

States offers instead to work with Russian technicians on the efficient utilization and transportation of coal energy (as artificial gas), a much smaller staff and investment can produce much more important results, much sooner. Everyone will gain if scientists and engineers now working at military enterprise will turn their attention to problems of food and fuel production, conservation of resources, and development of industrial methods conducive to decentralization.

Until there is reasonable assurance of permanent peace, until the world is united under a single democratic government, atomic power will be of greatest benefit to man if its use is confined to the sun and stars.

COMMENT

Sir:

There are three elements in the Daniel-Squires article. (1) The proposal for a disarmament race with the USSR. (2) The suggestion, put forward with a gentleness that makes it almost unnoticeable, that scientists working on weapons research could start the movement by direct action ("local democracy" is the euphemism). (3) The appendix showing how questionable is the economic usefulness of atomic power and how the much more important gains from nuclear research for peaceful purposes would have needed only a very small fraction of the expenditure we have made on the atom bomb.

Point (2) has been discussed in a more explicit form in the October, 1948, and January, 1949, issues of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, where I was one of those who took issue with Daniel-Squires on it. Their article there, to me and to others, seemed to be a claim for special powers for scientists which, if there were any chance of their being exercised, would constitute a danger to democratic society—and which would also be indistinguishable in their effects from sabotage by Russian agents.

Point (3) is of the greatest importance, and I find myself in complete agreement with it. In my own article referred to above, I apparently gave the impression that the whole of the vast expenditure on the atom bomb was necessary for obtaining the benefits of radio-isotopes for research in chemistry, biology, etc. Daniel-Squires have corrected this and have shown furthermore that the large investments in atomic energy projects are really justifiable only for military purposes—that the potential benefits from industrial atomic power are so small that even a tiny contribution to peace or to security would be ample justification for giving up the attempt to produce energy until we have established a secure peace.

But neither of these two points have very much to do with (1), the proposal that the USA should embark on a disarmament race with the USSR.

While I do not think the proposal makes much sense, I am in favor of it. I do not think it makes much sense because if an act of disarmament could have started a disarmament race, it should have done this when the USA disarmed with breakneck rapidity at the end of the war (when the Communist slogan, "Bring Home the American, not Russian Boys!" helped to create the power vacuums that now plague our conscience). It does not make sense because any act of disarmament that left us strong relatively to the USSR would be denounced as a hypocritical trap, while one that left us significantly weaker—and which would amount to telling all our friends in Europe and Asia that the only way to save their necks is to join the Russians—would not, I think, be proposed by Daniel and Squires. It does not make sense because the people behind the Iron Curtain (which includes those in the free countries who bind their own eyes with little private iron blinkers) will never get a true account of the disarmament step, while all others do not need to be persuaded by such a gesture that the USA is not dedicated to any manifest destiny of restoring capitalism in Russia. It does not

make sense because there was more excuse for believing that Hitler had no aggressive intentions than for any literate person believing that the Russians are merely afraid or that anything less than conviction of failure would prevent them from trying to establish Russian communism over the whole planet.

Nevertheless, I am in favor of the proposal. I favor it because the situation is desperate. If this should be a way of upsetting the Russian Date with Destiny, it should be tried even though its chance of success be very small indeed. The risk need not be too great. We can make many steps of disarmament without seriously jeopardizing our relative military position.

It is important to recognize that although what is proposed is a disarmament race, its success must be judged not by our really being *weakened*, but by our being *strengthened* through winning—to our side—to the side of peace, though not at the price of surrender—in exchange for some atom bombs, those people who may be persuaded by the gesture that our objective is indeed peace.

If such a policy should be tried, I have no doubt that it will be branded as warmongering, as Daniel and Squires fear. The refusal of the Russians to take the next step in disarmament would indeed strengthen those who warn us of Russia's aggressive intentions and even those who are in favor of immediate "preventive" war. Every peace plan can become a war plan in the moment of its rejection, as every rejected declaration of love can be the beginning of hatred. This, too, is one of the dangers that must be braved in the search for peace.

There is a way in which this danger can be reduced, a way that was suggested to me by my colleague, George Watson, of the Political Science department of Roosevelt College. Let the first American step be taken at a time when the Russians have done something that it is possible to call a peace move. Let the American step be declared to be not the first but the *second* step, made in response to the Russian peace move. The failure of the Russians to make a third step could not then so easily be turned into a further (and unnecessary) unmasking of Russia's aggressive intentions. But whether this extension of Daniel-Squires' proposal is a good thing or a bad thing, I don't know. I know only that anything should be tried that might postpone the war and thus increase the possibility of preventing it.

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ABBA P. LERNER

Sir:

If World War III is prevented and the world moves into an era of peace and a decisive advance in civilization, this paper by Cuthbert Daniel and Arthur M. Squires may come to be regarded in that so much to be desired future as one of the greatest and most influential documents in the history of human politics and thought. Its publication now is so timely as to seem providential, for it suggests what seems to me the one way in which the initiative could be transferred from the forces making for war to those making for peace. The one way, to state the case in another form, in which the initiative both in the field of propaganda and that of action can be taken out of the hands of the Kremlin and put into the hands of the democratic and peace forces in the world.

The basic thesis of the Daniel-Squires paper is absolutely sound: "the only thing to which the USSR can respond is a major objective change in the situation," just as this is the only thing to which the USA can respond. Unless the "I will only if you will first" deadlock is, therefore, to continue until it is exploded in open warfare, there has to be unilateral initiative. Obviously, that is something which one power cannot ask of another. So far as we in the USA are concerned, therefore, the only possible conclusion is that the USA must take the first step toward disarmament unilaterally. For the armaments race we must substitute a disarmament race. We must lead off and see whether the others will and can catch us.

Daniel-Squires furthermore take the bull by the horns by flatly declaring that "an American step toward disarmament must be a real, objective weakening of the USA. It must not be a phony gesture meant to feint the Russians into a counter-gesture." I do not want to spend more time summing up the points in this paper with which I am in agreement, for that would mean virtu-

ally summarizing the whole of it. I want to come straight to the dilemma which the paper itself raises for the authors and for all who want to find the way to peace.

The USA, Daniel-Squires argue, must take the initiative in an objective weakening of its own power position over against the USSR. Such weakening must, above all, not be phony. Clearly, therefore it must be substantial. But, they contend, this need not mean complete disarmament. Indeed, the USA will presumably be still so potent in a military way (what with the atomic weapons as to which it possesses the know-how and to the production of which it could return plus the military establishment which it still holds in reserve) that the first—and chief?—argument in favor of their proposal for unilateral action is that if Russia does not follow the U.S. example, it will be threatened with “early war, which it cannot win. . . . If the Kremlin refuses to match America’s move within a reasonable period, the hand of those Americans who advocate ‘preventive’ war will now be greatly strengthened.”

The U.S. will objectively weaken its position since its actions must be “unambiguously on the side of peace”; but the result of such weakening of its position is to be that Russia is put at a great disadvantage in the propaganda battle and the U.S. is left so strong in a military way as to be unquestionably able to lick Russia, if it “misinterprets” our gesture, in a “preventive” war which is very likely to come about and may even be speeded up because the Russians misinterpret—or interpret only too accurately?—what the U.S. is about.

I think that any move toward such a moratorium on the production of atomic weapons as Daniel-Squires propose would have a considerable psychological effect, and I am all for it. But I question whether the U.S. can both weaken and not weaken its power position.

One reason suggested for avoiding complete disarmament is that taking this step “would create a power vacuum inviting early Russian domination of all Europe.” But the threat of atomic attack by the U.S. in case Russia advances further in Europe either is or is not a factor in the power struggle and a deterrent to Russia. If it is, then removal of that factor may lead to a forward move by Russia and a softening of resistance to the Kremlin in Western Europe. If it is not, then on Daniel-Squires own showing the U.S. is not objectively weakened.

It is also doubtful whether in the economic field a partial, limited or gradualist transition can be made from a war to a peace policy. What would be the effect on the American economy at this jittery moment if atomic weapon production were suddenly curtailed and an indication thus given that the economy was probably going on a peace basis shortly?

The point of the various questions that I am raising is that I believe thoroughly in the thesis which underlies the Daniel-Squires paper, viz., that the way to disarm is to disarm. I think that what they are really proposing is complete disarmament—i.e. so far as any ability to wage modern war is concerned. They point out that if Russia accepted the American example, then we’d have to maintain the initiative by at once disarming further. It seems to me that the only logical answer they could give to the question, “But what if Russia remains recalcitrant and ‘takes advantage’ of our kindness?” is that in that case, too, we ought to take further steps toward disarmament to prove that we don’t mean war. If that is what we are setting out to prove, then war is just what we refuse to turn to *under any circumstances*.

Finally, one reason why Daniel-Squires do not come out for complete disarmament is, I surmise, that they believe it is too much to ask the American people to accept in one dose. But they are as a matter of fact asking the American people to make a great moral decision—to act unambiguously for peace, to stop threatening the Russian people and so on. Their observation that the threat of “preventive” war “could not be constructive if put as an ultimatum” is, of course, entirely correct and very revealing in this entire context. But if the American people are to “wage peace,” then they will have to be free from “ambiguity” and divided motives in their own minds and they will have to know the price they may have to pay. Therefore, the way to meet

their undoubted hesitation and questioning is to hold forth the possibility of non-violent resistance, not to suggest that we can make a motion toward non-violent procedure and still fall back in the ultimate extremity on atomic war.

A. J. MUSTE

Sir:

Messrs. Daniel and Squires are naive. The political kernel of their proposal is their *hope* that if the United States destroys its atomic bombs and plants, Stalin will be ashamed of himself and abandon his dictatorship. The Stalin regime cannot permit the kind of inspection and control they desire without relinquishing the dictatorship of the Communist Party—a dictatorship which instead of growing weaker over the years has grown stronger.

Anyone who has studied the structure of power in the U.S.S.R. realizes that this is a fantastic assumption to make. The only time Stalin *refrains* from aggressive action is when he is weaker than those whom he wants to destroy. The only time and place he acts aggressively is when and where he is relatively stronger. Stalin never takes chances. This is demonstrated by the factional history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, by the domestic policies of the Soviet regime, and by its foreign policy.

Berlin does not disprove this generalization. When I was in Berlin last summer I learned from the best possible sources that the American military authorities had been aware of the possibility, before it happened, that the Soviets would impose a blockade on the city. The original intention of General Clay’s staff was to force that blockade with troops and planes and armored trains. But this proposed plan for breaking the blockade was vetoed by Truman. There is every reason to believe that Truman’s veto was known to Stalin—whose sources of information, as perhaps everybody is now aware, are excellent!—before he gave the orders to the Russian commanders to go ahead. As it was, he gave the orders gradually, first for one mode of transportation, then for another, until he became convinced that Truman would stick by the veto, especially in an election year.*

If we were to adopt the Daniel-Squires proposals, we would be inviting ten Pearl Harbors, or as many as Stalin has atomic bombs for. For once we disarm, he would be free of the only thing he fears—retaliation and failure.

Stalin cannot disarm for the same reason that Hitler could not disarm—it would mean the end of his dictatorship. I wonder whether Daniel-Squires would have made the same proposal to Hitler in 1939 if we had discovered the bomb then. My guess is that if Hitler had known we possessed the bomb, he would *not* have gone to war, mad and incautious as he was. And Stalin is *not* mad and far from incautious.

The nub of the whole matter is that Stalin cannot be controlled by a free public opinion in the Soviet Union because there isn’t any. Nor does he care a damn about free public opinion elsewhere.

I am *not* in favor of a preventive war because I am as confident as one can be in human affairs that so long as Stalin fears he will be blasted off the face of the earth once he strikes against the West, he will wait. We can see to it that he is never free of that fear. Even less than the romantic Hitler has he the demonic desire to bring the world down on him in a universal ruin.

Our own free public opinion can prevent the West from waging a preventive war. But there is no free public opinion in the U.S.S.R. and its satellite countries to prevent Stalin from waging a preventive war. But there is no free public opinion in the strategy is wrong. While the preponderance of power is still in the hands of the West—and Daniel-Squires apparently believe that it can be retained for at least five years—all efforts must be directed to spread a passion for elementary political freedoms among the peoples behind the iron curtain. There are many ways in which this can be done—not by governments, and certainly not by those businessmen of the Western world who believe they

* I recommend in connection with Stalin’s strategy a close study of Boris Souvarine’s book on *Stalin*, together with his remarkable newsletters *L’Observateur des deux Mondes*.