ruin and misery. A drawn or indecisive struggle would be almost as ruinous. How clearly do most Americans realize that the most complete victory we have any right to expect would be only a little disastrous?

War would not be a simple matter of dropping a few bombs on Moscow or Peiping. To destroy Russia's military power, it is almost certain that we should be obliged to flatten out and lay waste practically the whole of Europe. It is very unlikely that London and New York and the other great cities in Great Britain and our own country would escape serious damage.

Can we expect our European allies to be enthusiastic over such a prospect? If they prefer incorporation into a vast Communist Union to a fate such as has overtaken Korea, shall we be in any position to blame them? It is easy enough for us to tell them that they ought to prefer devastation and death to enslavement; but there is something contemptible about such advice. It is they who will have to do the dying, and it is their fields that will be laid waste. It ought not to surprise us, if their view of the matter turns out to be very different from ours.

Winning wars has become a habit of ours. It has come to seem like a law of nature. We will take it for granted, then, that we shall win. What will be our position after the victory?

The least we can expect is that we shall find ourselves committed to the task of policing, for at least a century to come, a world made desolate. Our soldiers will have to garrison Siberia, Africa, China and doubtless large areas of Europe. So far in our history, we have shown neither liking nor aptitude for empire.

If nevertheless we find ourselves driven to such an undertaking, we shall be obliged to transform ourselves into a military state very much like Hitler's Germany. Neither our political institutions nor our economic order can survive such a change.

The militarization of our society must lead to the formation of a great military caste. All the rest of our population will slave to support that caste. In the long run, only our fighting men will have enough to eat! We have actually been closer to that than one likes to acknowledge. And when our warlords have taken over the policing of the world, we must look forward to a rationing of thought, a control of education and of writing and speaking, even more drastic than the rationing of food.

Our coast lines, our Great Lakes, and our rivers will doubtless remain very much as they are; but very little more than the large geographical features will remain of the America we know and love. Through books and magazines, and over the radio we are being instructed in what we must do to survive an atomic attack. We are even drilling little children in what to do when the bombs begin to fall. The instructions answer all the questions except the most important one of all—WHY? Why should any American alive today wish to live in the kind of state that ours must become, if we do not succeed in averting the Third World War?

2. A Realistic Evaluation of Communism.

In the Battle of the Bulge and in the later Retreat from the Yalu, our armed forces came frighteningly close to disaster. In each case the reason was our underestimate of the numbers and the fighting quality of the enemy. To underestimate the strength of Communism will almost certainly lead to ruin.

Of some oriental despot or other it is reported that he made use of a very effective device to protect his peace of mind. He simply announced that any messenger who brought him bad news would at once be put to death! He must have found life beautiful, too beautiful to last long. If we wish to win our fight against Communism, we must be willing to face unpleasant facts.

Our armies, our navy and our air force can probably win a military victory. They cannot conquer Communism. Communism is a way of thinking. As the late Senator Taft pointed out, it must be fought in men's minds.

Communism has won the passionate devotion of great numbers of intelligent, generous and gallant men and women. Their enthusiasm, their readiness to sacrifice and to suffer, the

world-wide sweep of its missionary labors, offer impressive parallels with Christianity in the Age of the Apostles. "To the under-privileged masses (Communists offer) equality and security and what they call economic justice; to the peoples fighting against colonialism it is emancipation from their imperialist masters; to soft pacifists it is attacks against warmongers and petitions for world peace; to the oppressed races it is racial equality; to the cosmopolitans it is the supranational world scope of Communism; to the intellectuals it is the lure of the ideal of equality and justice; to the liberals it is what they call the struggle against Fascism."²

Communism, in short, is strong and dangerous because it is so largely right. It is a flaming denunciation of real evils of our economic and political order. Wherever oppression and exploitation flourish, and so long as they flourish, there will be Communists. At any rate we should hope so, unless and until better methods of resistance and reform can be developed. The complete crushing of the spirit of rebellion in man would be a disaster worse than the most ruthless Communist despotism.

Communism was not an accident. It was not the invention of wilfully wicked or perverse individuals. It arose as the inevitable reaction to the economic theories of Adam Smith and his successors. Looking back, we can see easily enough that our great grandfathers ought to have foreseen just such a reaction against the attempt to base social relationships upon the single motive of greed.

If all restrictions upon private greed and personal ambition are removed, the selfish aims of individuals, shaken together in free markets and ground to some degree of smoothness by the abrasives of competition, will, simply as a result of the continued shaking, fall into patterns that will insure the largest possible measure of human welfare. That was what Adam Smith and his followers devoutly believed and taught. For the regulation of industry and trade, moral or humanitarian considerations were irrelevant. Indeed they were worse. Any attempt to mitigate the severity of the stern, impersonal laws of supply and demand could only obstruct the working of a process that in the large was just and even beneficent.

After Adam Smith, Karl Marx was inevitable. The teaching that those individuals who possessed capital need think only of increasing it and owed no duties or obligations to their

(2) Malik, Charles, delegate from Lebanon to the United Nations, in a speech before the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, December, 1950. Printed in the *Christian Century*, 79, Jan. 17, 1951, pp. 74,75.

workers or toward society as a whole, was a grim parody of the doctrine of the divine right of kings. It was so obviously one-sided and partial that it could not have failed to call forth the opposing doctrine that the State should assume responsibility for all economic activity. Any serious attempt to evaluate modern Capitalism or Free Enterprise must keep in mind that one of the consequences of Capitalism has been Communism.

The balance sheet of Capitalism is not made up wholly of red entries. There is much to its credit. It has been immensely productive. It has raised the standard of living of the masses. It has broken the rigidity of ancient and outworn customs. It has evoked a world-wide demand and support for science and technology. It has been the powerful ally of democracy in the fight against feudal oppression and despotism and arrogance.

On the other hand, Capitalism is by no means entitled to all the credit for such success as it has enjoyed. It owes much to revolutionary scientific discoveries and inventions, to the discovery of new continents that could be exploited with comparative ease, to a rapid increase in population that provided an expanding market for goods of every description, and to an increasing supply of gold that helped to keep prices rising. Moreover it has undergone a number of modifications that Marx did not foresee. The new democracies have found themselves, often very much against their wills, compelled to impose more and more restrictions upon the activities of capitalists. Compassion, nurtured by Christianity, has succeeded at least in postponing some of its ugliest consequences.

In our fight against Communism everywhere in the world, we need every scrap of prestige we can command. We need, too, the intense devotion and readiness to sacrifice that can come only from complete devotion to a cause men believe is truly great. The essential shabbiness of "the profit motive" places us at a tragic disadvantage.

Communist propaganda attacks us primarily on the ground that we are immoral! The Russians do not claim that they have become rich. They claim that they have set the masses free. The economic democracy that they have established is, they claim, the reality; our political democracy is only its caricature.³

Our economic system, they freely admit, has been immensely productive. Our prosperity is proof, however, of the ruthlessness with which we have exploited other—as we would say—"inferior" peoples.

(3) Cf. Trueblood, Elton, *The Life We Prize*, p. 25 ff. Harper and Brothers, 1951.

Absurd as such arguments seem to us, they are highly effective with oriental peoples. The colored peoples of the world have long and bitter memories of white, capitalistic imperialism. The temptation is strong to blame Capitalism both for the humiliation and exploitation they have suffered in the past and for the difficulties they encounter today.

If Communism is strong and dangerous for the reason that it is so largely right, it is devilish because it is only partly right and is as one-sided as the doctrine against which it is the protest. It refuses to consider facts of the utmost importance for human life and happiness. It holds fast to errors that are even more destructive of human welfare than the evils it combats.

Revolutionary it certainly is; but it is far from being revolutionary enough. It remains within the frame of reference within which modern Capitalism developed. It does not demand as Christianity does, a deep and thoroughgoing change of motivation. Its underlying assumptions are identical with those that have given rise to the worst features of Capitalism.

There is the narrowing of concern to the one issue of material abundance, the same degrading of morality to short-term expediency, the same degrading concentration upon the narrow interests of a single class, the same reliance upon force and the same readiness to resort to violence⁴ These tendencies operate the more disastrously in the absence of such checks as economic competition, free political institutions and free churches provide.

Our ablest thinkers, it follows, must make a more intensive study of Communism than many of them have yet done. Why could not one of our great foundations finance a cooperative study by a dozen or a score of the finest minds in America and Europe?

3. Re-Thinking Americanism

A realistic reckoning with Communism will necessitate an equally careful and objective study of Americanism, of Capitalism or Free Enterprise, and of Democracy. We must locate the weak spots. We must correct mistakes. We must clean out the foci of infection. We must right injustices.

We must give particularly careful consideration to the question of how far we should go in undertaking to transplant our institutions to foreign soils or imposing our ideology upon

(4) First summarized in this fashion by A. J. Muste, *The Future of Labor Temple*, The Presbyterian Tribune, Sept. 2, 1937. Quoted in my book, *The Problem of Choice*, pp. 358, 359. Ginn and Company, 1941.

peoples with cultures very different from our own. Shall we undertake to make democratic capitalists out of Japanese, Koreans, the inhabitants of Indo-China, the savages of Africa, or the Balkan peoples?

Congress, or any department of our Government, cannot be expected to undertake such a study. Speeches and writings by individuals working independently and subject to the demands of editors, lecture audiences and radio networks will not suffice. *Somehow* the keenest and best informed minds and the most generous spirits among our people *must* get together in an atmosphere of disinterested inquiry, stark realism, and complete freedom from outside pressure of any kind.

Somehow.

How?

A number of years ago Mr. Rockefeller sponsored a project RETHINKING MISSIONS. May not some other individual or group support an effort to rethink or think through Americanism?

II. CONFESSION

A starkly realistic and penetrating study of our recorded history and the unrecorded ideas from which our actions sprang could not fail to bring to light a number of confusions and blunders. To acknowledge them to ourselves will require courage and deep sincerity. To *confess* them before the world would be an exciting adventure. We cannot tell in advance of trying it what effect such a confession would have upon the thinking and the policies of other nations and peoples.

There is at least one precedent for such a confession. In 1923 our Government paid \$23,000,000 to Colombia to settle that country's claim against us for the loss of what is now the tiny state of Panama.

In 1950 two articles upon our use of the atomic bombs printed in LOOK were translated into Japanese and arrangements were made for publication in Japan. In those articles Admiral Zacharias pointed out that the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the result of a mistake in "evaluating" the information supplied by Army and Navy Intelligence. Admiral Zacharias, and apparently the authorities in Japan, hoped that such a frank confession would diminish to some extent the resentment that stupid fumble called forth.

More is needed, however, than the opinions of a single individual, no matter how able or how highly placed he may be, or how favorable may have been his opportunities for observing the events under discussion. Is there any way by which we can make such a confession "official"? Could Congress be induced to pass a resolution of regret? Or our President? Or the Departments of State or Defense?

If we cannot make it "official," there may yet be great value in resolutions published by representative and influential groups. Could various religious groups in our country unite in some such statement?

III. A PLEDGE

The bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were our terrible veto upon all attempts to limit the destructiveness of war or to diminish the sufferings that must result from it. Is there any way in which we can revoke that veto or reverse the precedent we set?

We might at least begin by announcing our firm determination to exercise restraint in the use of atomic weapons. We might well add to that a pledge to limit the bombing of cities and to give warning of our intention to do so.

Could the responsible officers of our government announce to the world at large that *in the event of war the commanders of our armed forces in the field will give warning of their intention to attack an enemy city, whether with atomic weapons or other means of destruction. At the same time they will designate areas in the neighborhood of such cities as sanctuaries, against which for the time specified, no operations will be conducted and where refugees will be safe. We shall adhere to such procedure until or unless it becomes apparent that it endangers the success of military operations or the security of our own people.*

Could we go on to urge all members of the United Nations to adopt this principle as an amendment or addition to the prevailing laws of war?

To warn an enemy of intention to attack a particular point at a particular time must seem at first to relinquish the important advantages of uncertainty and surprise. It is scarcely to be expected that any high command will consent to such a proposal.

The advantages can be retained, at least in large part, by the simple expedients of naming two or more cities some distance apart and by setting the date within somewhat broad limits.

The demoralizing effects of suspense and prolonged anxiety, moreover, may be even greater than the shock of unexpected attack. And finally, to announce an attack and to carry it through as scheduled would provide the most impressive demonstration imaginable of superior power. The effect of such a demonstration upon an enemy's morale would almost certainly be devastating.

I really must confess some concern that the Russians, if any of them should happen to notice this article, will beat us to the Council Chamber of the United Nations with the proposal and so lay claim to a moral superiority.

For the operations of psychological warfare the value of such a procedure would be almost incalculable. An enemy can be induced to cease hostile operations *either* by reducing him to despair *or* by holding out hope of a tolerable settlement. Both applied simultaneously would certainly be more effective than either alone, as obviously as two oars are better than one for rowing a boat. That we constantly endeavored to spare our enemies as much as possible of war's devastation and suffering would supply the most convincing proof anyone could ask of the sincerity of our claim that we have in view only the restoration of peace and the reestablishment of friendly and mutually profitable relations.

From a nation that has proved itself capable of restraint and generosity, the other nations of the world would be encouraged to expect dispassionate judgment upon international issues, patient attention to grievances, and justice tempered with mercy over the whole range of international relations. *To* such a nation, it is at least reasonable to expect, they would be more willing than we find them today to concede leadership in world affairs and trusteeship for atomic power.

IV. DIRECTING REVOLUTION

In a notable article in LOOK for the 16th of January, 1950, Justice Douglas pointed out that all over the world revolutions are in progress. The masses have got the idea that poverty, misery and exploitation by a privileged class or by the white race are unnecessary. They are not a part of the order of nature, like the climate of a continent. They are not beyond the power of men to change. They can be abolished by vigorous collective effort.

If we are to save the world from Communism, he concluded, even if we wish to survive as a free people, we must aid such up-

risings. We must place at the disposal of the just awakened peoples our experience of free institutions to guide them through the mine fields that lie in front of them. Coming to details, he wrote:

Our position must be clear on land reform, unemployment insurance, price control, taxation, food rationing, and all other issues that are vital in (any) area.⁵

If we do not provide such aid and guidance, the Communists will take over the role of champions of the oppressed and liberators of the dark-skinned peoples of the world from white imperialism.

So long as Moscow means, truly or falsely, hope for the masses; and the Western World does not mean so with the same clarity, it is idle to speak of peaceful coexistence.⁶

So far, our dread of Communism has led us into alliances with the forces of reaction and exploitation rather than with those of revolution or even reform. A pledge to fight Communism has too often been all that we have required to induce us to open up our treasury. So we found ourselves supporting a regime in French Indo China detested by the people.

Austria, Russia and Prussia in the early years of the 19th Century formed a Holy Alliance to "contain" (as we would say today) democracy. Our Monroe Doctrine was largely responsible for the collapse of the undertaking.

Has no commentator upon world affairs pointed out that our own country is busily trying to build up another alliance, dismally similar, against Communism? Our President finds himself cast for the role of Metternich. Most striking of all in this strange reversal of roles, China has achieved some success in establishing a Monroe Doctrine for Asia!

"The only way to beat the Communists is to beat them to it." I make haste to add that I am quoting a contemporary Methodist leader, the Reverend E. Stanley Jones. "IT" to which we must beat the Communists, is certainly not the police state we observe in Russia. "IT" is a truly social, political and economic order. If we do not lead the oppressed masses of the world in their struggle for a richer life, the Russians will.

Metternich was finally obliged to flee for his life from Vienna in a closed carriage. Our president, perhaps twenty-five

(5) Douglass, William O., *We Can't Save Asia By War Alone*. Look, 16th Jan., 1951, p. 48.

(6) Malik, Charles (delegate from Lebanon to the United Nations), *The Challenge of Communism*. The Christian Century, 78, Jan. 17, 1951, pp. 74-77.

or fifty years from now, if we continue to side with exploitation and oppression, will doubtless have a jet plane at his disposal, powered perhaps with atomic energy. Metternich found refuge in England. Later he was permitted to return to Vienna. Where our President could safely land, would be difficult to predict. It is at least imaginable that the development of atomic energy and the perfection of airplanes might make it unnecessary to land at all! But that would give rise to other complications.

To say that we must beat the Communists to IT, is easy enough. But how?

Can we expect the French to withdraw from Indo China, because we tell them that the natives would like to be free? Will the royal family and the nobility of Iran introduce the reforms and the public works the country so badly needs, because we advise them it is time? How successful were we in persuading Chiang Kai Shek to correct the worst and most glaring abuses of his regime? With our point 4 program we may be able to pry reforms out of reluctant despots and entrenched privilege; but we must expect to encounter resistance and every kind of subtle sabotage that wily greed can devise.

We shall find the Communists working for the same reforms! Can we, or should we, prevent them? In competing with us for the leadership of reform and revolutionary movements, they will find it easy to outbid us. It will be easy, because they will be unhampered by any scruples that honesty or simple realism might suggest.

Along with diplomatic and economic pressures must go a world-wide propaganda more pressing and persistent than any people except the Communists have ever yet developed. We must undertake, this means, a world-wide *missionary* movement vaster, more comprehensive in its aims, more variegated in its methods, more grandiose in its goals than any of which Christendom has ever dreamed. But this raises still other perplexing problems.

Will the attempt to plant the dollar sign and the ballot box in every inhabited region of our globe prove more successful than the attempt to plant the Cross? Has our Department of State the wisdom needed to reorganize the life of Roumania, Madagascar, Uganda or Sze Chuan? Has Congress? Can we rely upon our political machinery, our colleges or our technical schools to supply men and women with the moral and spiritual resources to match the needs of such an undertaking?

V. A HOLY WAR

Is the hour upon us, when Christendom, if it is not to perish, must unite in a Holy War against Communism, a crusade in the twentieth century against the modern infidel?

War does seem inevitable. The issues that divide mankind cut too deep for settlement by any means less drastic and costly. But shall we accent the word, WAR, or the other word, HOLY? What can make a war holy?

The final crusade, perhaps, and the greatest of all, would be defeated before it ever got fairly started, should it make use of atomic or hydrogen bombs or those "ultimate weapons" at which military experts hint. Dare we make the venture, even in imagination, to call for a vast army, perhaps ten millions strong, of doctors and nurses, engineers and administrators, specialists in the care and training of children, dietitians, experts in sanitation and agriculture, educators of all ranks, editors and writers, with vast numbers of simple laborers?

This army, gathered from all Christendom, we would furnish with machinery and supplies for rebuilding ruined cities, with fertilizers and agricultural machinery to improve the productivity of farms, vast quantities of milk, chocolate, soap and tobacco—and we must not forget equipment for sports and for orchestras and bands. Dare we match a vast Salvation Army against the forces of Communism?

The cost in treasure would be enormous. Doubtless there would be some cost in life besides. But what war today would cost less? We are spending billions in preparation to lay waste the world. Perhaps there is no escape from that burden. But could we not spend other billions more wisely and to better advantage to build a world that will be fairer and happier? And if we must die, should we think it harder to die in a war for life than in one which can yield only devastation and death?

What such a surging up of the Spirit would mean for us and for all mankind staggers the hardest imagination.

"The Communists have a purpose in life beyond their immediate care and worries. The non-Communist world does not have such a sense of mission. . . . In many instances Western man is too much wrapped up in himself, in his own self-pity, his own self-worry and petty, little problems. He does not sufficiently rest in joy on the marvellous vision of objective and independent truth, throbbing with life and meaning and salvation. . . .

“(The American ideal) is. . .a very timid ideal. It is not dangerous enough; it does not answer to man’s deepest hunger for truth and community, where going out of one’s self is a joy, and where it is more blessed to give than to receive. . . .If the thirsty souls of honest, seeking men throughout the world are going to be satisfied, a mighty, living, true faith must be discovered or created to balance the militant faith of Communism.”⁷

Something more than forty years ago, John R. Mott prophesied, “Today the *churches* must send ten thousand missionaries to Japan, or tomorrow the *American people* must send a hundred thousand bayonets.” Dr. Mott has lived to see that he greatly underestimated the number of “bayonets” required. Unless we can make a greater venture today, we shall have to pay, and before very long, a much higher price for bare survival. Indeed we may not be able to purchase even that for any price at all.

(7) Malik, Charles, *The Challenge of Communism*. See earlier references.