

# The Perils of Pacifism

BY ERIC MACK

Against the hopes and predictions of many, nuclear missiles have been placed in Western Europe by the US government as a part of NATO's defense of the area. But calls for nuclear disarmament by the West continue.

I am not about to defend the controversial decision by the NATO governments to deploy those missiles. That is a matter for military strategists, whose province it is to figure out the best way to defend the citizens of a given area, if defending them is indeed a legitimate purpose. But is it? That is precisely what is at issue in the disarmament debate—what may individuals do, or have done for them, in the defense of their lives and property? And to whom may unpleasant, indeed lethal, things be done?

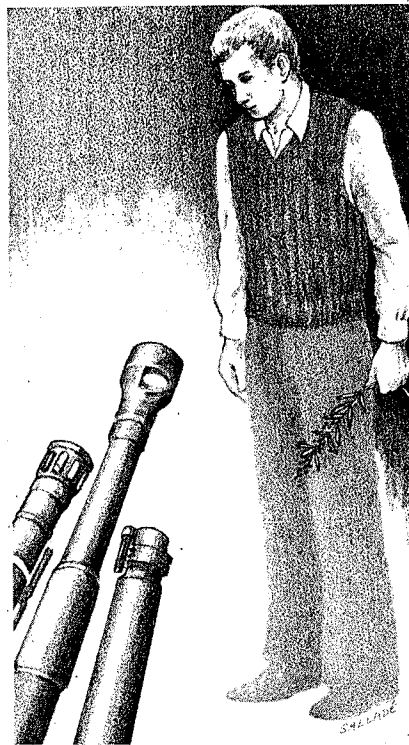
At one extreme on these questions is the pacifist, who tells us that nothing violent may be done even in the defense of life and freedom. We are, in essence, counseled to surrender *before* evil, to let the aggressor prevail. At the other extreme is the advocate of whatever force is necessary to protect life or freedom. If destroying 25 million Soviet children will effectively secure our lives and freedoms, advocates of unlimited defense would accept such destruction. Thus, we are counseled to surrender *to* evil—to adopt the same murderous mentality we propose to resist in others.

If these are our only alternatives, it's no wonder there's considerable sympathy for the pacifism that is so often to be found behind calls for disarmament. Fortunately, these are not the only alternatives.

Pacifism, in spite of its initial appeal, is incoherent. It is incoherent because it both insists that we all have rights—for instance, rights to life and liberty—while denying that we could have a right to defend our lives and liberties. Yet a right is something one may *require* others to respect. If we possess rights to life and liberty, as most pacifists believe, we may require that others respect our rights. Sometimes the only way to accomplish this is to resist persons forcibly and even lethally. When force, even lethal force, is necessary to defend basic rights, the use of such force is morally permissible.

Against whom? Clearly, the guilty aggressor, acting freely and intentionally,

is fair game. But what about the innocent aggressor forced into aggression by his own immoral government? Certainly the innocent aggressor does not *deserve* to be killed. Yet equally clearly, the potential innocent victim need not accede to death or enslavement by an innocent aggressor. Potential victims have a right of self-defense, a right to resist the destruction of their basic rights. It is a great evil



that the government of an innocent aggressor has forced him into attacking others. But that evil does not strip the potential victims of their right to resist.

But what about the hardest case of all—inocent bystanders? What about, for example, Soviet children—may they too be killed in order to secure our rights? If we accept this position, we embrace the murderous doctrine of unlimited defense. However, we need not embrace this brutal alternative.

An attack on innocent bystanders such as Soviet children would not be an act of self-defense, since those children would be no part of any Soviet attack on us. Thus, no right of self-defense could justify directing an attack upon them or could justify strategic policies involving such attacks.

Unfortunately, for decades preparations for such attacks have been central to the US strategic stance, which calls for deterring Soviet attacks by threatening massive retaliation against Soviet population centers. A moral person could not seriously contemplate such strikes nor credibly threaten them.

There is, however, a morally permissible alternative. The most obviously acceptable form of defense would be one designed simply to destroy incoming missiles or bombers (antiballistic missiles, etc.) or to protect us from the effects of an aggressive attack (civil defense). But it is not likely that a purely protective system could be completely effective; so it would have to be supplemented with a strategic counterstrike system capable of destroying the military means by which an aggressor might seek to follow up and profit from his first strike. To be acceptable, a responsive counterforce system must be directed only at military targets and must consist of weapons developed and employed, as much as possible, to destroy only such targets.

A responsive counterforce system might still result in the tragic deaths of many innocent bystanders. Nevertheless, the use of weapons designed to inflict damage on military targets would be justified in the face of aggression. Responsibility for the deaths of, for example, innocent Soviet children killed despite our efforts to achieve a purely counterforce response to aggression would lie with Soviet leaders who had decided to locate their instruments of aggression in the midst of innocent bystanders.

We do not have to be pacifists and bow before evil. Neither must we surrender to evil by seeking the deaths of innocents. To avoid the latter we must adopt a strategic policy radically different from current US policy—one that centers on purely protective capacities and counterstrike weapons that aim only and precisely at the aggressor's military.

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## TAXES

# Mum's the Word

BY TIMOTHY CONDON

**B**y now everyone knows that nothing's going to be done about today's favorite bogeyman, "the deficit," until after the November elections. This gigantic problem, recently discovered as a campaign issue by the same people who've been causing the problem for the last 25 years, will serve as a perfect excuse once again to screw the American taxpayer but royally. But please, not until after the elections.

After all, *everyone knows* that "the budget can't be cut"—at least not meaningfully: there are too many "entitlement" programs in place with automatic increases already mandated. Can't be touched. Never mind that Congress passed laws that mandate such spending and can very well pass laws ending it. Nope. Not feasible. Some coward might lose his congressional seat.

The result: taxes are going to be increased in 1985 more than any living person has ever seen them explode. They will go up possibly higher and faster than ever in American history. The taxpayer is going to pay, and pay, and pay, and pay. And, to make sure there isn't too much inconvenient complaining by the shirkers and fat-cats (you know, the ones making \$15,000 or \$20,000 a year), the IRS is going to be given powers that spit on the Constitution.

Therefore, it isn't too early for each and every taxpayer to start thinking about how to react. Here are some rules to start living by:

- *Keep your mouth shut.* Many IRS audits are instituted as a result of overheard comments, or "confidential" tips (for which the spy is paid money, should any be squeezed out of the hapless taxpayer informed upon). You should become very private and very close-mouthed about your financial affairs, whether you are collecting money "under the table" or not. That includes friends, family members, and lovers.

- *Consider rearranging your financial affairs so as to increase your privacy.* There are many ways to do this, but don't take it from me: go get a couple of books that are very good indeed on the subject. *Mark Skousen's Complete Guide to Financial Privacy* is very good (Caroline House Books, 236 Forest Park Place, Ottawa, IL 61350). Skousen gives you an over-

view of why you should want more privacy (independent of the storm that will soon sweep down upon all of us), and tells you a number of ways to achieve it. A second, more recent book on financial privacy deals specifically with foreign bank accounts, which you may want to consider. *Bank Accounts: A World Guide to Confidentiality*, by Edouard Chambost, is pricey (\$31.95, put out by Wiley Press) but worth it if you want seriously to consider a foreign bank account (and there are many reasons why you might want to do this).

- *Understand the government's confiscation apparatus.* Read, for a start, *All You Need to Know About the IRS*, by Paul Strassels, a former IRS agent. This book tells how the government is able to keep most of us scared and cowed, while extracting amounts of wealth that dictators and despots of the past would not *dare* attempt to seize. Armed with the kind of knowledge garnered from this book, you will be in a better position to withstand the government's techniques, both subtle and not-so-subtle.

- *Don't fall for the propaganda barrage that will inevitably materialize.* Sometime between 1985 and 1987 the federal government is going to make a big show of an "amnesty program for taxpayers." All of us will be allowed to confess our sins to the government and turn over large amounts of money, in return for a general amnesty. Several points leap to mind: One, if they could catch you and prosecute, they most certainly would; an amnesty is an admission that they *can't* catch the vast number of people who exploit every possible interpretation of the tax code to hold on to their money. (Moreover, if those people *could* be caught, where would they all be housed after conviction? The state of Montana?) Second, there is no doubt in my mind that if you take advantage of such an "amnesty," your name will go on a computer tape somewhere, and you will be marked for special scrutiny in the future should you ever come to the government's attention again. Third, such a program will rely heavily on unspoken intimidation, and it will be coupled with a much-publicized increase in IRS powers (which would have occurred anyway); if you know how the

government intimidates you in the first place (see the books above), then you won't be so fearful that you'll rush to give your money to the IRS.

- *Don't fall for a flat-tax scheme unless it guarantees the government will receive less of the people's wealth.* Government lovers of all stripes hate the idea of a "flat tax"; but you're going to see some of them jumping on the bandwagon. Why? Normally, a graduated income tax enables a politician to play off one segment of society against another: "We're not going to tax *you*, we're only going after the *rich fat-cats*," they say (you know this is a lie, but it's worked quite well for governments in the 20th century). With a flat tax, this cannot be done. But if it means politicians can extract even *more* wealth from the people, then they'll go along with it.

Friends, there comes a time when everyone has to make a very fundamental decision. Even today, many people feel that "cheating" on income taxes is wrong. But at some point even those people will have to say, "No more," and begin fighting the government by joining the subterranean economy. In fact, a strong argument can be made *right now* that a majority of Americans have already made that decision. But the conflagration about to descend upon each and every taxpayer is going to make millions more converts.

Under the guise of "reducing the deficit," terrible things are going to happen to anyone who works for a living and pays taxes. Each of us will have to make a decision about how to fight the seemingly unstoppable march of government as it causes ever more economic dislocation, as our standard of living begins another long slide downward. I don't preach to anyone about how far to go, how strong a stand to take, and whether that stand should be public or private.

The only absolute is this: somehow, sometime, a stand must be taken, by all of us. If we fail, then we take our places beside those throughout history who have been exploited by government. And we then cease to be free men and women.

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