

## *Prologue and Postscripts*

**Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam**, by Gar Alperovitz, *New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965. 317 pp. \$7.50.*

**The Decision to Drop the Bomb: A Political History**, by Len Giovannitti and Fred Freed, *New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1965. 348 pp. \$6.00.*

**Hiroshima Plus 20**, prepared by *The New York Times*; introduction by John W. Finney, *New York: Delacorte Press, 1965. 211 pp. \$5.00.*

MR. ALPEROVITZ, a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, has made a detailed analysis of American policy vis-à-vis Soviet Russia, with regard to Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe on the one hand and to the Far East on the other, during the first five months of the Truman administration. In a style reminiscent of Lenin's political use of military terminology, the author analyzes American policy in terms of strategy and tactics and constructs his chapters accordingly.

In an opening chapter he presents the strategy of an immediate showdown with Soviet Russia, a strategy calling for American firmness, which President Truman adopted on recommendation of his ambassador to the Soviet Union, W. Averell Harriman, and which was supported by a consensus of all important advisers. Its first application concerned the crisis over the reorganization of the Polish government. The author shows that by May 7, 1945, the showdown strategy had failed. (In an appendix he surveys the Polish question from the Yalta Conference to Truman.)

Next the author examines the strategy of a delayed showdown, a strategy which required Truman to reverse himself and which he adopted on recommendation of his Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson. This strategy was to postpone the diplomatic confrontation with Stalin until the atomic bomb had been completed and demonstrated. In Stimson's view, the possession of the bomb would add great power to American diplomacy and allow Truman to offer the secret of the bomb as a bargaining counter. Since the exact date of this advice to Truman is not known, the author, in

another appendix, attempts to estimate the date from what is known, and concludes that it was the 25th of April, 1945, the day when Stimson first informed Truman about the new weapon.

In a third chapter Mr. Alperovitz elaborates further the decision to postpone the confrontation with Stalin and sets forth the developments revealing Truman's reversal of policy. The firm-line advisers of the strategy of immediate showdown, including Sir Winston Churchill, were shocked by Truman's change of mind. Symbolic of the new policy were the missions of Harry Hopkins to Moscow and of Joseph Davies to London. The firm-line policy had been repealed in favor of temporary compromise; but most important to the author is the evidence that in the thinking of American policymakers final determination of the issues and problems of Eastern and Central Europe now depended upon the results of the atomic test.

The succeeding chapter concerns the Far East and two faces of the strategy of delay. Once again Truman accepted Stimson's strategy, the essence of which was to do nothing until after the atomic test. When Stimson warned Truman of complications if the bomb had not been "laid on" Japan by the time of the Potsdam meeting, Truman reassured him that he had moved the date to the 15th of July "to give us more time." Symbolic of the strategy of delay in the Far East was the mission of T.V. Soong to Moscow, a mission which, the author demonstrates, became intimately bound up with the use of the atomic bomb and the American desire to prevent the Red Army from entering Manchuria. At this point in the narrative the author calmly records the many pathetic attempts of the Japanese, from September 1944 onwards, to surrender. The tragic story reaches its climax on July 28th at Potsdam when, as the author writes, "Truman permitted the bombing [of Hiroshima and Nagasaki] despite new cable intercepts," which indicated that the Japanese had not abandoned their attempts to end the war.

The next two chapters cover in detail the tactics of the Potsdam Conference, tactics which were firm but delaying. The issues involved concerned Southeastern Europe, defeated Germany, and the Far East. The result appeared to be a stalemate, but the American delegation was not depressed because, as the author has exhaustively proved, the whole point of strategy throughout the summer and throughout the Potsdam meeting was to delay the settlement of controversial issues until the atomic bomb had been demonstrated. He notes the ironic fact that, in spite of Truman's two postponements, the Potsdam meeting had to take

place before the bomb could be demonstrated. Soon after the meeting, however, on August 7th, the demonstrations took place on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Aboard the cruiser *Augusta* in mid-Atlantic, Truman received the news and was "greatly moved." "His sentiment," writes the author, "was not remorse, but satisfaction." Backed by the bomb, American diplomacy then took the offensive.

In a dramatic concluding chapter the author describes this offensive, led by Secretary of State James Byrnes. Truman had accepted his advice on the use of the bomb as a threat to Stalin, in preference to that of Stimson who, reversing himself, had attempted unsuccessfully to change the strategy of delay and had recommended sharing the bomb with Soviet Russia. Confident of success Byrnes went in late August to confront V. Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, in London. The conference quickly ended in deadlock. Thus, the author reveals that though the weapon was immediately successful the policy based on it ultimately failed.

This brief outline of the salient aspects of the book can hardly do justice to the wealth of information on the historical developments, on policy-making, and on high-level negotiations of the period, contained in the work, nor to the scope and depth of the learning and logic displayed in it by Mr. Alperovitz. From published and unpublished documents and the secondary literature on the subject he constructs his thesis on the role of the atomic bomb in American diplomacy. As he moves through his chapters he piles evidence upon evidence, periodically repeating and summarizing to pound home his points, criticizing and correcting the dates and interpretations in the writings of other specialists, such as Herbert Feis, to sustain his own new and controversial interpretation.

To the view that American policy was conciliatory toward Soviet Russia until 1947, Alperovitz opposes and proves the contradictory view, that far from following Roosevelt's policy of cooperation, Truman soon after taking office launched a powerful foreign policy initiative aimed at reducing or eliminating Soviet influence in Europe. Again contrary to others' views, Alperovitz proves that the atomic bomb played a role in the formulation of Truman's policy at the Potsdam Conference and that the bomb determined much of Truman's shift to a tough policy aimed at forcing Soviet acquiescence to American plans for Eastern and Central Europe. Lastly, and contrary to common belief, Alperovitz holds that on the basis of the evidence "the atomic bomb was not needed to end the war or to save lives and that this was understood by American leaders at the time."

The book of Messrs. Giovannitti and Freed,

considered by the authors and publisher to be a "political history (which it is not) of the 144 days from the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945," is rather an account of how the decision to drop the bomb was made, who made it and who opposed it, an account set in a frame of reference to *some* of the political history of those days, including, most importantly, the Japanese side of the tragic story. The book is the result of two years of research work by the authors for NBC television documentaries, work which entailed especially the gathering of oral testimony in interviews and which the world-wide facilities of NBC enabled them to pursue throughout the United States, Japan, and Europe. In addition, the authors have made use of pertinent books and articles, including the manuscript of Alperovitz's doctoral dissertation, which was enlarged to become the book here reviewed, and of the personal advice and counsel of Herbert Feis and Robert J. C. Butow, whose writings on the surrender of Japan have been "culled" by the authors.

Although their book covers approximately the same period as Alperovitz's, and involves the reader similarly in high-level decision-making, it is more comprehensive in scope, including as it does not only all the American government officials, military men, and scientists involved in the production and use of the bomb and their various activities pertaining to it, but also all the Japanese high civilian and military leaders involved in the problem of surrender and the role of the bomb in relation to it: the other side of the coin, as it were. Furthermore, this book of Giovannitti and Freed provides complete coverage of all the conflicting views among government officials, military men, and scientists, then and later, over the use of the bomb, the political objectives of the bomb, the problem of maintaining the Japanese Emperor, and the problem of flexible or unconditional surrender with regard to Japan. Further, the book includes the conflicting views in Japan between the civilian and military leaders over the problem of surrender and the question whether it was the dropping of the bomb, the entrance of Soviet Russia into the war against Japan, or both that brought about the final surrender.

After some 300 pages, and an appendix of 15 pages of extensive quotations in which, in television fashion, the *dramatis personae* speak for themselves, as it were, the authors sum up the arguments in an epilogue and conclude:

Until and unless new evidence is uncovered to prove otherwise, it is our belief that the de-

cision to use the bomb was taken in good faith not to unleash a weapon in vengeance against a ruthless enemy, but primarily to bring a quick end to a barbaric war and secondarily to derive the benefits of a timely victory.

The book prepared by *The New York Times* is a compendium having to do with the effect on the affairs of human beings of the explosion over Hiroshima, from the precise moment of impact, which heralded the dawn of the Atomic Age, until today. Concerned that there should be any debate about the decision to drop the bomb, the editor, John W. Finney, is at pains to point out that with the passage of years true perspective has been lost, for twenty years ago such a debate would have found little audience. However, hindsight of history and the advancement of science now permit a fuller understanding of the cataclysmic event and of its moral and political implications.

The volume consists of some twelve brief essays contributed by members of *The Times* staff and some other writers. Reference to most of these contributors and their essays will suffice to give the flavor of the book. Hanson Baldwin produces a minute-by-minute account of the decision to drop the bomb. A. M. Rosenthal describes Hiroshima today. George R. Packard III, Special Assistant to our ambassador in Tokyo, reports on the generation of Japanese 20-year-olds. Senator Clinton P. Anderson, a member of President Truman's cabinet for three years beginning June 1945, discusses the peaceful use of atomic energy. Richard H. Rovere sketches the relation of the bomb to diplomacy and international politics since 1945, opening his essay, interestingly enough, with the conclusions reached by Alperovitz. William L. Laurence, Science Editor Emeritus of *The Times*, who was the only journalist permitted to witness the test of the first atomic bomb and the only newspaperman to fly with the atomic-bomb mission over Nagasaki, presents a series of interviews with top scientists, revealing their views twenty-years later. And W. H. Auden, the noted poet and essayist, discusses some aspects of the moral and emotional effects of the bomb on Man's consciousness. Concluding the volume are two appendices which contain copies of original documents deemed pertinent, such as Albert Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt and Laurence's eyewitness report on the test at Alamogordo.

The three volumes marked the 20th anniversary last year of the opening of the Atomic Age. But they do not still the debate; rather do they represent a fresh starting point for it.

Reviewed by HENRY M. ADAMS

## *The Giant Antagonists*

**Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict**, by Walter Laqueur, *Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1965. 369 pp. \$6.75.*

THIS INTERESTING book is a study in what the author calls "the metapolitics of Russian-German relations." He has deliberately avoided a conventional history of diplomatic relations on the ground that "what Germans and Russians thought about each other, their civilisations, ways of life, and political systems mattered much more in the long run than all the diplomatic reports." The result is a book of great interest to the general reader as well as to the professional historian. It combines readability with meticulous scholarship. The author has researched deeply in the German archives captured by the Allies in 1945, especially those of the Nazi Party, Propaganda Ministry, SS, and Foreign Office; he has examined innumerable obscure pamphlets written in Russian and German; and he has skillfully utilized the endless secondary literature in German, Russian, French, and English.

The central part of Laqueur's book is devoted to the relationship between the Nazi movement and Russia—both the Russia of communism and the Russia of reactionary counter-revolution. This discussion is preceded by a preliminary sketch of the rise of German Russophobia and Russian Germanophobia before 1917; it is succeeded by a concluding section devoted to Russian-German relations since 1945 and their projection into the future. The author's distribution of emphasis is designed to meet the wishes of readers interested in Naziism and communism—the two most fascinating political phenomena of the modern world—but little interested in such "dead," though historically important, aspects of German-Russian metapolitical relations as the German influence upon Russian Conservatism and Social Democracy before 1917. (Russian Conservatism owed much to German romanticism while Russian Social Democracy, in both its Bolshevik and Menshevik form, was shaped not only by the thought of Marx but by a mixed attitude of attraction and repulsion toward the formidable organizational structure of German Social Democracy).

Laqueur documents far better than any previous author the "Russian influence upon National So-