

WHICH WAY FOR AMERICA?

COEXISTENCE

or

NO EXISTENCE

PEACE OR H-BOMB ANNIHILATION?

By Adam Lapin

About the Author

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COEXISTENCE OR NO EXISTENCE

By ADAM LAPIN

A few months ago you couldn't say the word. It was considered subversive—or worse.

Today a great national debate rages around it. Politicians and statesmen talk about it. Newspaper writers discuss its pros and cons. It even screams from headlines—although it is a long word.

The word is “co-existence.” It is most often used together with another word: “peaceful.”

What does it mean? Typical Americans interviewed by the Gallup Poll gave these definitions of peaceful co-existence:

“Communism and capitalism living side by side.”

“Living without fighting the Russians.”

“Let them live their lives and let us live ours.”

“Getting along with everyone.”

It means these things—and more.

It means the peaceful living together in one world of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, of capitalist and socialist governments, of countries with different political and social systems.

It means that differences between these countries will be settled not by atomic and hydrogen bomb war but by peaceful negotiations of disputes around the conference table.

It means that the two different systems will compete—but to show which can first utilize atomic energy for peace, which can do more to improve the cultural and economic standards of its people. They will compete to show which is more staunchly dedicated to peace and the public welfare.

It means, above all, peace for us and our loved ones, a chance for our children to grow up as happy and useful citizens rather than to end their days in wooden boxes on distant battlefields.

Of those interviewed by the Gallup Poll, more than two-and-a-half to one said they favored peaceful co-existence.

But more than half of those questioned did not know what

the term meant. Even these probably favor the idea—without being familiar with the term. But all of us better become familiar with what is meant by peaceful co-existence and with the great debate which rages around this issue. For our very lives may depend on it.

THE GREAT DEBATE

Senator William Fife Knowland, son of a wealthy California newspaper publisher, sparked the current debate. Knowland, sometimes called the Senator from Formosa because his principal concern in life seems to be restoring Chiang Kai-shek and his cronies on that island stronghold to the mainland of China, said co-existence is a Russian "Trojan horse."

Although he is the Administration spokesman in the Senate, Knowland professed to be fearful that even President Eisenhower was falling for this dread new idea. He said he wanted to let the world know that some American leaders are "against co-existence." He said "time is running out" for the U.S.—and called for action now against China and the Soviet Union.

Sen. William Fulbright, Arkansas Democrat, took the Senate floor to charge that Knowland's position leads "inevitably to preventive war," means that the U.S. will launch an offensive war.

Before the debate was over, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson had their say—in varying degrees and with various qualifications differing with Knowland.

If it seemed to die down briefly, Knowland started it up all over again by calling for a naval blockade of China.

Secretary Dulles said that meant "war action." President Eisenhower agreed. The C.I.O. national convention in Los Angeles said Knowland was backing policies that would result in "the outbreak of immoral, so-called preventive war and the ultimate destruction of civilization." It added:

"But if the Administration should compromise with the

Knowlands, it shall meet our instant and forthright opposition."

That is exactly what President Eisenhower did in the last week of January, when he asked Congress to authorize new military action in the Formosa Straits. This alarmed the entire world and caused Senators Morse, Lehman and Flanders to denounce it as "preventive war." But the C.I.O. top brass remained silent.

BUT THE PEOPLE WANT PEACE

Why has this great debate flared up now? Why were Sen. Knowland's ideas more generally rejected than they would have been a year or two earlier? Why is there now growing recognition of the need for peaceful co-existence?

We Americans are a practical people. We have watched the evidence pile up that peace is a practical proposition—and we have started to draw our own conclusions.

We started drawing conclusions when the Korean war, the most hated war in our history, was stopped by negotiations back in 1953. We did even more thinking when the Indo-China war was stopped by direct negotiations at the Geneva conference in June, 1954.

For the first time in 20 years, there was no war anywhere in the world. The idea that peace was feasible, that the inevitable war some of our statesmen and generals kept talking about could be prevented, gripped the imagination of peoples everywhere—including the American people.

There is another reason why Americans have started speaking up for co-existence. As a practical people, we have noted that there is no alternative to peaceful co-existence except a hydrogen bomb war. And this alternative we have rejected with dread and abhorrence.

The A. F. of L. Butchers Union put it pointedly when its two top officers, President Earl W. Jimerson and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick E. Gorman, said the issue was "co-existence or no existence."

Since the end of World War II, U.S. foreign policy has been based largely on the idea that our country could achieve mili-

tary supremacy through a monopoly on atomic and hydrogen weapons.

This was why our State Department frowned on proposals to outlaw atomic and hydrogen bombs. This was the real meaning of Secretary of State Dulles' slogan of "massive retaliation." If there was any dispute anywhere in the world with the Soviet Union or China, just drop the bomb on Moscow or Peking.

Co-existence, so the argument ran, wasn't necessary—because we alone had the bomb. Apparently the makers of this policy didn't consider the possibility that the Soviet Union, too, would develop nuclear weapons. So what happens now when both sides have atomic and hydrogen bombs?

This has come to pass. The atomic monopoly has turned out to be a myth, the race for atomic supremacy a terrible illusion. And the foreign policy based on this illusion turned out to be a fiasco for our country.

We were told we had to arm to the teeth to preserve peace and to safeguard our democratic institutions against Soviet aggression. But we began to notice that these very democratic institutions were being wrecked by war hysteria and armaments programs.

As billions were spent for war, the domestic programs of the New Deal were scuttled. The Taft-Hartley Act was passed as cold war fever began to grip our country. Free speech began to be considered a luxury. McCarthyism flourished—and Communists and others who spoke up for peace were branded "subversive" and jailed under the Smith Act. New repressive legislation like the McCarran Act, the Walter-McCarran Act, aimed at the foreign born, and the Humphrey-Butler Act, outlawing the Communist Party and putting the trade unions under government regulation, was enacted.

We were told that our policy of building military strength would win us friends and allies throughout the world. But our alliances began to crumble, and peoples everywhere pointed with concern and anger at the war talk of our generals and our Senators like Knowland and Joe McCarthy.

Our policy brought us not democracy, but the threat of a

garrison state in which conformity would reign and McCarthyism would be king. It brought us not the peace-through-strength we were promised, but the Korean war—and the grim danger of all-out atomic war.

No wonder that more and more Americans began to champion co-existence as against a foreign policy which in the end offers only war with the dread new weapons of mass destruction.

THE PLOTTERS AGAINST PEACE

For the U.S. to drop the bomb anywhere on any pretext would bring disaster on the whole world—including, first of all, our own country.

This has become the really subversive doctrine of our times—subversive of all civilization, of life itself.

Those who advocated it tried to pin the subversive label on all who spoke up for peaceful co-existence. As Sen. Fulbright put it, the air had been so “poisoned by McCarthyism” that rational discussion of foreign policy had become difficult.

But those who clamor for war are themselves the real subversives who would lead our country into a disastrous atomic holocaust and would snuff out our democratic liberties. They have already brought our country into disrepute throughout the world.

Who are these plotters against the peace and security of our country?

They include the chairborne generals and admirals of the Pentagon, men like Admiral Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who have repeatedly urged dropping the bomb somewhere soon.

They include politicians like Sen. Knowland who puts his lunatic dream for overthrowing the government of China and restoring Chiang Kai-shek to the mainland above the welfare of the American people.

They include Sen. Joe McCarthy and the extreme pro-fascist wing of the Republican party who shout “subversive” and

“Communist” at all who oppose them so they can impose an un-American police state on our country.

These groups have now joined forces in a sinister coalition. When a committee was set up to collect signatures to save McCarthy from Senate censure, it was headed by retired war-now military men like Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer and Rear Admiral John G. Cromelin. The coalition was further cemented when McCarthy came out for Knowland’s proposal to blockade China—while Knowland reciprocated by opposing censure.

These are powerful men, and they are well-heeled with funds from Texas oil millionaires and Midwest industrialists.

But the secret of their strength lies in their contacts and supporters high in the Eisenhower Administration and in the upper echelons of big business. It lies in the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy, which is deliberately risking war with China and gambling with the lives of thousands, perhaps millions, of Americans.

It lies in the program of preparing for war to achieve world domination rather than negotiating for peace. This program has the support of the Wall Street interests which profit from war contracts and want to rule the world. The war program is sponsored by the Eisenhower Administration and is supported by most Democratic leaders. Unfortunately, on this question the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. high commands take their cue from big business and its two political parties, despite the fact that the rank and file want peace.

So long as this program is official policy, the war-now crowd has an ever-present opportunity for inflaming incidents, for provoking trouble, for plunging our country into atomic war.

DOES CO-EXISTENCE MEAN “APPEASEMENT”?

What are the arguments of those who talk so blithely about dropping bombs?

They say Soviet pleas for co-existence represent a sinister Russian stratagem, an even more dangerous Soviet “new look.”

But the fact is that peaceful co-existence has been the cornerstone of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union ever since it came into being in 1917. The new socialist country resolved at the outset to live at peace with the capitalist world around it. V. I. Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, put it this way in an interview with the New York *Evening Journal* back on Feb. 18, 1920:

“Our plans in Asia? The same as in Europe; peaceful co-existence with the peoples, with the workers and peasants of all nations.”

In 1927 Joseph Stalin said “the existence of two opposite systems, the capitalist system and the socialist system, does not exclude the possibility of . . . agreements between them.”

Soviet leaders have stood for that policy ever since. They still do.

But isn't it appeasement, as Knowland and McCarthy argue? Isn't it un-American to concede the right of the Russians or the Chinese to have the kind of government and social system they want?

On the contrary, it is written large in the American democratic tradition from earliest days that every people should have the right to determine its own form of government and that we should live at peace with all countries—regardless of their political or social systems.

That was the idea of Washington's Farewell Address—as it was the whole point of Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policy.

Roosevelt put his belief in co-existence into the statement he wrote on the day of his death, April 12, 1945, when he said:

“Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world, at peace.”

This policy was written repeatedly into Roosevelt's speeches and into his Teheran and Yalta agreements with Stalin and Churchill. In his Christmas Day, 1943, message to the Ameri-

can people, he expressed confidence that the U.S. would get along "very well indeed" with the Soviet Union. On Oct. 21, 1944, he said that the great nations which had waged the war together would now "embark together after the war on a greater and more difficult enterprise—that of waging peace."

The idea of co-existence is the very foundation of the United Nations. UN isn't supposed to be an anti-Communist alliance. It is rather intended to include socialist and capitalist countries alike, to unite them all in the cause of co-operation for peace.

But Knowland and McCarthy like neither Roosevelt nor UN. They say, in fact, that the U.S. ought to pull out of UN if the People's Republic of China, with its 600 million population, is admitted to that body. They want to undermine the original purpose of UN—and make it an instrument for waging cold war and hot war, too.

Those who oppose co-existence, like Senators Knowland and McCarthy, argue that the history of the decade since World War II proves it won't work. They say the Russians rejected co-existence, that the cold war became necessary because "the Russians started it."

But there is plenty of evidence to the contrary for thoughtful Americans to consider. For example, there is the recent declaration by Winston Churchill that way back in 1945, while the Russians and the British and the Americans were fighting side by side, he was all ready to arm the Nazis to fight the Soviet Union.

Or, there is the statement of former Secretary for Air Thomas K. Finletter that the U.S. dropped that atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 so as "to knock out Japan before Russia came in" and so that the U.S. would come "out of the war with a decisive balance of power over Russia."

Or, there is the fact that ex-President Truman, back in 1946, sponsored Churchill's Fulton, Mo., speech calling for a U.S.-British alliance against the Soviet Union.

A look at the facts will suggest that powerful men in our country and in Britain, who always rejected peaceful co-existence with the Soviet Union, were chiefly responsible for

the collapse of post-war peace hopes and for the start of the cold war.

But what about the argument that the Russians threaten us with aggression now? Here, too, the facts indicate different conclusions than the familiar propaganda charges. One such fact is that no Russian soldier has fought outside the borders of his country since 1945—while Americans, unfortunately, did fight in Korea.

Another fact is that fear of Soviet aggression diminishes the closer one gets to the borders of the Soviet Union. Thus, most Europeans fear the danger of revived German militarism, rather than an attack by the Russians.

It turns out that the aggression charges hinge not on military aggression but on so-called political or even economic aggression. Thus, we are told that the movement of the peoples of Asia for independence from colonial domination is proof of Soviet aggression. Or, we sometimes hear that it would be Soviet aggression if the peoples of Italy or France were to elect a Communist-led government.

But must the U.S. act as a policeman for the colonial status quo in Asia—as it tried unsuccessfully to do in Indo-China? Must the U.S. go to war to keep Asian peasants from deciding their own destinies or Europeans from picking their own governments?

These are big questions, and there is plenty of room for discussion and argument. But regardless of differences about who started the cold war or even who is responsible for continuing it, surely all Americans of good will can agree that it is high time to stop it—indeed that it must be stopped and real peace established if the terrible alternative of atomic war is to be avoided.

EISENHOWER'S STAND

Where does President Eisenhower stand in the great debate on co-existence?

The McCarthys and the Knowlands are alarmed by the President's statements that he rejects war as a solution of in-

ternational differences and that the prospects for lasting peace are "more promising than at any time in recent years."

Knowland complains that he still advocates the "massive retaliation" and "liberation" policies originally pronounced by the President—but that the Administration was backing away from its own past policies.

Unfortunately, this is not quite true. Mr. Eisenhower and his Cadillac Cabinet have not been able to ignore the fact that their policy is encountering resistance at home and abroad. The President also realizes that an appeal on the peace issue was needed to keep the Republican party in power—and to keep his faltering European allies in line. And he has undoubtedly exercised some restraint on the Pentagon hotheads.

But the plain fact is that the Administration has not broken with its past policies.

That is why there is such a glaring contradiction between Administration words and deeds. While Mr. Eisenhower talks of peace, he acts to:

—Rearm Western Germany despite the fears of the whole world that this will mean a rebirth of Nazism and of aggressive German militarism.

—Provoke conflict in the Far East by using U.S. military forces to keep the Chiang Kai-shek gang on Formosa and other Chinese islands, by creating the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), by signing a military pact with Chiang while refusing to permit the real government of China to be seated in the United Nations.

—Discourage proposals for lifting the embargo on trade with the socialist world and to balk all suggestions for big power peace talks.

—Further militarize our country by introduction of Universal Military Training and continue spending more than \$40 billion a year for war preparations.

Such a program cannot lead to peace. Indeed, the President himself holds out no more hope than that it will lead to an armed truce for decades to come. A wire service dispatch on Dec. 15 quoted him as stating that "the U.S. must

remain prepared to fight and win a big war for perhaps the next 50 years."

Mr. Eisenhower sanctions the use of the word co-existence these days. But what he offers is not peaceful co-existence—but a dreary prospect for a continuing arms race and continuing war tensions—a policy of eventual war.

And so long as the world remains divided into hostile, armed camps, so long will the danger persist that Knowland and the Pentagon Brass will push us into war and that McCarthyism will achieve supremacy at home.

A PROGRAM FOR PEACE

Surely the American people want something better than that. And they can have something better.

Co-existence doesn't only mean an absence of shooting war—although that is the all-important starting point. It isn't just a negative concept. It contains the bright promise of a better life for all peoples.

It means lifting the pall of fear from the world.

It means building homes and schools instead of H-bombs and aircraft carriers.

It means reviving a New Deal program of social legislation.

It means ending the reign of McCarthyism which has thrived on the cold war.

It means peace-time jobs for American workers from trade with the socialist world.

The program of the Communist Party puts it this way:

"Our country, in its own interests, must take advantage of the immense markets for American goods available in the Soviet Union, China and Eastern Europe. These markets can provide millions of jobs for American workers for years to come."

All this is possible if the American people act:

- To stop German rearmament.
- To prevent the militarization of our country through UMT.
- To establish diplomatic relations with the new China and end support to Chiang Kai-shek's corrupt clique.

- To demand top-level peace negotiations now of the U.S., the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and the Chinese People's Republic.

- To lift barriers against trade with the socialist world.

- To outlaw atomic and hydrogen weapons and achieve general disarmament under a strict inspection and enforcement system.

THE PEOPLE MUST ACT FOR PEACE

This is the bright future which is within our grasp if we will work for it. It is worth working for—and we will have to work for it.

If our country got embroiled in the Korean war and has come far too close for comfort to global war, it is partly because we haven't worked hard enough for peace.

Far too many Americans have fallen for the fantastic notion that foreign policy is none of their business, that they can afford to let sabre-rattling generals and fancy-pants diplomats decide the issue of war or peace.

Far too many trade unionists and Democrats have criticized President Eisenhower's big business administration in domestic policy—but have let his generals and industrial tycoons and bankers have their own sweet way on foreign policy.

In fact, most Democratic leaders are wedded to the same foreign policy as the Eisenhower administration—as are the heads of the CIO and A. F. of L. And some Democratic spokesmen, like Adlai Stevenson, have criticized the Administration for its modest cuts in war appropriations.

That is one reason the President has been able to mislead many voters with his peace talk, has been able to make peace speeches while he carries out a policy which leads to war. It is because the Democrats have not offered the alternative of a real peace policy.

But the thirteen Senators—twelve of them liberal Democrats—who either voted against the Formosa resolution or supported restricting amendments, can become the nucleus of a real opposition to the bi-partisan war program. And there are

also a few leaders of A.F. of L. and C.I.O. unions who are moving in that direction.

Peace is everybody's business. Co-existence, with all its gleaming hope for our country, can become a reality only if we make it our business.

It can be realized if organized labor and its powerful allies among farmers, the Negro people and church groups, join the fight for peace in a solid and united front now.

This means putting pressure on the President to stop the war drive of the Knowlands and the McCarthys and to halt the Administration's own war moves.

It also means beginning to lay the foundations now for electing a Congress and a national Administration in 1956 which will curb the war-makers and start moving towards peace negotiations and peaceful co-existence.

It means putting the heat on Democratic Party spokesmen, in and out of Congress, to stop tagging along after Eisenhower on foreign policy and to respond to public demands for peace—so that reactionary, war-minded Republicans won't be able to sneak into power again under the mantle of peace.

Already the people are beginning to speak up through their unions and their church organizations. But there is much more to be done.

We can start enlisting our friends, our neighbors, our fellow workers, our union or club or church in the crusade for peaceful co-existence, for peaceful relations with all countries.

We can write the President and our Senators and Congressmen, organize peace delegations to visit members of Congress, urge our state legislatures and city councils to memorialize Congress to act for peace.

Out of such grass roots activity will come a national tidal wave for peace which can sweep the war-makers out of Washington.

The issue is *co-existence or no existence.*

More on War and Peace

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