1966

Ethics and United States Foreign Policy According to Reinhold Niebuhr

John Redmond Macnamara
Loyola University Chicago

ETHICS AND UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY ACCORDING TO REINHOLD NIEBUHR

by

John R. Macnamara, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

June

1965

LIFE

John Redmond Macnamara, S.J. was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 11, 1937. He was graduated from Loyola Academy, Chicago, in June, 1955. His undergraduate work was done at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio and Loyola University of Chicago. Majoring in political science, he received the Bachelor of Science degree in February, 1961.

In January, 1962, he entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio and was transferred to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, in August, 1963. He enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University of Chicago in September of the same year. In June, 1964, West Baden College moved to North Aurora, Illinois, and became the Bellarmine School of Theology of Loyola University of Chicago. Mr. Macnamara is currently completing his studies for the degree of Master of Arts in philosophy at this institution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Preface vi

Chapter

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIEBUHR'S SOCIAL ETHICS 1

Introduction--General outline--The first stage: Conventual Liberalism--Reaction and transition-- The second stage: Marxism--The influence of liberalism and Marxism on subsequent thought--Two general characteristics of Niebuhr's thought--Conclusion.

II. THE FOUNDATION OF NIEBUHR'S ETHICS 12

General nature of man--Three dialogues of the human self--Freedom--Essential vs. Existential nature--Love as the norm of human nature--Meaning of the norm--Sacrificial love vs. mutual love--Justice and love--Nature of ethics--Comparison with the natural law theory.

III. THE TRANSITION TO SOCIAL ETHICS 35

Individual vs. Collective morality--Power--Types of power--Goodness and evil of power--Difficulties in attaining the ideal of love on the collective level--Balance of power--Love and social ethics--Further criticism of the natural law theory--Conclusion.

IV. WAR 53

Method--Three stages of war theory--Pacifism--Anti-pacifism--Nuclear war theory--Limitations of war.

V. PEACE 65

Oversimplified approaches to moral problems in international affairs--Self-concern vs. altruism--Misuses of power--American responsibility--The Truman Doctrine--The Marshall Plan--NATO--Point Four Proposal--Three Themes--Inter-

Page

national organization.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 80

PREFACE

The Nuclear War Institute held at West Baden College in November, 1963 indicated rather forcefully that there is little dialogue between philosophers of morality and the men who are engaged in the more practical aspects of politics. It cannot be said that United States policy has been formulated without ethical considerations, but I believe that most people will admit that these considerations have not formally entered into the decisions. The effort to relate ethical theory and political reality is a difficult problem inasmuch as it involves the confrontation of the theoretical and practical spheres. Yet, there are many who hold the importance of such a confrontation and would hope to witness solutions that can be worked out in realistic terms.

Very few philosophers of morality have attempted to relate their ethical theories to the concrete hard facts of everyday political life. One notable exception is Reinhold Niebuhr. His ability in this area has led many to regard him as the philosopher of political realism and accounts for his importance as an ethician. The extend of his contribution and influence in this area is attested to by a number of men who are professionals in both the ethical and political fields.

This thesis aims primarily at showing how Dr. Niebuhr has gone about applying an ethical theory to some aspects of United States foreign policy.

His writings on the subject cover a large span of years and treat such a variety of aspects that any attempt to cover all of them would result in superficial treatment. Consequently, I have elected to limit the discussion to a few specific issues which were predominant during the time of World War II and the years immediately following. This period has been chosen because Dr. Niebuhr's writings at this time reflect his thought in its maturity. Moreover, the issues which he discussed at this time are such that we can see rather clearly how he went about applying his theory to the practical politics of the time.

In keeping with the aim of the thesis stated above, it seems best to limit this work to the presentation of Niebuhr's doctrine. An attempt to go beyond this into evaluation and comparison would result in overextension and superficiality. I say this for two reasons. The first is that Niebuhr's ethics of United States foreign policy is found scattered through a number of his books and a larger number of occasional writings. Even though the bulk of his general ethical theory is found well summarized in his books, it at times becomes clear only when it is seen how it is applied. As a result it is necessary to bring the two aspects together into a synthesis so that the practical decisions can be seen in light of the general theory. Secondly, the dialectical nature of his thought demands careful and extensive synthesis.

Finally, it should be noted that there is no scarcity of secondary sources on Niebuhr. Many of them treat of his concern for practical politics.

However, I have not found any extensive treatment of his writings on United States foreign policy. The unique character of this thesis, then, is that it deals with a limited portion of the practical politics with which he concerned himself in order that it might be seen how he applies a general ethics to particular problems.

CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIEBUHR'S SOCIAL ETHICS

Any attempt to understand an individual's mature philosophical position requires at least a general familiarity with the manner in which that position developed during the course of his philosophical career. Attention must be given to those forces which work on the individual from outside such as his education and the temper of the age in which he lives. We must also consider the development in terms of the insights and reactions which take place within the individual himself. This is particularly true of a man like Reinhold Niebuhr whose interests extend in almost every direction and whose thinking has undergone several drastic changes in a relatively brief span of time. It is precisely because of this variety of interests and the radical changes in his thinking that the task of providing an account of background and development becomes a difficult one. Nevertheless, various patterns and trends can be detected although the divisions and changes were never as clear-cut and abrupt as a summary analysis might lead one to believe.

The evolution of Niebuhr's social ethics and political philosophy is generally considered to have occurred in three major phases. The first, which corresponds approximately to the period of the 1920's, is characterized by a

conventual liberalism which combines the doctrines of the Social Gospel with the pragmatism of John Dewey. This trend had wide popular acceptance in the United States at the time. During the period of the 1930's, the second phase in the development of Niebuhr's thought was to appear in the form of the acceptance of Marxist principles, although not without qualification. By approximately 1940, his mature position was beginning to take form and it is generally believed that from this time up to the present, his position has not changed essentially even though there have been several variations in its application. This period witnesses a combination of pragmatism with the classical principles of western civilization and an effort to transcend the principles of both trends.

Within this evolution, there was a development in two general areas of application. One of these concerns the matter of socialism and all the implications connected with economic and political controls. The other treats the question of pacifism and includes the entire discussion concerning the use of violent and non-violent resistance.

Now that we have seen the general outline of the evolution of Niebuhr's thought, we are in a position to examine each of the stages more closely in order to obtain insight into his mature ethical position. The Social Gospel doctrine which formed one of the two major elements of Niebuhr's thought in the 1920's was largely influenced by Walter Rauschenbusch who was its most important theologian. The theory put forth by Rauschenbusch was that the concept of the Kingdom of God is the central approach for both religion and society.

The Kingdom came to be identified with a gradual growth in the perfection of laws, customs, institutions of education, and everything else that comprised the collective life of humanity. The manner in which this aim was to be effected was through faith and through knowledge which consists in a scientific comprehension of social life. It is true that Rauschenbusch did not think that the Kingdom of God could be established on earth in its fullness because he knew that social change would not abolish the sinfulness of man. But many of his followers differed from him on this point and fully expected to see the establishment of the Kingdom of God in history. For them, the Kingdom of God thus became synonomous with historical progress. Egoism and power would not destroy the progress provided that human relations would be controlled by love, that a policy of non-violence would be established in political relations, and that pacifism would prevail in international relations.[1]

The other major influence during this early period was the social application of the instrumentalist version of American pragmatism associated with John Dewey. This was based on the theory that social change could be effected by means of education and experiment. It was felt that the only factor which prevented social progress was ignorance and consequently science and

---

[1]Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Reinhold Niebuhr's Role in American Political Thought and Life," Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), pp. 127-28.

education were looked upon as the tools for working out the great economic and political issues.[2]

In 1936, Niebuhr published an article in which he enumerated a set of propositions that characterize the conventual liberalism of the early period.

> a. That injustice is caused by ignorance and will yield to education and greater intelligence.
>
> b. That civilization is becoming gradually more moral and that it is a sin to challenge either the inevitability or the efficacy of gradualness.
>
> c. That the character of individuals rather than social systems and arrangements is the guarantee of justice in society.
>
> d. That appeals to love, justice, good-will and brotherhood are bound to be efficacious in the end. If they have not been so to date we must have more appeals to love, justice, good-will and brotherhood.
>
> e. That goodness makes for happiness and that the increasing knowledge of this fact will overcome human selfishness and greed.
>
> f. That wars are stupid and can therefore only be caused by people who are more stupid than those who recognize the stupidity of war.[3]

The transition of Niebuhr's thought into the second major phase was well on its way at the time that he wrote the article from which we have just quoted. His dissatisfaction with liberalism rested on the fact that its creed blinds it to the real world. This dissatisfaction was foreshadowed by an earlier insight which made a distinction between what he called the "prophet" and the "statesman."[4] The prophet, for him, was the man committed to God while the statesman was the man committed to the sinful world. This

---

[2] Ibid., pp. 129-30.

[3] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Blindness of Liberalism," Radical Religion, I, No. 4 (Autumn, 1936), p. 4.

[4] Reinhold Niebuhr, Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (New York: Willett, Clark, and Colby Co., 1929), pp. xii-xiv.

distinction gave rise to a certain opposition which he felt existed between the Social Gospel and pragmatism. Instead of being fused into one as the liberal creed presupposed, these two streams seemed to be a paradox. The Social Gospel lacked the sense of the relative since it placed its emphasis on the law of love. Pragmatism, on the other hand, lacked a sense of the absolute because of its insistence that expert knowledge could overcome all difficulties. Niebuhr's solution to the problem appeared on two levels. On the level of strategy, he prescribed the balance of power; on the level of tactics, his answer was found in adherence to Marxist principles.[5]

At this point, we find Niebuhr in the second phase of the evolution of his thought. Although it is true that he never felt completely at ease about accepting the Marxist principles in their entirety, he did subscribe to them quite extensively and they did influence his thinking profoundly.[6] In general, it might be said that the defects of the liberal philosophy seemed to be the strength of Marxism. Kenneth Thompson describes these as follows:

> Liberalism had failed to relate the individual organically to society; Marxism made society the beginning and the end. Liberalism maintained that the individual through maximizing self-interest would miraculously serve the interests of all; Marxism showed that this was in practical terms

---

[5]Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 136.

[6]Kenneth Thompson, "The Political Philosophy of Reinhold Niebuhr," Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 159.

> a middle-class idealogy. Liberalism concealed the conflicts of interest which prevail in all communities; Marxism laid bare the struggles which went on between diverse social and economic classes. Liberalism insisted that justice could be attained through the automatic working of a free economic system; Marxism proclaimed that injustice was inevitable as long as economic inequality prevailed.[7]

It can be seen that Marxism dominated Niebuhr's thought during this period, but it must be pointed out that his allegiance was always strictly limited. He saw that the Communists made two basic errors. The first was that they found the Kingdom of God in history. Although he liked their emphasis on the collective aspect of man's existence, he feared that it was culminating in a secular religion. The Communists, he insisted, perceived the Soviet Union as the incarnation of the absolute. His other basic objection centered around his theory of power. While he liked the Marxist socialization of the economy, he feared that the power which it sought to balance would simply be allocated in a new disproportion.[8]

Before we go on to consider the third and final stage in the development of Niebuhr's thought, we must consider the influence of liberalism and Marxism on his later thinking. Kenneth Thompson addresses himself to this question and points out that Niebuhr retained certain perennial truths inherent in liberalism and Marxism as he embarked on his mission of discovering a viable theory of politics, but he stripped them of their worst fantasies. In

---

[7] Ibid., p. 158.

[8] Schlesinger, op. cit., pp. 139-40.

looking at the elements of liberalism which endured in Niebuhr's thought, he says:

> Liberalism, for example, provides certain moral objectives which serve as the gentle civilizers of politics in our society. Together they make up what Niebuhr calls the spirit of liberalism, which is older than bourgeois culture. They include a spirit of tolerance and fairness without which life is reduced to an almost consistent inhumanity. Freedom or liberty is another moral and political objective which the spirit, if not the middle-class application and interpretation, of liberalism bequeths to Niebuhr's thought.[9]

He goes on to say that Niebuhr rejected Marxism more completely and more emphatically than liberalism but it remains at least a residual element of his approach. Thompson suggested that there are three insights from Marxist thought which appear to endure. These are summarized as follows:

> The three insights from Marxist thought . . . include its emphasis on the social dimension of life and the collective fate of man's existence which for Niebuhr implies a responsibility to seek justice at the national and international level. He adds, however, that these organic forms of life will not yield to the efforts of collectivists or idealists to coerce them into new mechanical or artificial molds. Second, Marxism requires that the political and economic structure of human communities be taken seriously. It rejects the belief that structures are of no importance so long as good men operate these systems and structures. Third, as against the liberal concept of an easy harmony of interests, Marxism postulates the idea of class struggle. Niebuhr finds this last idea unacceptable unless expanded to embrace all political struggles which endlessly go on as the sole means of righting the balance between the victims and the beneficiaries of injustice.[10]

---

[9] Thompson, op. cit., p. 162.

[10] Ibid.

As Niebuhr's thought began to pass from the second phase of its development, another aspect of Marxist philosophy began to trouble him. He saw that the Marxist conception of the nature of man as a being who would be transfigured with the withering away of the state was unrealistic. To him, this notion was as utopian as the sentimentality of liberalism.[11] Throughout his entire career, the problem of the nature of man was basic for him. His thinking on the subject underwent an evolution as it did on the other issues and was finally presented in its mature form in his book, The Nature and Destiny of Man,[12] which was a revised version of the Gifford Lectures which were given at the University of Edinburgh in 1939. According to John C. Bennett, the chapter entitled "The Kingdom of God and the Struggle for Justice" which appears in the second volume of that book represents the continuing structure of his social ethics as well as anything that he has written.[13] An understanding of Niebuhr's concept of the nature of man is an essential prerequisite to the proper understanding of his social ethics.

---

[11] Ibid., p. 160.

[12] Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. I: Human Nature, 1941; Vol. II: Human Destiny, 1943; one-volume edition, 1949).

[13] John C. Bennett, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Social Ethics," Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 47.

Before we consider the various aspects of Niebuhr's mature ethical position in detail, we must note two characteristics of his thought. First, there exists a certain dialectical structure in his thinking. This is most apparent in his books where he puts forth his theories in detail. The result of this is that there is frequently some ambiguity as to where he is placing his emphasis. This ambiguity can be resolved only by an analysis of his concrete decisions for action which can be found chiefly in his numerous articles and editorials.

The other characteristic concerns his attitude toward the modern scientific method. Niebuhr admits that "modern social and psychological sciences have been able to teach us a great deal about man and his community."[14] At the same time, however, he recognizes their limitation when he says that they have been "singularly deficient in generating wisdom in human affairs."[15] He elaborates on his position when he says: "What is insufferable is that elaborate claims should be made for the resources of 'science' in the clarification of our perplexities, when it is obvious that a most rigorous application of the methods of science means a denial of everything which is characteristically human."[16]

---

[14]Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 3.

[15]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Tyranny of Science," Theology Today, X, No. 4 (January, 1954), p. 465.

[16]Ibid., p. 471.

Those things which Niebuhr specifically objects to in the modern scientific method have been lined up by Kenneth Thompson as five illusions or fantasies. The first is the myth of a presuppositionless science. Another is that science tends to conceal conclusions which fail to conform to the facts. A third illusion is that the position of the observer differs in physical and social science. In the latter, man is both the agent and the observer. The problem, however, is less acute when the observer is removed from his subject in time and place as in historical studies. The fourth illusion of the scientific approach results from modern conceptions of causation and prediction. Both the complexity of causation and the intervention of contingent factors in history are ignored. Furthermore, prediction is possible only in terms of rough probabilities. The final illusion is also the most persistent. All too frequently, science is considered to offer the most profound method because it is the latest fruit of culture.[17]

Yet, in spite of his disavowal of the exclusive use of the scientific method, Niebuhr does see its value and always insists on the considerations of political realities. Furthermore, his thinking is filled with many profound practical insights. He realizes the importance of an empirical approach along with a more philosophical one because he realizes that ideological sentiments can frequently influence judgments. Perhaps it is the curious and somewhat

---

[17]Thompson, op. cit., pp. 153-55.

unique combination of philosophical understanding and historical realism that has earned for him widespread acclaim as America's foremost political philosopher. He is constantly praised for the relevance of his thought while most political philosophers are criticized severely for their lack of relevance. That this is particularly true with respect to United States foreign policy can be attested by the words of Ernest W. Lefever: "There has been very little serious writing which explicitly relates Judaeo-Christian ethics to the formulation and conduct of United States foreign policy. The many books and articles written by Reinhold Niebuhr over the past three decades are the major exception."[18]

It is against this background of the first two phases of the development of Niebuhr's thought and general characteristics which illumine the nature of his thinking that his mature philosophical position must be viewed. The next step, then, is to consider his views on human nature as they apply to the establishment of the foreign policy ethic.

---

[18]Ernest W. Lefever, Ethics and United States Foreign Policy (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1957), p. 181.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATION OF NIEBUHR'S ETHICS

The foundation of Niebuhr's social ethics is found in his understanding of human nature. Much of his writing has been devoted to this topic. Almost every one of his books takes up the question in one form or another and each treatment brings out a new emphasis or new aspect while at the same time remaining true to the fundamental concept. Consequently, we shall begin this treatment by considering those aspects which are especially relevant to his general social ethics as well as his application to the ethics of United States foreign policy.

Niebuhr's concept of the nature of man begins with man's individuality. "Individuality," he says, "is a fruit of both nature and spirit."[1] On the level of nature, one individual is separated from another by virtue of a physical organism which maintains its discrete existence and has its particular history. But man's genuine individuality is the product of the spirit. "Nature supplies the particularity but the freedom of the spirit is the cause of real individuality."[2]

---

[1] Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 54.

[2] Ibid., p. 55.

Man, according to Niebuhr, is distinguished from animals because of his capacity to transcend himself. In other words, man not only has a center within himself, but he also has a center beyond himself. Consequently, Niebuhr distinguishes spirit, which is man's unique capacity for self-transcendence, from soul, which man shares with animals. From this capacity for self-transcendence arises man's fundamental freedom which allows him to choose, develop, and shape history.

Niebuhr describes or defines the uniqueness of the human self by emphasizing the three dialogues in which this self is involved. He shows that "the self is a creature which is in constant dialogue with itself, with its neighbors, and with God, according to the Biblical viewpoint."[3] An examination of each of these dialogues will serve to clarify some aspects of the nature of man.

Niebuhr asserts that it is a matter of experience which all must admit that man is a creature engaged in a continuous internal dialogue. This internal dialogue is something which is peculiar to the human creature. In this process, the self approves or disapproves its actions, it judges and excuses, it pities and glorifies. The self in which this dialogue is carried on is not the "rational" self in contrast to the "sensible" self. There are not two distinct selves but merely two different dimensions of the same self. This dialogue

---

[3]Reinhold Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 4.

within the self proceeds on a number of different levels. Niebuhr lists them as follows:

> Sometimes it is a dialogue between the self as engaged in its various responsibilities and affections and the self which observes these engagements. Sometimes the dialogue is between the self in the grip of its immediate necessities and biological urges, and the self as an organization of long-range purposes and ends. Sometimes the dialogue is between the self in the context of one set of loyalties and the self in the grip of contrasting claims and responsibilities.[4]

The setting of this dialogue is the whole self which includes both man's nature and his spirit as we described them above. It is necessary to keep this duality in mind. It is in the context of this organic unity of the self and its functions and the freedom and transcendence of the self over its functions that this internal dialogue takes place.

The second dialogue of the self is that which takes place constantly with man's various neighbors. "This may be a quality which Aristotle was partly describing by defining the self as a zoon politicon. But that definition would not do justice to the endless nuances and levels of the dialogue of the self with others."[5] The reason for this is that the self "is not merely dependent on others for its sustenance and security. It is dependent upon them for the image which it has of itself and for the spiritual security which is as necessary to the self as its social security."[6]

---

[4] Ibid., p. 7.

[5] Ibid., p. 4.

[6] Ibid., p. 4-5.

In the dialogue with others, there are certain conditions which Niebuhr discusses and which can be enumerated briefly. (1) "The self faces the other self as a mystery which can never be fully penetrated."[7] (2) "The self sees the other as an instrument for its purposes and as a completion for its incompleteness."[8] (3) "The self cannot be truly fulfilled if it is not drawn out of itself into the life of the other."[9] (4) "The self recognizes the other as the limit of its expansiveness."[10] (5) "The uniqueness of the individuals which enter into any dialogic relation makes each one of these relations highly unique, however general may be the natural basis of the relation."[11] (6) "While the self is a unique center of life it is indeterminately 'open' to other selves."[12] (7) "The pattern of these dialogues is conditioned by historic factors."[13]

"The self's physical and spiritual need of others is naturally satisfied not only in casual and transient but in permanent relationship."[14] Thus, the

---

[7] Ibid., p. 30.

[8] Ibid., p. 31.

[9] Ibid.,

[10] Ibid., p. 32.

[11] Ibid., p. 33.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 34.

dialogue with others gives rise to and includes man's communities. There is a twofold relationship of the individual to the community. The vertical dimension of this relationship can be further divided into two forms. Man "looks up at the community as the fulfillment of his life and the sustainer of his existence. By its organization his physical and moral needs are met."[15] Niebuhr describes the nature of this form of the vertical dimension in the following way:

> The individual is related to the community (in its various levels and extensions) in such a way that the highest reaches of his individuality are dependent upon the social substance out of which they arise and they must find their end and fulfillment in community. No simple limit can be placed upon the degree of intimacy to the community and the breadth and extent of community which the individual requires for life.[16]

The second form of the vertical dimension is the view that the individual takes when he looks down on the community "because he is, as it were, higher than it. It is bound to nature more inexorably than he. It knows nothing of a dimension of the eternal beyond its own existence."[17] Consequently, the community tenaciously clings to life and is often willing to sacrifice every dignity to preserve its existence. The other dimension of the individual's relationship to the

---

[15] Ibid., p. 35.

[16] Reinhold Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 48.

[17] Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 35.

community is the horizontal one which he "experiences . . . whenever his community is in conflict with other communities."[18]

The third dialogue, which is the dialogue with God, reveals the self in its ultimate search for meaning. This search takes many forms, but Niebuhr feels that it is possible to place them into three general categories. "The first category embraces all religious responses in which the self seeks to break through a universal rational system in order to assert its significance ultimately."[19] It may do this individually or in the assertion of the significance of the collective self. In the latter case, the individual is so conscious of his finiteness that he can only find significance in the community. The second category is generally defined as "mysticism" and stands at the opposite pole of idolatry. "It is . . . an heroic effort to transcend all finite values and systems of meaning, including the self as particular existence and to arrive at universality and 'unconditioned' being."[20] The third category of [illegible] faiths of Judaism and Christianity. "These faiths interpret the self's experience with the ultimate in the final reaches of its self-awareness as a dialogue with God. This idea of a dialogue between the self and God assumes the personality of God. . . ."[21] In describing this category, Gordon Harland

---

[18] Ibid., p. 38.

[19] Ibid., p. 63.

[20] Ibid., p. 64.

[21] Ibid.,

summarizes Niebuhr's thinking on the matter as follows:

> In this dialogue man is convicted not for his finiteness but for his sin, and he is convicted by a love that has the power not only to convict but also to uphold and redeem. In this dialogue he learns that the attempt to seek the fulfillment of the self from the standpoint of the self are both idolatrous and self-defeating; that the self can find fulfillment only when centered in God; and that this can be found not when self-fulfillment is sought as the conscious end, but for the glory of God only.[22]

We have already seen that man's capacity for self-transcendence is closely associated with his freedom. A further examination of this freedom is necessary for a proper understanding of Niebuhr's concept of the nature of man and his social ethics.

Man's freedom enables him to rise above purely natural process. In Christian Realism and Political Problems, Niebuhr writes:

> According to the Christian view, the human self arises as an independent and self-determining force in the very social process and historical continuum in which it is also a creature. Its freedom is a radical one because the self is not easily kept within the confines of nature's harmonies. This freedom is the basis of the self's destructive as well as creative powers; and there is no simple possibility of making nice distinctions between human destructiveness and creativity.[23]

And in The Self and the Dramas of History, he puts this same notion into a slightly different perspective:

---

[22]Gordon Harland, The Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 62.

[23]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 6. Cf. also: Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, pp. 59-60.

> It is obvious that the self's freedom over natural process enables it to be a creator of historical events. Both its memory of past events and its capacity to project goals transcending the necessities of nature enable it to create the new level of reality which we know as human history. But the self is not simply a creator of this new dimension, for it is also a creature of the web of events, in the creation of which it participates.[24]

Here Niebuhr squarely faces the controversy between voluntarism and determinism. He considers three elements: nature, reason, and history. In refusing to admit that nature, reason, and history strictly determine man's activity, he is not so naive as to fail to recognize their influence on man's actions. All three elements condition and in some respects limit what man will do. Consequently, he views man as a basically free creature whose activity is influenced by nature, reason, and the historical context in which he finds himself.

From the foregoing, we can put together most of the elements in Niebuhr's concept of the essential nature of man. He summarizes it as follows:

> The essential nature of man contains two elements; and there are correspondingly two elements in the original perfection of man. To the essential nature of man belong, on the one hand, all his natural endowments and determinations, his physical and social impulses, his sexual and racial differentiations, in short his character as a creature imbedded in the natural order. On the other hand, his essential nature also includes the freedom of his spirit, his transcendence over natural process and finally his self-transcendence.[25]

Thus, man's essential nature contains two contradictory elements: finiteness

---

[24]Niebuhr, The Self and the Drama of History, p. 41.

[25]Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 270.

and freedom. But, it must be noted that man never really attains the fullness of his essential nature. There is a difference between what man is essentially and what he is in the existential order of things.

The basis of the contradiction between essential man and existential man is found in the two components of man's nature. Man's finiteness is the occasion for his sin. This happens in three ways. First, "man is insecure and involved in natural contingency; he seeks to overcome his insecurity by a will-to-power which overreaches the limits of human creatureliness."[26] Moreover, "man is ignorant and involved in the limitations of a finite mind; but he pretends that he is not limited."[27] In these two cases, sin becomes identified with pride. In the third case, "man seeks to solve the problem of the contradiction of finiteness and freedom, not by seeking to hide his finiteness and comprehending the world into himself, but by seeking to hide his freedom and by losing himself in some aspect of the world's vitalities."[28] In this situation, Niebuhr would call the sin sensuality rather than pride.

But Niebuhr insists that the uniqueness of the Biblical approach to the human problem lies in its subordination of the problem of finiteness to the problem of sin. We have already indicated that finiteness is only the occasion

---

[26] Ibid., p. 178.

[27] Ibid., pp. 178-79.

[28] Ibid., p. 179.

for sin. "The contrast between what man is truly and essentially and what he has become is apparent even to those who do not understand that this contrast is to be found in every human being and has its seat in the will of man himself."[29] It is the freedom of man's will which has been corrupted by original sin that makes it possible for man to sin. This position has been summarized as follows:

> The will is bound. It is not bound by fate or by creation. It is bound to the interests of the self which, in contradiction to its essential nature, seeks the things of the self for the sake of the self and thus deepens the alienation of the self from its true self. Nor can the will so bound, unwill its condition by willing. The condition must be restored. That the condition is restored through the person, work, and promise of Jesus Christ is the message of the Christian faith.[30]

In summary, then, we see that man's failure to achieve the fullness of his essential nature is, according to Niebuhr, the result of the corruption of his freedom of will through original sin. In addition, the element of finiteness in the essential nature of man produces the insecurity which is the occasion for the individual to choose freely in contradiction to the law which his essential nature gives to him. Now that we have viewed both the essential and existential aspects of the nature of man, we are in a position to examine the law or norm of morality which arises out of man's nature and governs it.

Niebuhr tells us that "it is important to distinguish between the essen-

---

[29] Ibid., p. 265.

[30] Harland, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

tial nature of man and the virtue and perfection which would represent the normal expression of that nature."[31] We will recall that there are two elements in this essential nature. The first is man's finiteness and the virtue and perfection which corresponds to it is usually designated as the natural law. "It is the law which defines the proper performance of his functions, the normal harmony of his impulses and the normal social relation between himself and his fellows within the limitations of the natural order."[32] The second element in man's essential nature is his freedom of spirit and the virtues which correspond to it "are analogous to the 'theological' virtues of Catholic thought, namely faith, hope, and love."[33] Niebuhr validates these as basic requirements of man's freedom as follows:

> Faith in the providence of God is a necessity of freedom because, without it the anxiety of freedom tempts man to seek a self-sufficiency and self-mastery incompatible with his dependence upon forces which he does not control. Hope is a particular form of that faith. It deals with the future. . . .
>
> Love is both an independent requirement of this same freedom and a derivative of faith. Love is a requirement of freedom because the community to which man is impelled by his social nature is not possible to him merely upon the basis of his gregarious impulse. . . . Since men are separated from one another by the uniqueness and individuality of each spirit, however closely they may be bound together by ties of nature, they cannot relate themselves to one another in terms which will do justice to

---

[31] Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 270.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 271.

> both the bonds of nature and the freedom of their spirit if they are not related in terms of love. . . . This "I" and "Thou" relationship is impossible without the presupposition of faith for two reasons: (1) Without freedom from anxiety man is so enmeshed in the vicious circle of egocentricity, so concerned about himself, that he cannot release himself for the adventure of love. (2) Without relation to God, the world of freedom in which spirit must meet spirit is so obscured that human beings constantly sink to the level of things in the human imagination.[34]

From the foregoing, we can see that love is the norm of human nature. It is a love based on faith and not unrelated to hope. Niebuhr explicitly states that this is the norm when he says that "the law of his (i.e., man's) nature is love, a harmonious relation of life to life in obedience to the divine center and source of his life."[35] Later on, he even goes further when he says that "love is . . . the end term of any system of morals. It is the moral requirement in which all schemes of justice are fulfilled and negated."[36]

Now that we have seen that Niebuhr's primary ethical norm is the law of love, we must examine the details and meaning of this norm. He tells us: "It contains three terms: (a) the perfect relation of the soul to God in which obedience is transcended by love, trust, and confidence . . . ; (b) the perfect internal harmony of the soul with itself in all of its desires and impulses; and (c) the perfect harmony of life with life: . . . ."[37] But, he also distin-

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 271-72.

[35] Ibid., p. 16.

[36] Ibid., p. 295.

[37] Ibid., pp. 288-89.

guishes between agape which is the heedless, self-forgetful, and self-sacrificing love of Christ in the New Testament and mutual love in which the concern of one person for the interests of another prompts and elicits a reciprocal affection. Niebuhr says in Christian Realism and Political Problems that these two kinds of love cannot be divided by any neat line.[38] Nevertheless, the distinction is of considerable importance in the development of his ethical theory. It can be understood best if we study the relationship that exists between them.

Niebuhr constantly refers to this relationship as paradoxical. Sacrificial love is an act in history. At the same time, it must transcend history. Sacrificial love cannot justify itself in history because the self-realization of each individual depends upon the reciprocal affection of mutual love and because conflicting social demands are satisfied only in mutual love. "Mutual love and loyalty are, in a sense, the highest possibilities of social life, ..."[39] But, the kind of self-giving which has self-realization as its result must not have self-realization as its conscious end; otherwise the self by calculating its engagement will not escape from itself completely enough to be enlarged."[40] Thus we see that "from the standpoint of history mutual love

---

[38]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 160.

[39]Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 185.

[40]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 141.

is the highest good" but "mutuality is not a possible achievement if it is made the intention and goal of any action."[41] Consequently, mutual love needs sacrificial love in order for it to remain mutual love. In view of this, Niebuhr can call the sacrificial love (agape) of the New Testament "the support of all historical ethics."[42]

The sacrificial love which we have been considering has a threefold relation of transcendence to mutual love. First, agape "completes the incompleteness of mutual love (eros), for the latter is always arrested by the fact that it seeks to relate life to life from the standpoint of the self and for the sake of the self's own happiness."[43] Second, "the Cross represents a transcendent perfection which clarifies obscurities of history and defines the limits of what is possible in historic development."[44] Niebuhr then goes on to show that the final justification of agape is never found in history because of the necessity of mutuality. Thus, even though agape always remains the norm, it is also true that no decision can simply conform to agape. This is the paradox which we discussed above. Finally, the third relation of transcendence is that "the

---

[41] Niebuhr, Human Destiny, pp. 68-69.

[42] Ibid., p. 69.

[43] Ibid., p. 82.

[44] Ibid., p. 86.

Cross represents a perfection which contradicts the false pretensions of virtue in history and which reveals the contrast between man's sinful self-assertion and the divine agape."[45]

Before we can complete the picture containing the chief positive elements in Niebuhr's ethical scheme, we must consider the notion of justice which he sets up as a correlative of agape. He does not attempt a definition of justice because, for him, justice has no independent basis. Rather, it is a relational term and has meaning only in connection with agape. It is the embodiment of agape in the structures of society.[46] The relationship is a dialectical one analogous to the relation of mutual love and sacrificial love.[47] It must be considered from both aspects: the relation of love to justice and the relation of justice to love.

The relationship of love to justice is such that it both fulfills and negates justice.[48] Niebuhr tells us that love fulfills justice "because the obligation of life to life is more fully met in love than is possible in any scheme of equity and justice."[49] It negates justice "because love makes an end of the

---

[45] Ibid., p. 89.

[46] Harland, op. cit., p. 23.

[47] Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 247.

[48] Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 295. Cf. also: Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 193.

[49] Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 295.

nicely calculated less and more of structures of justice. It does not carefully arbitrate between the needs of the self and of the other since it meets the needs of the other without concern for the self."[50] The higher possibilities of love always stand over every system of justice.

When it comes to relating justice to love, the basic relationship is not changed, but the relationship, viewed in this way, does take on a new perspective. The complexities of this relationship must be viewed in two dimensions. One is the dimension of the rules and laws of justice while the other is the dimension of the structures of justice. The difference between them is that the former deals with an abstraction; the latter with the embodiment of justice in history.[51] The rules and laws of justice have both a positive and negative element in their relation to love. Positively, "they extend the sense of obligation toward the other, (a) from an immediately felt obligation, prompted by obvious need, to a continued obligation expressed in fixed principles of mutual support; (b) from a simple relation between a self and one 'other' to the complex relations of the self and the 'others;' and (c) finally from the obligations discerned by the individual self, to the wider obligations which the community defines from its more impartial perspective."[52]

[50] Ibid.

[51] Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 247.

[52] Ibid., p. 251.

Negatively, "they are merely approximations in so far as justice presupposes a tendency of various members of a community to take advantage of each other, or to be more concerned with their own weal than with that of others."[53]

In summary, then, we see that the major elements in Niebuhr's ethical system consist in three analogous pairs of concepts based on the fundamental duality in the makeup of man. This duality has been described in terms of nature and spirit. All of these pairs has two characteristics in common. First, each pair is composed of terms which are dialectically and somewhat paradoxically related. Second, there is a term in each pair which corresponds to the spiritual element in man's makeup. This term always stands in such a relationship to its mate that it includes it while at the same time it transcends it. These pairs correspond to three aspects of man's activity: its source, the activity itself, and its result or achievement. The first pair which deals with the source of man's activity describes his nature in terms of his existential nature and his essential nature which we considered from various aspects. The second pair is that of mutual love and sacrificial love and involves the activity of the human individual. Man's achievement is considered in the third pair which consists of justice, on the one hand, and agape on the other. It is within this framework that Niebuhr's social ethics forms.

At this point, it seems necessary to consider just what ethics means to

---

[53] Ibid., pp. 251-52.

Niebuhr. From our previous considerations, it might seem that his ethics has a predominantly theological foundation. Certainly it has a theological influence. In a recent article, Dan Rhoades describes the manner in which Niebuhr's ethics arises out of theology and political analysis. He gives an account of Niebuhr's basic theology by saying that disinterestedness or selflessness is the absolute ideal and that devotion to it is the essence of the Christian faith.[54] He goes on to say that Niebuhr is confronted with the fact that egoism (a condition in which man's higher capacities are limited because of human finitude) and egotism (unfaith, distrust, and unbelieving pride) are existent in the world and are heightened on the collective level. At the same time, Niebuhr realizes that the strategy of calling upon reason and religious devotion to overcome egoism and egotism in the political arena is impractical.[55] It is against this background that Rhoades shows the nature of Niebuhr's ethics. Theology lays down the absolute norms and determines that his basic method will be teleological. His political analysis is controlled by his theology in that it is restructed to explaining the heightened forms of egoism and egotism, which are antitheses of his absolute norm, on the collective level. From his political analysis comes the utilitarian aspect of Niebuhr's ethics. In other

[54]Dan Rhoades, "The Prophetic Insight and Theoretical-Analytical Inadequacy of 'Christian Realism,'" Ethics, LXXV (October, 1964), p. 3.

[55]Ibid., pp. 3-5.

words, his ethics is more concerned with immediate consequences than with absolute ends even though the absolute ideal remains in judgment upon each particular act. As a result, "the ethics deals with the polarity between the idea and the 'real.'"[56]

The question of the place of theology in Niebuhr's ethics has relevance in accordance with the purpose of this thesis only insofar as it clarifies the question of what Niebuhr himself was trying to do. Consequently, the Rhoades analysis has not been introduced for discussion in itself. One's inclination to agree or disagree with this opinion would depend on his own views of philosophy and theology. I submit that Niebuhr himself would not agree with the Rhoades analysis even though it probably represents what most other men would think on the subject.

Niebuhr does not seem to be at all interested in the question of philosophy versus theology. Rather, his whole approach seems to be an attempt to disregard these categories and present a view of the nature of man and morality which comprises the totality of man's nature as a limited being who at the same time transcends these limits. These can be seen from the manner in which he describes the fundamental duality in man's makeup which we have just considered. He also brings this out when, in speaking of the origin of the norm of morality, he says: "The ethics of the Cross, therefore, clarifies, but does

[56] Ibid., p. 4.

not create, a norm which is given by the very constitution of selfhood."[57]

That Niebuhr seems to be aiming at avoiding the traditional distinction between philosophy and theology can be further seen by considering his frequent attacks on Catholic natural law theory. In general, these attacks have centered around two poles. The first, which is relevant to our present consideration of the relation between philosophy and theology, deals with the distinction between reason and faith or the natural and the supernatural. Niebuhr looks upon the Thomistic scheme as dividing a coherent whole into a "two-story world with a classical base and a Christian second story."[58] The second area of attack is the alleged failure of Thomistic natural law ethics to take into account the contingencies of history. We will consider this aspect later when we take up the question of the application of his general ethical theory.

The basic point of difference between Niebuhr's position and natural law ethics is, according to Niebuhr, the latter's unbounded confidence in human reason. He interprets Catholic doctrine as holding that fallen man lacks the capacity for the relation of communion with God in faith, hope, and love while at the same time insisting that man's reason and capacity for natural justice were not seriously impaired as a result of original sin.[59] Niebuhr

---

[57]Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 232.

[58]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 189.

[59]Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 281.

feels that this distinction between the natural and the supernatural or between reason and faith indicates a lack of appreciation of the finiteness of man's reason. The result is that man is defined as a rational creature and the indeterminate relations of the individual to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God are viewed as a donum superadditum.[60] Niebuhr's position, on the other hand, attempts to unite, as we have seen, all of these elements into man's essential nature which is known and understood partly through reason and partly through revelation which always work together. In commenting on the Catholic view and the ethical position derived from the distinction we have just noted, Niebuhr writes:

> These ultimate requirements of the Christian ethic are not counsels of perfection or theological virtues of the sort which merely completes an otherwise incomplete natural goodness or virtue. Nor can they be subtracted from man without making his freedom a source of sinful infection. They are indeed counsels of perfection in the sense that sinful man lacks them and is incapable of achieving them. But they are basic and not supplementary requirements of his freedom.[61]

From these observations of Niebuhr's attack on the natural law, we can see that in his own view he is not concerned with distinguishing between philosophy and theology. Nor does he deny the necessity and validity of the use of man's rational powers. (We shall consider this point more in detail later.) He only insists that man's reason is limited and tainted both because of

---

[60]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, pp. 188-89.

[61]Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 54.

man's nature as a limited creature and because of the sinful element introduced into that nature by original sin. The role of revelation in his ethics is primarily one of clarification. It enables us to see the nature of man in its totality. It is important because this would be impossible by simply using man's limited rational powers.

In summary, we have considered Niebuhr's views on the nature of man and the basic norm of morality which is the law of love. In view of the theological considerations that enter into his general ethical theory, we found it necessary to consider the role of theology in the construction of his ethics and conclude that his orientation is that of a Christian philosopher. On this basis, then, we proceed to consider the application of his theory to the socio-political situation, in general, and to United States foreign policy, in particular.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSITION TO SOCIAL ETHICS

In 1932, Niebuhr's book, Moral Man and Immoral Society, drew a sharp distinction, as the title indicates, between the moral behavior of individuals and that of social groups.[1] Since that time he has modified the position indicated in this title but the distinction does, nevertheless, indicate something of the general nature of his position regarding the difference between individual and collective morality. Now, as a preliminary to the consideration of the problem of applying the norm of love to social ethics, we must consider this distinction between individual and collective morality as it is viewed by Niebuhr.

We have already noted that man is related to the community in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. The horizontal relationship is experienced whenever his community is in conflict with other communities. In the vertical dimension, we see that man looks up to the community which is the fulfillment of his life and the sustainer of his existence. But, he also looks down on the

[1] Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932).

community because he is higher than it for the reason that the community is bound more inexorably to nature than he is.[2] It is on this basis primarily that Niebuhr's position that "as soon as a third person is introduced into the relation even the most perfect love requires a rational estimate of conflicting needs and interests."[3] Thus, in community, the more complex situation necessitates greater difficulties in rising above the demands of nature to the full realization of the ideal of love.

Niebuhr gives a number of characteristics of communities which account for the increased difficulty of attaining the moral idea on the collective level. All of these are in some way the result of the relationship of power to the community. Consequently, before we consider these characteristics, it will be helpful to consider in some detail in what his notion of power consists and how it is related to the ethical ideal.

Social power, for Niebuhr, has two aspects which determine the quality of the order and harmony of a given community and are essential and perennial aspects of community organization. One is the coercive and organizing power of the government; the other is the balance of the vitalities and forces in any given social situation which is generally referred to as the equilibrium or balance of power. Both of these contain possibilities of contradicting

---

[2]Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, pp. 35-38.

[3]Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 248.

the law of brotherhood. The former may degenerate into tyranny; the latter into anarchy.[4] But in order to understand the relevance of power on the collective level, it will be necessary to consider Niebuhr's concept of power in general.

We have already seen that man, because of his finiteness and sin, is in a state of insecurity and that he seeks to overcome this insecurity by a will-to-power. The effect of this will-to-power is that it disburbs the harmony of creation if it is directed improperly. In religious terms, this disturbance is called sin and its definitive characteristic is pride;[5] in moral and social terms, it is injustice. The injustice occurs because man strives to overcome his insecurity by asserting his power in subordinating the lives of others to his own will.[6]

---

[4]Ibid., pp. 257-58.

[5]Cf. Rhoades, op. cit., pp. 3-7. Niebuhr here is attacked on theological grounds for considering pride as the definitive characteristic of sin as he does in Human Nature (pp. 179, 188). Mr. Rhoades points out that earlier in the same work, Niebuhr considers the primal sin to be unfaith, distrust, or unbelieving pride. Mr. Rhoades regards this to be more accurate theologically because sin primarily has to do with man's relation to God. This criticism seems to coincide with the position taken by Fr. Gustave Weigel,S.J. in his article entitled "Authority in Theology" which appears in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), pp. 367-78.

[6]Niebuhr, Human Nature, pp. 178-79.

Niebuhr then goes on to accept Bertrand Russell's distinction between two forms of the pride of power.[7] Niebuhr writes that in one form "The human ego assumes its self-sufficiency and self-mastery and imagines itself secure against all vicissitudes."[8] This form is present in some degree in all human beings but rises to greater heights among those individuals or classes who possess greater degrees of social power. The other form is "the lust for power which has pride at its end."[9] At first glance, it seems as though the second form which we have just described does rise out of man's insecurity but that the first does not. However, Niebuhr points out that the distinction is justified as long as it is regarded as strictly provisional. The individual or group which possess the first form of the pride of power is always faced with the possibility of losing that power and thus there is a drive to maintain the secure position. Thus, "the will-to-power is an expression of insecurity even when it has achieved ends which, from the perspective of an ordinary mortal, would seem to guarantee complete security."[10]

In general, Niebuhr classifies power under two major headings: spiritual and physical. Spiritual power is further divided into two forms. One

---

[7]Bertrand Russell, Power, New Social Analysis (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948), pp. 15ff.

[8]Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 188.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 194.

of these is the rational wherein reason is the instrument used in advancing the claims of one individual against another. It can be either just or unjust depending on how it is used. In the other form of spiritual power, one individual or group enslaves another through spiritual vitalities such as mental or emotional energy, the pretension or possession of virtue, the prestige of an heroic life, or the prestige of a gentle birth. On the practical level, there is always an admixture of both the spiritual and the physical.[11]

Power, for Niebuhr, is not something that is intrinsically evil. His own words make this clear: "But power cannot be evil of itself, unless life itself be regarded as evil. For life is power. Life is never pure form or reason. It is inherently dynamic. Even the purest 'reason' is power."[12] His discussion of power aims at showing the great possibility of injustice that derives from power since power is frequently sought by the human individual or group as an expression of pride which has its source in human finiteness and insecurity.

Now that we have considered the general nature of power and its place in Niebuhr's philosophy, we are in a position to consider in greater detail the reasons which he gives for the increased difficulty of attaining the ideal of love on a collective basis. We have seen that man's finiteness and sin give rise to insecurity. This insecurity gives rise to a will-to-power and when this will-to-

---

[11] Ibid., pp. 260-61.

[12] Reinhold Niebuhr, "Power and Justice," Christianity and Society, VIII, No. 1 (Winter, 1942), p. 10.

power becomes excessive, it results in a disorder which has the religious dimension of pride or sin and the moral and social dimension of injustice. In other words, it is a contradiction of the ideal of love. Now, Niebuhr gives two reasons for distinguishing the disorder (pride) on the individual and collective levels. First, it is necessary because even though group pride has its source in individual attitudes, it achieves a certain authority over the individual and because it develops organs of will it seems to become an independent center of moral life. Second, the distinction is necessary because the pretensions and claims of the collective unit exceed those of the individual with the result that the group is more arrogant, hypocritical, self-centered, and more ruthless in the pursuit of its ends. This is true to such an extent that the individual will frequently seek identification with the group for the purpose of attaining his more individualistic and selfish ends.[13]

Frequently, it is asserted that the will-to-power of the group is simply the result of the instinct for survival and not the result of rational calculation. The basis for this contention is a view which regards the group as having developed organs of will but lacking any sort of mind which is the basis for self-transcendence as well as responsible moral conduct. On this point Niebuhr counters by admitting that it is true "that the group possesses only an inchoate 'mind' and that its organs of self-transcendence and self-criticism

---

[13]Niebuhr, Human Nature, pp. 208-9.

are very unstable and ephemeral compared to its organs of will,"[14] but then goes on to prove that the activity of the group, in general, and the nation,[15] in particular, is spiritual (or rational) in character. He writes:

> The most conclusive proof that the egotism of nations is a characteristic of the spiritual life, and not merely an expression of the natural impulse of survival, is the fact that its most typical expressions are the lust-for-power, pride (comprising considerations of prestige and "honour"), contempt toward the other (the reverse side of pride and its necessary concomitant in a world in which self-esteem is constantly challenged by the achievements of others); hypocrisy (the inevitable pretension of conforming to a higher norm than self-interest); and finally the claim of moral autonomy by which the self-deification of the social group is made explicit by its presentation of itself as the source and end of existence.[16]

Some of the expressions of characteristics of the nation which we have just enumerated were listed by Niebuhr in a slightly different fashion in Moral Man and Immoral Society to indicate the differences between the individual and collective selves and to account for the increased difficulties in attaining the ethical ideal on the collective level. Among the other characteristics of the

---

[14] Ibid., p. 210.

[15] Niebuhr frequently uses the nation as the prime example of a group. As he puts it: "The egotism of racial, national and socio-economic groups is most consistently expressed by the national state because the state gives the collective impulses of the nation such instruments of power and presents the imagination with such obvious symbols of its discrete collective identity that the national state is most able to make absolute claims for itself, to enforce those claims by power, and to give them plausibility and credibility by the majesty and panoply of its apparatus." (Human Nature, p. 209.)

[16] Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 211.

group which make for the greater difficulty about which we are speaking is the fact that groups can only know the needs of other people at second hand and indirectly. Since sympathy and justice depend on a perception of need, there is obviously a greater difficulty in achieving ethical relationships.[17] Also, even though he insists that there is at least an inchoate "mind" in the group, it cannot be denied that the group is held together much more by force and emotion than by mind. This, too, adds to the difficulty of attaining the ethical ideal.[18] The hypocrisy which was mentioned above is still another characteristic of the nation or group which adds to the difficulty.[19] Yet, in spite of the fact that Niebuhr sees many characteristics of the group which account for the differences between individual and collective morality, he finds it impossible to draw any neat line between them because of the nature of the relationship of the individual and the group or community.[20]

From the foregoing analysis of the nature of man and the community, we see that Niebuhr views man on the existential level as basically insecure. His effort to overcome this insecurity is manifested in a will-to-power which can be

---

[17] Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, pp. 83-85.

[18] Ibid., pp. 88-89.

[19] Ibid., p. 95.

[20] Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, p. 48.

channeled in such a way as to help him toward the achievement of the norm of love which is laid down by his essential nature. This will-to-power can also be misdirected and result in a disturbance of the harmony of creation and produce injustice among men. Because the possibility of injustice is greater on the collective level for the reasons which we have enumerated above, it follows that the achievement of the ideal of love is harder to attain in the group situation. Since power lies at the base of man's efforts to achieve this ideal and also is at the root of his failures in achieving it, Niebuhr concludes: "The contest of power, then, is the heart of the political life."[21] Thus, for him, social and political ethics are primarily concerned with the problem of the balance of power.

We are now faced with the question as to how to achieve this balance of power so as to enable collective man to attain his ethical ideal. In other words, how does the law of love, which is the the primary law of Niebuhr's ethics both on the individual and collective levels, apply to social and political ethics? We now address ourselves to this question. In spite of the fact that Niebuhr's close friend and colleague, Dr. John C. Bennett, says, "It is very difficult to find a clear line connecting this perfect love with social ethics,"[22] we shall attempt to get some idea as to how Niebuhr handles this

---

[21] Reinhold Niebuhr, "Leaves from the Notebook of a Warbound American," The Christian Century, LVI, No. 46 (November 15, 1939), p.1405.

[22] Bennett, op. cit., p. 57.

problem.

The question of the relation of the law of love to social ethics is complicated by a problem connected with the law itself. The type of love that Niebuhr puts down as the ideal is the sacrificial love which arises out of man's essential nature and is exemplified in the life of Christ. But just as we noted that this ideal is a practical impossibility as regards fulfillment in the existential order for an individual, so it is also an existential impossibility for the community. Niebuhr writes as follows regarding the meaning of the ideal and the impossibility of attaining it:

> In practical terms it means a combination of anarchism and communism dominated by a spirit of love. Such perfect love as He demands would obviate the necessity of coercion on the one hand because men would refrain from transgressing upon their neighbor's rights, and on the other hand because such transgression would be accepted and forgiven if it did occur. That is anarchism, in other words. It would mean communism because the privileges of each would be potentially the privileges of all. Where love is perfect the distinctions between mine and thine disappear. The social ideal of Jesus is as perfect and as impossible of attainment as his personal idea.[23]

In spite of this realization, Niebuhr insists that the ideal remains and must be applied to the concrete social situation.

Niebuhr points out that the chief indication of the relevancy of the ideal of love to socio-political ethics is that "there are no limits to be set in

---

[23]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Ethic of Jesus and the Social Problem," Religion in Life, I, No. 2 (Spring, 1932), p. 200.

history for the achievement of more universal brotherhood, for the development of more perfect and more inclusive mutual relations."[24] In view of the fact that there is this indeterminate possibility, it seems that there must be some element which will continually purify the already existing love that exists between and among men. Thus, Niebuhr says that "the most direct relationship of love to the problems of the community would seem to be the purifying effect of sacrificial love upon mutual love."[25] "The law of love, therefore, is not a norm of history in the sense that historical experience justifies it. Historical experience justifies more complex social strategies in which the self, individual and collective, seeks to preserve its life and to relate it harmoniously to other lives."[26] But Niebuhr is quick to point out that the strategies about which he is talking and the systems of justice which men propose cannot maintain themselves without this deeper dimension of the law of love.[27]

But, it is argued that the collective self need not conform to a standard higher than that of prudent self-interest. Yet, the very nature of the community, as Niebuhr sees it, contradicts this contention. The conscience of the individuals within any given community must concern itself with the relation of

---

[24]Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 85.

[25]Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 185.

[26]Niebuhr, Human Destiny, p. 96.

[27]Ibid.

life within the community to life outside of it. If it does not, the community itself will be self-defeating.[28]

Now we have seen that the ideal of love is an impossibility on both the individual and collective levels. But, we have also seen that in spite of its impossibility, the ideal of love has relevance for social ethics. The ideal is necessary because it is derived from the nature of man and the nature of man's communities. Earlier, we discussed the nature of sacrificial love and its relation to mutual love and saw the latter as the type of love which exists between and among men and is necessary for individual fulfillment. We noted that the reciprocal aspect cannot be the object of any act of love because, if it were, the act would cease to be love. On this basis, we saw how sacrificial love and mutual love are related. All that was said in this regard applies to the community situation as well as the individual. But, we must ask whether this constitutes the entire picture on the social level.

Dr. John C. Bennett thinks "that in Niebuhr's formal analysis of love there is a missing link as we seek to relate love to social ethics."[29] He feels that this missing link is presupposed in the whole of Niebuhr's thought but does not find it clearly related to the types of love which Niebuhr emphasizes. "Mutual love is the form of love that is closest to social ethics, but this con-

---

[28]Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, p. 235.

[29]Bennett, op. cit., p. 57.

cept does not describe the kind of love which is often present in connection with the larger problems of society where the element of mutuality is lacking."[30] Dr. Bennett sees this as a love that has agape in it, but is not pure agape. It consists in "a real caring for the welfare and dignity of all of our neighbors, even those whom we never see, those who may live as vast multitudes on other continents or those who may actually be opponents or enemies."[31] This love means that we will justice for others and it expresses itself in many different forms.

Thus far, our analysis has been dealing with the formal aspects of Niebuhr's social ethics. We are now in a position to begin to consider the relation of the ideal of love in terms of material content. In other words, we ask how this law of love is to be applied to the concrete decisions that make up the everyday life of the community.

Perhaps, the most simple and direct answer to the question that we have just placed is that the law of love is applied to social ethics by means of the laws of justice. This does not mean that Niebuhr's position has been altered. He still holds that "the final law in which all other law is fulfilled is the law of love. But this law does not abrogate the laws of justice except as love

---

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., p. 58.

rises above justice to exceed its demands."[32] This simply means that on the practical level, the affairs of the community are to be governed by the spirit of justice which spells out particular rights and duties. Love is not to be substituted for justice in Niebuhr's scheme. Rather, it is the fulfillment and highest form of justice.[33] Justice is the highest rational ideal because reason must deal in terms of ascertainable causes and consequences of moral action. Yet, it must always be remembered that rational justice is related to the law of love both positively and negatively. The positive relation is that it contains approximations to the ideal of love. At the same time, there is a negative relation because rational justice constantly seeks to do something less than justice.[34]

At this point, it will be advantageous to resume our discussion of Niebuhr's attack on Catholic natural law theory. On the formal level, Niebuhr's position is clear enough because of his position on the nature of man and his emphasis on the law of love. On the level of application, however, his position can only be understood in terms of that against which he is primarily reacting.

---

[32]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Spirit of Justice," Christianity and Society, XV, No. 3 (Summer, 1950), pp. 5-6.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Niebuhr, Human Destiny, pp. 248-52.

In the last chapter, we saw that Niebuhr criticized the upholders of the natural law theory for overemphasizing the human reason and for not admitting that original sin had corrupted man's rational capacity. His other major area of criticism arises out of what he considers to be undue confidence in human reason. This criticism centers around the natural law tendency to find universal propositions under shifting historical conditions and this leads to one of two errors. Natural law proponents either define the primordial or biological as normative as in the birth control issue where Niebuhr feels that "nature" is defined in purely biological terms or they confuse historically contingent standards with purely natural ones.[35]

Niebuhr does not feel that the material content of ethics can be drawn from its formal principle except perhaps in very general terms. He does allow for universally valid moral propositions if they are minimal and state something as broad as that which prohibits murder.[36] But, natural law goes much further. He feels that "it gives the peculiar conditions and unique circumstances in which reason operates in a particular historical moment the sanctity of universality."[37] By way of illustration, he says that "the social ethics of

---

[35]Reinhold Niebuhr, "A Protestant Looks at Catholics," The Commonweal, LVIII, No. 5 (May 8, 1953), pp. 117-120.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Niebuhr, Human Nature, p. 281.

Thomas Aquinas embody the peculiarities and the contingent factors of a feudal-agrarian economy into a system of fixed socio-ethical principles."[38]

This does not mean, however, that Niebuhr denies the necessity and validity of human reason in determining the material content of social ethics. We have already seen that he insists upon it. What he objects to is the canonization of reason to the extent that it is thought that concrete ethical decisions can be made without some defect in them. The place of reason in this scheme has been stated by Niebuhr in the following words:

> Reason itself is not the source of law, since it is not possible to prove the self's obligation to the neighbor by any rational analysis which does not assume the proposition it intends to prove. Yet reason works helpfully to define the obligation of love in the complexities of various types of human relations.[39]

Repeatedly, Niebuhr has been charged with being a moral relativist by natural law proponents. Just as repeatedly, he has denied the charge and it seems that, in many respects, the charge is not one that is justified. For, it might even be said that he upholds a somewhat limited natural law. We can let him defend himself in his own words:

> Even if we do not accept the Catholic theory of a highly specific "natural law" we all do accept principles of justice which transcend the positive enactments of historic states and which are less specific and not so

---

[38] Ibid.

[39] Niebuhr, Faith and History, p. 193.

sharply defined as positive law, and yet more specific than the law of love.[40]

One analysis of Niebuhr's ethics sets forth even finer distinctions in the scale of moral relativity. These are based on the overall view of Niebuhr's writings but are not explicitly spelled out in any one place by Niebuhr himself. "A complete catalog would appear to include in descending order: the love ideal, absolute natural law, 'political principles,' positive or civil law, basic social structures and institutions, and finally the level of naked power conflicts."[41]

Thus, Niebuhr's attacks on the natural law theory seem to sharpen the focus on two elements of his own social ethics. The first element is the place of reason in working out the material content; the second is the emphasis he places on historical contingencies. Perhaps, it would be profitable to discuss the validity and accuracy of his criticisms of the natural law at this point, but it seems better to move on to complete the study of his ethics of United States foreign policy since our aim is not evaluation of Niebuhr's position but simply an understanding of his foreign policy ethics.

In summary, then, we have seen that the social ethics of Niebuhr follows directly from his concept of the nature of man. Love remains the primary norm of all human activity. Man's existential condition is basically

---

[40]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 148.

[41]Reinhold Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics, ed. Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 166, (editors' footnote).

insecure. From this condition arises a will-to-power which, if properly used, will assist him in attaining the goal which is laid down for him in the law of love. The resulting state, in this case, is one of justice which is the highest achievement of man's existential nature. Improper use of power results in injustice. The social ethics, therefore, is concerned with balancing power so as to effect the highest form of justice. It does this by using reason to apply the law of love to concrete everyday practical decisions. Yet, Niebuhr is always painfully aware that the deficiencies of human reason and the contingent nature of history make it impossible to achieve perfection in these decisions. He is also insistent that it is much more difficult to achieve this justice when we operate on the collective level. At the same time he points out that the community is necessary for the achievement of justice. Now we can turn to investigate the application of his theory in the concrete cases of United States foreign policy.

CHAPTER IV

WAR

The study of Niebuhr's analysis of United States foreign policy could be undertaken in several different ways. We could approach it historically by taking up the various issues as he wrote about them. If our interest were the interest of an historian or political scientist, this would probably be the most fruitful way of proceeding. We could also proceed by selecting those issues about which Niebuhr wrote the most. This would enable us to see the ethical issues that came up but there is still a danger that we would become more involved in the political aspects rather than the philosophical. Since our aim is a comprehensive view of the ethical aspects of United States foreign policy, it seems best to proceed by way of analyzing the two major ideas or categories into which all of his foreign policy writing can be placed. Consequently, the present chapter will be devoted to the first of these categories which is war; the following chapter will take up the second which is peace. In this way, we can best keep our focus on the ethical aspects of his analysis. But, this does not mean that we intend to ignore the historical or political aspects. We will consider them at length but always with a view to the accomplishment of our primary prupose.

It might be said that Niebuhr's war theory has had three stages. In his early years he was an ardent supporter of the pacifist position but this was quickly changed and he became one of its most outspoken opponents. Once he recognized the validity and necessity of war, his position has not changed basically although it has undergone development and modification because of the new problems introduced by the advent of nuclear weapons.

Niebuhr's break with pacifism began when he came to realize that there is no moral difference between violence and non-violence. He writes:

> The differences are pragmatic rather than intrinsic. The social consequences of the two methods are different, but the differences are in degree rather than in kind. Both place restraint upon liberty and both may destroy life and property. Once the principle of coercion and resistance has been accepted as necessary to the social struggle and to social cohesion, and pure pacifism has thus been abandoned, the differences between violence and non-violence lose their absolute significance, though they remain important.[1]

The importance of the distinction to which Niebuhr refers at the end of the passage just quoted is that he regards social violence as a great evil which ought to be avoided if at all possible because of the potential destruction involved.[2]

In discussing Niebuhr's thought on the pacifist issue, Dr. John C.

---

[1]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Is Peace or Justice the Goal?" The World Tomorrow, XV, No. 10 (September 21, 1932), pp. 276-77.

[2]Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1935), pp. 188-89.

Bennett points out that Niebuhr's mind changed "only as the actual alternatives in the world became limited to surrender to the expanding totalitarianism on the one hand and violent resistance by nations resulting in war on the other."[3] Niebuhr criticized the pacifists because they tried to apply the personal ethic of sacrificial love to the social problem of war. The moral issues of war require a different ethic because the issue is whether or not to accept suffering by others as the victims of injustice and aggression.

Shortly before World War II, Niebuhr was largely instrumental in founding the magazine, Christianity and Crisis, which was intended to counteract the pacifist trend in the various religious sects. It is a very interesting and profitable study to trace his thought on this pacifist issue as it is unfolded in a large number of articles in this magazine. Although it is impossible to consider these articles in great detail, we can uncover the general aspects of his thought on the pacifist issue by means of a general study of them.

In the very first issue, Niebuhr's general viewpoint was stated. He insists that there are historic situations in which the refusal to defend the inheritance of a civilization, even though it is very imperfect, against aggression may result in unjust consequences much worse than war.[4] He then goes on to criticize the "perfectionists" on two points. They are wrong in their

---

[3]Bennett, op. cit., p. 66.

[4]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Christian Faith and the World Crisis," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 1 (February 10, 1941), p. 4.

failure to distinguish between individual and social ethics which results in their desire to establish a political policy of submission to injustice with the further result that the lives and interests of others are defrauded or destroyed. They are wrong also because they feel that there is no right or obligation to defend an imperfect political system.[5]

Later in the same year after the United States had placed economic sanctions on Japan, Niebuhr pointed out that the sanctions would be useless unless the Japanese realized that the United States would go to war if necessary. If this were not the case, then all that the Japanese would have to do to eliminate the sanctions would be to threaten a violent reaction. Thus, there is no possibility of drawing an absolute line between violent and non-violent action.[6]

We have already seen a theme which Niebuhr constantly reiterates when he shows that the alternatives that we have are either going to war or succumbing to a Nazi victory. His conclusion, of course, is that the obligation to seek after the highest possible degree of justice demands that we choose the former alternative. But, he carries this even further when he sets up a pair of hypothetical cases and comments on their moral value. The first of

---

[5]Ibid.

[6]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Japan and Economic Sanctions," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 15 (August 25, 1941), p. 2.

these is the case of those who say that it is better to choose enslavement without death and destruction when the odds of success are slight. The second is the case of those who say that at a time when the odds of success are minimal, it is still better to risk death and destruction in pursuit of a victory even though enslavement may result anyway. Niebuhr places such importance on the avoidance of enslavement and the resulting higher degree of justice that he says that the second of these alternatives would be the better moral decision even if the first would be a better decision from a strictly political or strategical point of view.[7]

Niebuhr's views on the morality of war become much more clear when viewed in the light of his comments on the Neutrality Act of 1939. He goes so far as to say that this "is one of the most immoral laws that was ever spread upon a federal statute book."[8] Niebuhr feels that the immorality of this law was heightened because a great deal of misguided idealism was evoked in its support. The remainder of the article is devoted to the task of setting down some general notions on the differences between morality and immorality. He describes the essence of immorality as "the evasion or denial of moral respon-

[7]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Reflections on the World Situation," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 6 (April 21, 1941), p. 2.

[8]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Repeal the Neutrality Act," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 18 (October 20, 1941), p. 1.

sibility."[9] The immoral man, therefore, is one who "refuses to recognize his obligations as a member of a community" and who "isolates himself from the affairs of his community and acts as a completely unrelated individual."[10] "Morality," on the other hand, "consists in the recognition of interdependence of personal life."[11] As opposed to the immoral man, "the moral man is the man who acts responsibly in relation to his fellows, who knows the duties that communal life requires, and who is willing to accept the consequences which these duties impose."[12] Here, we see the application, in practical terms, of the concept of the nature of the human self and his relation to the community.

This examination of Niebuhr's attacks on pacifism shows us that his practical views are both an embodiment and a clarification of his general ethical theory. We see, as we have just noted, his concept of the nature of man and the community. The distinction between individual and collective morality is clarified in terms of the obligations one has toward others when making decisions that affect the group. His insistence on the defense of less-than-perfect political systems echoes his comments on the existential nature of man and his communities which contain only approximations of the ideal of

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

love. The necessity of choosing between alternatives that are only relatively perfect embodies his assertions regarding the relational character of justice. Finally, the total picture is an example of the way in which reason operates in Niebuhr's system to apply the ethical ideal by means of achieving a balance of power.

Another element is added to the war theory as we begin to consider the problem of the just war in the nuclear age. Here we see how Niebuhr adapts to the new problems presented as a result of the contingent nature of history. His theory on nuclear war develops only gradually and illustrates his aspect of Niebuhr's general ethical theory as well as his approach to the new problems of social ethics.

The problem first begins to present itself when the question of obliteration bombing comes up. In March, 1944, he writes in the editorial section of Christianity and Crisis that obliteration bombing would seem to exceed the limits of total war.[13] Since he invites readers' comments on this issue, it would seem that at this time he did not have a definite opinion on the matter. A few weeks later, he wrote that the bombing question should remain under scrutiny because of the tendency of the military mind to ignore moral and political factors in determining strategy. He points out that the change of

---

[13]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 4 (March 20, 1944), p. 2.

policy from precision bombing to obliteration bombing came about unexpectedly without an explanation of the reasons behind it. And, he goes on to suggest that we are not employing all the moral and political forces at our disposal to aid us in achieving victory.[14] In the following issue, he again editorializes on the problem and says that it seems that a line can be drawn in terms of military necessity but that this necessity is extremely difficult to define. At the same time, he suggests that the lack of a satisfactory political reconstruction program increases the military necessity of physical destruction.[15]

Over a year later, he takes up the atomic issue and offers two alternatives as possible solutions to the problem. The first of these would be to outlaw the bomb but he rules this out as impractical for several reasons. Historically, the outlawing of particular instruments of conflict has been unsuccessful. Moreover, such a policy would only engender mistrust. Then there would also be the problem that it would be impossible to put the nations who have the bomb and those who do not on an equal footing. Finally, this system would only guarantee non-use at the beginning of any war. The other alternative is an international organization and he does not find this wholly satisfactory either because the bipolar arrangement of nations would make the

---

[14]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Is the Bombing Necessary?" Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 5 (April 3, 1944), pp. 1-2.

[15]Reinhold Niebuhr "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 6 (April 17, 1944), p. 2.

organization virtually ineffective. Then he sets down a general norm which states that the policy should be so directed that it would overcome rather than aggravate mutual fear and mistrust.[16]

Niebuhr finds it impossible to come to any easy or clear-cut solution to the nuclear problem. He fully recognizes the importance of the problem because of the possibility of incalculable destruction. He insists that the notion that the excessive violence that would result from nuclear war has ended the possibility of a just war is unrealistic and that the moral problem is altered but not eliminated. He says that "the development of atomic weapons has heightened the moral dilemmas which periodically generate the pacifist revolt against responsibilities which embody moral ambiguities."[17] But he will not concede that it has solved them.

He rejects the pacifists who offer the solution which is urging the renunciation of atomic weapons because the solution they offer oversimplifies the problem. These pacifists would hope that the enemy would go along with a plan for renunciation but they are willing to do it alone if necessary. Of course Niebuhr is unhappy with this not only because we do not have access to the will of the enemy and therefore would not know whether they did go along with

---

[16]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Atomic Issue," Christianity and Crisis, V, No. 17 (October 15, 1945), pp. 5-7.

[17]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Hydrogen Bomb and Moral Responsibility," The Messenger, XIX, No. 9 (May 4, 1954), p. 5.

it or not but also because a responsible statesman cannot put his nation in such a position of defenselessness even if such a course of action is permitted to an individual and might even be the more virtuous thing in the latter case.[18]

Niebuhr rules out the possibility of mutual disarmament as a solution to the problem because of the impossibility of devising adequate inspection systems and the exceptional risk involved in such an undertaking. He writes:

> For nuclear disarmament, even if undertaken mutually, involvs some risk to the securities of both sides. There is small prospect that either side would be willing to take the risks. This remains true even if their failure to do so would involve the world in the continued peril of nuclear warfare.[19]

Here the proposed solution is ruled out both on the practical and moral levels.

Niebuhr also considers the proposals that there can be limited wars in the nuclear age even with the use of nuclear weapons. Although time seems to be answering the difficulty raised in his objection, it should be noted that he raised the doubt that tactical atomic weapons could be useful instruments in such limited wars.[20]

Niebuhr's solution to the nuclear problem does not seem to appear. He is unwilling to admit that all war in the nuclear age should be outlawed because

---

[18]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Hydrogen Bomb," Christianity and Society, XV, No. 2 (Spring, 1950), pp. 5-7.

[19]Reinhold Niebuhr, The Structure of Nations and Empires, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 269.

[20]Ibid., p. 280.

of the horrible consequences that might result. He cannot see the practical possibility of preventing war by means of disarmament. Nor does he see that the possibility of limited wars is a practical solution. He would encourage more positive effort to avoid all such wars and remains open to the new developments of science and political and military strategy before coming to an ultimate solution.

There is still another aspect of Niebuhr's war theory which has been implicit in the foregoing but demands clarification and emphasis here. Although he is insistent upon the moral necessity and validity of war for the purpose of the attainment of the highest possible justice, he is at the same time insistent that war must not be extended beyond that point which is necessary for the attainment of this goal. A case in point is the controversy between President Truman and General MacArthur during the Korean War. Niebuhr felt that President Truman's action in removing MacArthur when the latter wanted to extend the war was not only justified but also the only morally correct alternative even if MacArthur's plan might have been better politically and militarily. But Niebuhr even felt that President Truman's decision had good effects politically as is indicated when he wrote that "the dismissal of MacArthur without a serious political crisis not only reassured our European friends about the sanity of our foreign policy but also about the stability of our democratic institu-

tions."[21]

In summary, then, we have seen that Niebuhr's general ethical theory readily finds application as well as clarification in his evaluation of the various aspects of war. This war theory comprises a substantial portion of foreign policy ethics. His aim is to show how the balance of power is designed to produce the highest form of justice which is the existential embodiment of the ideal of love. The balance notion is brought out best if we contrast his efforts to combat pacifism with his comments on the virtues of limiting the war in Korea. He also wants to make clear that there is a sharp distinction between individual and collective morality. This distinction was not quite so pronounced when we were dealing on the theoretical level, but it becomes more apparent as we consider the practical aspects of Niebuhr's ethics. Finally, we have seen the place of reason and historical contingencies and the role that they play in the working out of the concrete practical decisions of social ethics. Now that we have considered the major aspects of Niebuhr's views on war, we can turn to the question of peace to round out our view of Niebuhr's foreign policy ethics.

---

[21] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Peril of War and the Prospects of Peace," Christianity and Crisis, XI, No. 17 (October 15, 1951), p. 129.

CHAPTER V

PEACE

From what we have already seen of Niebuhr's concept of collective morality, we are not surprised that he is continually calling our attention to the fact that moral problems become more serious and more complex as the community becomes larger. As a result, he views the moral issues in international relations as much more difficult than any others in the entire political realm. It is no wonder, then, that he was quite critical of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for what Niebuhr viewed as an oversimplified approach to the moral problems of international affairs. The views of Mr. Dulles on the Communists are a case in point. Niebuhr's criticism can be summed up in his own words as follows: "Mr. Dulles' moral universe made everything quite clear, too clear, with the result that it complicated our relations with our allies, who found our self-righteousness very vexatious."[1] This same criticism about an oversimplified approach to the moral problems of international affairs was also a consistent theme in his writings on the Suez crisis in 1956.

[1]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Moral World of Foster Dulles," The New Republic, CXXXIX, No. 2 (December 1, 1958), p. 8.

At the base of the problem of the ethics of foreign policy is the question about the extent to which the policy should be governed by self-concern on the one hand and altruism on the other. Niebuhr tells us that it is not easy for a nation to be concerned with other nations in altruistic terms. He cautions that "a nation that is too preoccupied with its own interests is bound to define those interests too narrowly . . . because it will fail to consider those of its interests which are bound up in a web of mutual interests with other nations."[2] Niebuhr suggests two things in connection with this problem. First, he does not ask that any nation abandon self-concern altogether but insists that nations must realize that what is good for the alliance of free nations is for the ultimate good of any individual nation also. But this is not enough. Thus, the second requirement is that the citizens of a nation must have loyalties and responsibilities to a wider system of values than the national interest.[3]

The possession of great power carries with it the responsibility of using that power to effect the greatest degree of social justice. Niebuhr, therefore, is constantly insisting that the United States, because of its position of power, must employ every means to use its power in a responsible manner. He indicates that there are two ways in which we can deny our responsibilities to our fellow men. The first is by way of imperialism wherein we seek to

---

[2]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Our Moral and Spiritual Resources for International Cooperation," Social Action, XXII, No. 2 (February, 1956), p. 18.

[3]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

dominate them by our power. The second is by way of isolationism wherein we attempt to withdraw from our responsibilities toward them.[4] He points out that the isolationist tendencies of the United States stem from the fact that until just recently she was far removed physically from the rest of the world with the result that she did not feel her responsibility. But, he insists that the United States must realize its obligation toward the rest of the world and therefore manipulate its power for the good of mankind.[5]

We can see what Niebuhr is talking about here by considering its embodiment in actual foreign policy instruments and situations. The duty of helping other nations which are enslaved was the subject of an article in Christianity and Crisis in 1943 wherein Niebuhr urged both material help and the defeat of the tyranny which was holding them in slavery. He said that there is a duty to love without looking for a return.[6] He had written in a similar way the year before and had also included another aspect when he said that we must be mindful of the positive aspect of the reconstruction of a world order in addition to the negative aspect of defeating the enemy.[7] Other aspects

[4]Reinhold Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 36.

[5]Reinhold Niebuhr, "American Power and World Responsibility," Christianity and Crisis, III, No. 5 (April 5, 1943), p. 4.

[6]Reinhold Niebuhr, "America and the Enslaved Nations," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 17 (October 6, 1941), pp. 1-2.

[7]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Our Responsibilities in 1942," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 24 (January 12, 1942), pp. 1-2.

of his theory regarding American responsibility appeared about the same time. These include such fundamental notions as the abandonment of the principle of unlimited national sovereignty, economic reconstruction, and the placing of limitations on victors as well as on the vanquished.[8]

The fact that Niebuhr praised the Marshall Plan to such an extent that he called it "a kind of turning point in postwar history"[9] prompts us to consider this plan in some detail. In order to do this, it will be necessary to consider the details of this plan in the context of the larger program of American foreign policy of which it was the most significant part.

During the period from 1946 until 1950, United States foreign policy developed in four major steps: the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), and the Point Four Program. These were programs which worked out the details of a general concept which formed the basis of American policy. The general orientation of the program consisted in the acceptance of the concept of bipolarity. The United States policy was that of containment which was spelled out in detail in an article in Foreign Affairs in

---

[8]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Allied Peace Claims," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 11 (June 30, 1941), p. 2.

[9]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, VII, No. 14 (August 4, 1947), p. 2.

1947.[10] This was a policy in which the United States committed itself to containing Soviet power by counterforce at a number of shifting geographical and political points which would be determined according to the shifts in Soviet policy. The result would be frustration which would work at the weaknesses in the Soviet system.

In 1947, a civil war was being carried on in Greece in which the Communists were trying to overthrow the popularly elected government that was being sustained economically by Great Britain. At the same time, the Soviets were attempting to gain a free hand in the Turkish Straits. The Turks, too, were receiving economic and military assistance from the British. Early in that same year, Great Britain advised the United States that she would discontinue aid after three months. President Truman decided that the United States should take over the role of Great Britain in order to show its interest in the policy of containment. This was to be done primarily by economic assistance. The policy came to be known as the Truman Doctrine.

In June, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall proposed a scheme which was later to become known as the Marshall Plan. His proposal suggested that the countries of Europe plan their economic recovery in common. He assured them that those countries who were willing to cooperate would

---

[10]By X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, XXV, (July, 1947), pp. 566-82. (It was later disclosed that the author of this article was George F. Kennan.)

receive help and encouragement from the United States. The purpose of the plan was to provide political assistance to the countries that wanted it for the purpose of fighting against hunger and poverty so that conditions might be created wherein free institutions could exist. Thus, the Marshall Plan went beyond the Truman Doctrine in that it was offering political assistance and not merely economic aid.

At the end of August, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed for the purpose of maintaining and developing the individual and collective capacity of the signing nations to resist armed attack. It was agreed that all the member nations would look upon an armed attack against one as an attack against all. The prime NATO principle was that military establishments should be rebuilt in order to defend the reconstructed economies. Now, United States aid had been extended to include economic, political and military assistance.

When President Truman was inaugurated in 1949, the Point Four proposal was explicated in his inaugural address. He stated that the lines of United States foreign policy were to support the United Nations, to give economic assistance to strengthen the free world, to provide military assistance for the same purpose, and finally to inaugurate a program for the development of the underdeveloped countries. The motivation behind this proposal was twofold. It was looked upon as an humanitarian program but was also designed

to bring a larger number of countries into the sphere of influence of the United States.[11]

Niebuhr's enthusiasm about the Marshall Plan is not surprising when we consider that in 1943 he wrote as follows concerning the role of America after the war: "America could function in the interest of democracy only if it were ready to give economic support to the continent without seeking to prevent the establishment of systems which sought to combine collective forms of economy with political freedom."[12] His comments on the motivation that prompted the plan bring into focus the tension between self-concern and altruism about which we spoke earlier. Here we have the concrete embodiment of what we considered before in more theoretical terms. He remarks that both the national interest and the needs of others were served by this effort of the United States. In his own words: "In it prudent self-interest was united with concern for others in a fashion which represents the most attainable virtue of nations."[13] The Marshall Plan, for Niebuhr, was especially significant be-

---

[11]This summary of foreign policy from 1946 to 1950 is based on: William Reitzel, Morton A. Kaplan, and Constance G. Coblenz, United States Foreign Policy 1945-1955, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1956), pp. 104-40.

[12]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Peril of Our Foreign Policy," Christianity and Society, VIII, No. 2 (Spring, 1943), p. 20.

[13]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Hybris," Christianity and Society, XVI, No. 2, (Spring, 1951), p. 4.

cause it furthered the policy begun with the Truman Doctrine and achieved what the Truman Doctrine could not achieve by itself.[14]

As for the North Atlantic Treaty, Niebuhr was almost as pleased. He looked upon it as the logical capstone of the policy which had been developing during the period from 1946 to 1950. It was an indication of the willingness of the United States to assume its responsibility toward the world community and a recognition of the responsibility that it had for leadership among the free nations of the West. As a part of the overall policy of containment, it was the other side of the strategy which was at the base of the Marshall Plan.[15]

We might legitimately ask why Nuebuhr was so much in favor of the United States' policies during this period when in each of the instances mentioned above she acted independently of the United Nations. A complete answer will be implicit in the examination of his views on world organization which we will take up later. But the answer can be given in somewhat general terms at this point. Basically, the reason would be found in his article, "The Myth of World Government,"[16] where he points out that the constitutional setup of a state does not create a community. Rather the community itself

---

[14]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, VII, No. 13 (July 21, 1947), p. 2.

[15]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The North Atlantic Pact," Christianity and Crisis, IX, No. 9 (May 30, 1949), pp. 65-66.

[16]Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Myth of World Government," The Nation, CLXII, No. 11 (March 16, 1946), pp. 312-14.

must first exist and then the constitution can perfect it and give it more stability. The policies of this period were of such a nature that they were able to create a type of community on the international level. As the sense of community developed, new constitutional developments appeared. In this light, these policies would not be such as to be destructive of the United Nations but would ultimately foster its growth and stability.

Before we proceed to take up the question of world organization, it will be profitable to pause briefly for purposes of orientation. In general, it might be said that there are three themes which permeate Niebuhr's writings concerning United States foreign policy and its relation toward peace during the war and post-war years. The first of these is the responsibility of the United States to assume leadership in the world community. The second has to do with the necessity of international cooperation. The third and final theme handles the question of international organization.

We have already seen what Niebuhr means when he speaks of the responsibility of the United States to assume leadership in the world community. This became clear both in the discussion on power and responsibility and in his comments on the specific aspects of the policy of containment which dominated the scene during the early post-war years. This was a theme that was occupying his time even before the United States entered World War II. In an article in Christianity and Crisis, he stated that it was impossible to

determine exactly what course would be followed after the war but he was certain that the problems would be solved only if the United States would be willing to assume some measure of responsibility for the world order.[17] This responsibility will be seen in a different light as we take up the question of international organization.

The second theme has also made up a part of the topics which we have been considering. During the years of World War II, Niebuhr was constantly stressing the importance of international cooperation. His satisfaction with the United States foreign policy program in the post-war years can be partially attributed to the fact that it fostered cooperation among nations. As we take up the consideration of international organization we will see that cooperation on various levels is a necessary prerequisite of any world government.

If we consider the nature of man as found in Niebuhr, his concept of the interrelatedness of men, and the notions of his social ethics which call for the balancing of power and interests, we can logically project that world government is a longed-for ideal. But, as Niebuhr himself points out, the problem of world government can be approached from two different, but not necessarily opposite, viewpoints. One is the viewpoint of historical realism; the other is that of rationalist idealism. Niebuhr says that the task of world organization should be approached from the standpoint of historical realism but

---

[17] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The World After the War," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 1 (February 10, 1941), p. 3.

then qualifies this statement by pointing to the contributions that can be made by idealism.[18]

In general, Niebuhr regards the utopian ideal of world government as a fallacy. This does not mean that he is opposed to it or does not hold it up as an eventual ideal. He simply insists that "we do not have one world, or any hope of achieving it in the proximate future."[19] The fallacy, he tells us, can be set down in two propositions. First, governments are not created by fiat. Second, governments have only limited efficacy in integrating a community.[20]

The proposition that governments are created by fiat which consists of legal and constitutional enactments is unrealistic because it fails to take into account the lessons of history.[21] An historical example of this attempt is the social contract concept which has been present in political thought since the time of Hobbes.[22] Niebuhr admits that it is true that the United States was established by the fiat of the social contract, but hastens to point out that the

---

[18]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Plans for World Reorganization," Christianity and Crisis, II, No. 17 (October 19, 1942), pp. 3-6.

[19]Reinhold Niebuhr, "One World or None," Christianity and Crisis, VIII, No. 2 (February 16, 1948), p. 9.

[20]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 17.

[21]Niebuhr, "The Myth of World Government," op. cit., p. 312.

[22]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 18.

community which made up the United States preceded the constitutional fiat. This community was established by such integrating factors as the fear of a common enemy, the shared experience of the battlefield, a similar culture, and so forth. Thus, the Constitution established "a more perfect union" where union already existed.[23]

The second proposition shows a misconception of the relationship of government to community. "Governments cannot create communities for the simple reason that the authority of government is not primarily the authority of law nor the authority of force, but the authority of the community itself."[24] The real relation of government and community has been described by Niebuhr as follows:

> The fact is that governments presuppose community and in turn perfect it; but they cannot create it. Communities are created by more organic processes than the fiat of a constitution. They rest upon mutual trust and other forces of cohesion such as a common language and culture, common traditions and common concepts of law and morals. The international community lacks all these forms of cohesion.[25]

Thus, the international community demands certain organic forces of cohesion. Primary among these are forces which Niebuhr calls "social tissue."

---

[23]Niebuhr, "The Myth of World Government," op. cit., p. 313.

[24]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 22.

[25]Reinhold Niebuhr, "World Community and World Government," Christianity and Crisis, VI, No. 3 (March 4, 1946), p. 5.

Niebuhr sees that there is a degree of social tissue in the international community but it is minimal in comparison with that of existing national states. National communities have a common ethnic background, language, geography, and history but these elements are not present in the international community.[26] In fact, there is little to create the consciousness of "we" with the possible exception of three factors which Niebuhr enumerates. The first is the increasing economic interdependence of the people of the world but this should be contrasted with the wide disparity in the economic strength of various nations.[27] The second factor is the fear of mutual destruction but Niebuhr points out that "there is no record in history of peoples establishing a common community because they feared each other, though there are many instances where the fear of a common foe acted as the cement of cohesion."[28] Finally, the most important factor is the moral sense of obligation that men of all nations have toward their fellow men who live beyond the limits of their national states.[29]

Niebuhr feels that the United States is generally guilty of approaching

---

[26]Niebuhr, "The Myth of World Government," op. cit., p. 313.

[27]Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, p. 27.

[28]Ibid., p. 28. Cf. also: "The Myth of World Government," op. cit., p. 313. Here Niebuhr gives the present bipolar setup of nations as an example of the fear of a common enemy acting as a force of cohesion.

[29]Ibid.

the question of international organization from an idealistic viewpoint rather than that of historical realism. He writes:

> What makes American proposals for ideal constitutional solutions particularly vexatious is that we present them to the world even while we prove in our day-to-day politics that we are only beginners in the lessons of international mutuality. We are for world government until it is decided that its headquarters are to be near our ancestral home. We are for world government, but we think the British loan agreement is too generous, proving thereby how little we understand the problems of a very wealthy nation's relation to an impoverished world.[30]

And elsewhere, he says that "it would be intolerable if we again presented the world with a case of American schizophrenia, allowing our idealists to dream up pure answers for different problems while our cynics make our name odious by the irresponsible exercise of our power."[31]

In spite of the sharp criticisms of the American proposals which we have just seen, Niebuhr does see the United States in an important position in relation to the growth of the international community. There is, Niebuhr feels, another organic factor (over and above the forms of social tissue described above) that is serving to integrate the free world. This is the power and authority of the United States as she has emerged as a leader among nations because of her willingness to accept the responsibility thrust upon her as a result of a number of historical accidents. She has done this through a foreign

---

[30]Niebuhr, "World Community and World Government," op. cit., p. 6.

[31]Niebuhr, "The Myth of World Government," op. cit., p. 314.

policy such as we saw she adopted during the post-war years. But he points out that this position of power is both valuable for the unity of the world while at the same time being dangerous to justice.[32]

Here, we have seen Niebuhr's theory of the nature of man and community as it is developed in terms of practical political decisions. These decisions are not such that they should be able, in themselves, to provide answers for the problems that will arise in the future. This would be contrary to Niebuhr's fundamental concepts of social ethics which places heavy emphasis on the contingencies of history. As for the more general norms which can be found in Niebuhr's social ethics, it can be safely said that they could be of value for future generations. But, it would seem that Niebuhr would feel that the aim of his writings on the ethics of specific political issues has been accomplished if subsequent generations would see a method for applying a general concept of the nature of man and community to the unique problems of the time in which they occur.

---

[32]Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History, pp. 206-7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS

Niebuhr, Reinhold. The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

_____. Christian Realism and Political Problems. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

_____. An Interpretation of Christian Ethics. New York: Harper and Bros., 1935.

_____. The Irony of American History. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

_____. Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic. New York: Willett, Clark, and Colby Co., 1929.

_____. Moral Man and Immoral Society. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

_____. The Nature and Destiny of Man. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. I: Human Nature, 1941; Vol. II: Human Destiny, 1943; one-volume edition, 1949.

_____. Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics. Edited by Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960.

_____. The Self and the Dramas of History. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

_____. The Structure of Nations and Empires. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.

B. ARTICLES

Niebuhr, Reinhold. "Allied Peace Claims," Christianity and Crisis, I, No.11 (June 30, 1941), 1-2.

_____. "America and the Enslaved Nations," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 17 (October 6, 1941), 1-2.

_____. "American Power and World Responsibility," Christianity and Crisis, III, No. 5 (April 5, 1943), 2-4.

_____. "The Atomic Issue," Christianity and Crisis, V, No. 17 (October 15, 1945), 5-7.

_____. "The Blindness of Liberalism," Radical Religion, I, No. 4 (Autumn, 1936), 4-5.

_____. "The Christian Faith and the World Crisis," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 1 (February 10, 1941), 4-5.

_____. "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 4 (March 20, 1944), 2.

_____. "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 6 (April 17, 1944), 2.

_____. "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, VII, No. 13 (July 21, 1947), 2.

_____. "Editorial Notes," Christianity and Crisis, VII, No. 14 (August 4, 1947), 2.

_____. "The Ethic of Jesus and the Social Problem," Religion in Life, I, No. 2 (Spring, 1932), 198-209.

_____. "Hybris," Christianity and Society, XVI, No. 2 (Spring, 1951), 4-6.

_____. "The Hydrogen Bomb," Christianity and Society, XV, No. 2 (Spring, 1950), 5-7.

_____. "The Hydrogen Bomb and Moral Responsibility," The Messenger, XIX, No. 9 (May 4, 1954), 5.

_____. "Is the Bombing Necessary?" Christianity and Crisis, IV, No. 5 (April 3, 1944), 1-2.

_____. "Is Peace or Justice the Goal?" The World Tomorrow, XV, No.10 (September 21, 1932), 275-77.

_____. "Japan and Economic Sanctions," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 15 (August 25, 1941), 2.

_____. "Leaves from the Notebook of a War-bound American," The Christian Century, LVI, No. 43 (October 25, 1939), 1298-99; No. 46 (November 15, 1939), 1405-06; No. 49 (December 6, 1939), 1502-03; No. 49 (December 27, 1939), 1607-08.

_____. "The Moral World of Foster Dulles," The New Republic, CXXXIX, No. 2 (December 1, 1958), 8.

_____. "The Myth of World Government," The Nation, CLXII, No. 11 (March 16, 1946), 312-14.

_____. "The North Atlantic Pact," Christianity and Crisis, IX, No. 9 (May 30, 1949), 65-66.

_____. "One World or None," Christianity and Crisis, VIII, No. 2 (February 16, 1948), 9-10.

_____. "Our Moral and Spiritual Resources for International Cooperation," Social Action, XXII, No. 2 (February, 1956), 18.

_____. "Our Responsibilities in 1942," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 24 (January 12, 1942), 1-2.

_____. "The Peril of Our Foreign Policy," Christianity and Society, VIII, No. 2 (Spring, 1943), 18-21.

_____. "The Peril of War and the Prospects of Peace," Christianity and Crisis, XI, No. 17 (October 15, 1951), 129-30.

_____. "Plans for World Reorganization," Christianity and Crisis, II, No. 17 (October 19, 1942), 3-6.

_____. "Power and Justice," Christianity and Society, VIII, No. 1, (Winter, 1942), 9-10.

_____. "A Protestant Looks at Catholics," The Commonweal, LVIII, No. 5 (May 8, 1953), 117-20.

_____. "Reflections on the World Situation," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 6 (April 21, 1941), 2-3.

_____. "Repeal the Neutrality Act," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 18 (October 20, 1941), 1-2.

_____. "The Spirit of Justice," Christianity and Society, XV, No. 3 (Summer, 1950), 5-6.

_____. "The Tyranny of Science," Theology Today, X, No. 4 (January, 1954), 465.

_____. "The World After the War," Christianity and Crisis, I, No. 1 (February 10, 1941), 3.

_____. "World Community and World Government," Christianity and Crisis, VI, No. 3 (March 4, 1946), 5.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

Bingham, June Rossbach. Courage to Change. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.

Carnell, Edward John. The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.

Gordon, Morton and Vines, Kenneth N., (eds.) Theory and Practice of American Foreign Policy. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1955.

Harland, Gordon. The Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Kegley, Charles W. and Bretall, Robert W., (eds.) Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought. New York: Macmillan Co., 1956.

Lefever, Ernest W. Ethics and United States Foreign Policy. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1957.

Morgenthau, Hans J. and Thompson, Kenneth W., (eds.) Principles and Problems of International Politics. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.

Ramsey, Paul. Nine Modern Moralists. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Reitzel, William, Kaplan, Morton A., and Coblenz, Constance G. United States Foreign Policy: 1945-1955. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1956.

Rhoades, Dan. "The Prophetic Insight and Theoretical-Analytical Inadequacy of 'Christian Realism,'" Ethics, LXXV, No. 1 (October, 1964), 1-15.

Robertson, D. B. Reinhold Niebuhr's Works. Berea, Ky.: Berea College Press, 1954.

Russell, Bertrand. Power, a New Social Analysis. London: Allen and Unwin, 1948.

Schall, James V. "The Political Theory of Reinhold Niebuhr," Thought, XXXIII, No. 128 (Spring, 1958), 62-80.