

Illusions of Neutrality

by A. St. G. Abbott

In a rare moment of perception, the late John Foster Dulles once declared neutralism to be immoral. Nowadays, when the "uncommitted" constitute a noisy yet influential bloc in the United Nations, such words are eschewed by Western diplomats. The established democracies have succumbed to the turgid and interminable verbosity of recent initiatives to freedom.

But what Mr. Dulles meant is still true: that free nations which decline any part in the common defence of freedom continue to enjoy it at the expense of those who do accept this obligation. Sir Winston Churchill put the matter plainly enough when he remarked during the war that those neutrals who pretended to wonder what the Allies were fighting for would quickly find out if they were to stop fighting.

Lesson For The West

The recent conference of neutrals at Belgrade should succeed in teaching the West several lessons, the most important of which is that neutralists are on no account to be trusted. In the midst of the conference, Russia resumed H-bomb testing. Yet not a single delegate mounted the rostrum to announce that the Russian action had prompted his country to change its basic assessment of the rights and wrongs of the cold war struggle. There were expressions of regret - notably those of Mr. Nehru - but there was no sign of such abstract disapproval being translated into concrete diplomatic terms which might make Mr. Khrushchev desist in his bomb-testing. Remember that it matters not a damn to Mr. Khrushchev whether neutralist opinion approves or disapproves of his bomb-testing, provided such opinion does not result in solid backing for the West on Berlin, Germany, or any other cold-war issues.

Improbable as it may seem at first, Russia's resumption of nuclear tests has resulted in more rather than less neutralist support for the Russian case on Berlin, Germany, and Laos. Let me explain.

Russia's resumption of tests has convinced the neutrals that Moscow is in a really ugly mood, while Washington's restraint has convinced them that the United States is more flexible. Thus any pressure for peace the neutrals can exert is likely to be more influential with the West than with the East. Their main concern is the preservation of peace, not the rights or wrongs of Berlin or anywhere else. This objective is more likely to be achieved by putting pressure on the moderate Americans than on the immoderate Russians, which has in fact been the result.

In any dispute where the on-lookers are not immediately concerned in its cause, but are concerned only to prevent the disputants coming to blows, their weight will be thrown into encouraging the least aggressive

party to withdraw. Consciously or unconsciously, neutralist opinion is doing this today. Although anxious not to risk outraging either side, experience has unfortunately taught the neutral that less risk attaches to criticizing the West than the East. Precisely because the West is prepared to go on treating these countries as neutral, even when they oppose Washington and London at every turn, whereas Russia is not prepared to (at the first hint of the neutralist obstruction in the Congo Mr. Khrushchev attacked the whole concept of neutrality), they take up the "middle" position which is in fact much nearer that of the East than that of the West.

False Assumption

Western hopes of winning over the uncommitted world to its side are based on the false and dangerous assumption that the neutralists will back the side which has the best case. In fact, however, there is nothing good enough the West can do and nothing bad enough the East can do which will prompt them to take sides, since they are convinced the benefits of non-alignment outweigh any advantages that commitment could bring. This is a neutralist article of faith.

The West must understand, therefore, that the more it seeks to align its policies with the neutralist nations, the more it seeks to use them, the more they will

feel compelled to move Eastward, so as to avoid the unwanted embrace. The truth is that if the neutrals are to retain their middle position, they cannot afford to lag too far behind Soviet intransigence or to be overtaken too completely by Western moderation.

This should lead us to some fairly evident conclusions. Firstly, the neutral states can in no way be relied upon to act as objective and impartial arbiters in the cold war. Secondly, the West can never hope to woo them to this cause. Thirdly, and as a result of the first two considerations, Western policy should be to castigate and berate the neutralist camp as the situation warrants it - certainly not to cringe and curry favour with this rather seedy group of countries. To my knowledge South Africa and Rhodesia are the only two countries which have so far displayed the imagination, the guts and the realism to do this.

DARWIN

There was an ape in the days that were earlier;
Centuries passed, and his hair grew curlier;
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist;
Then he was a Man and a Positivist.

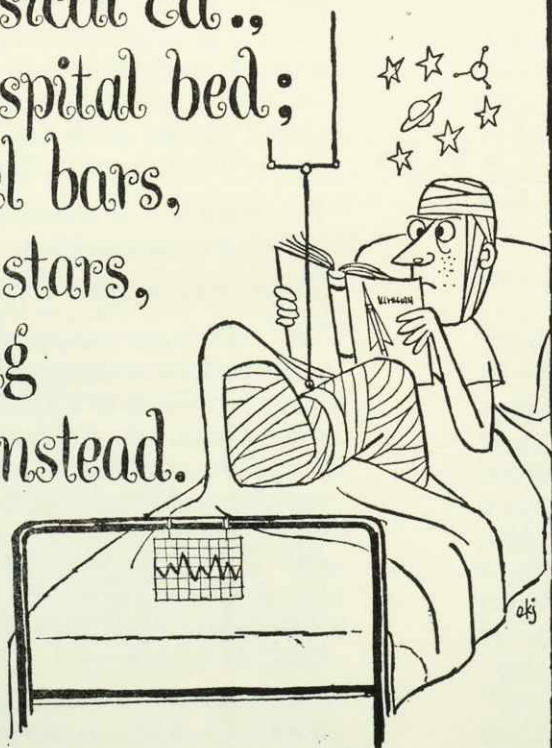
THE OUTCAST

Once there was an eager and naive young moralist
Who pointed a golden finger at humanity
Denounced the very lust, and drunkenness.
And when he turned
To see his words' effect on the populace
He found himself alone,
Friendless and fingerless.

Terry Wedge

A student in Physical Ed.,
Reclines in a hospital bed;
From the parallel bars,
He fell, and saw stars,
Now he's studying
space flight instead.

If bills your finances are wreckin',
Give a thought to Personal Chequin',
The account that says "whoa",
To your vanishing dough -
To the B of M now you'll be trekin'?



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