

or of the actual production capacity of mankind.

This summer, the World Employment Conference in Geneva was told that there had never been as many destitute people as today — a period following rapid and universal economic growth. At the beginning of this decade, about 700 million people lived in severe poverty, and 500 million were chronically hungry. An estimated 300 million people are unemployed or working for starvation wages. Another 800 million, the equivalent of the present population of China, will be added to the potential world labour force during the next 25 years without a hope, under present conditions, of finding adequate employment. Unless we are prepared to see our obsolete tanks turned against the wrath of these unemployed civilians — our own children —, we had better change the conditions.

Question postponed

The "stark, dreadful and inescapable" question of the Einstein-Russell manifesto of 1954 has thus been postponed at an immense and rapidly-multiplying cost. Mankind has neither committed suicide nor renounced war. It has instead channelled its aggression into local military conflicts and universal war preparations, misdirecting the constructive energy and material resources needed for commonsense environmental management. The longer the question is postponed, the greater the likelihood of thermonuclear suicide, whether through technical error or political miscalculation. But the longer the holocaust is postponed, the greater the hope that men may yet learn to live with their recently-acquired nuclear capability without needing to engage in homicidal fantasies regarding its use. And men are adaptable.

This makes the corporate decisions of our generation the most crucial, and our time the most exciting and potentially the most creative, since the emergence of man. The decisions are made not only by diplomats and journalists and politicians but also by the citizens at large. For the paradox of our generation is that governmental decisions obviously contrary to our interests in fact reflect our corporate decisions. Political leaders in all countries, including the most ruthless dictatorships, calculate in terms of grass-roots support or at least tolerance. They would not survive in power without the co-operation of silent private citizens concerned only with the short-term welfare of their families and averting their eyes from the probable long-term effects of their limited functions.

Holding each other responsible for common catastrophe, both the politicians and the public take a sneaking pride in their national "deterrents".

This duality of conflicting desires for peace and power, consolidated and reinforced by potential external threats, has thus emerged as perhaps the essential universal obstacle to survival. This is a major issue of all political affairs, whether at the hostile Vienna bargaining over tanks and aircraft or at pious world conferences concerned with the ills of our common global habitat. To possess power is commonly conceived in the modern world is to embrace the freedom to display our terrible weapons and thereby to relinquish life. To possess peace is to embrace the freedom to plan for generations thereby to end our present flirtation with suicide. Planning for "overkill" while practicing *détente* is relinquishing both peace and power. Yet we can have both. Peace does offer power — only of a different sort, the power of creative man.

Thus an American President in theory tell his public that, since the destructive power required for the destruction of every enemy and friend as a citizen had already been amassed in the United States would in the future endeavor to beat the Soviet Union at economic development rather than at surplus clear capacity until the day Communism progressed from coexistence to competition. To be fair to Mr. Ford, no American President could expect to be re-elected on such a platform, despite its military, political and economic consistency. Politicians have tried, at hundreds of conferences, to work out mutual commitments of national sovereignty intended to limit voluntarily the freedom of each to discharge their weapons. They have failed, probably because politicians are employed in armaments manufacture.

Test ban

But there has been one important exception — the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 when the professed will of the politicians coincided with the vehement demands of the public on both sides of the Iron Curtain for an end to atmospheric nuclear testing. The issue of environmental contamination was then grave, but a minor compared to the ever-present possibility of ultimate destruction. By the widely-publicized radiation sicknesses of the boat-load of Japanese fishermen and the explosion of a giant Soviet atomic bomb with the power of 58 million tons of

*Postponement
of holocaust
provides hope
of adaptation*