

Africa and the Movement for Peace

Bertrand Russell

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The Great Powers had stockpiled by 1963 the equivalent in TNT of 320 thousand million tons of explosives. To exhaust this nuclear stockpile would involve the use of all the explosive power of the entire Second World War every day for 146 years. This nuclear stockpile doubles each year. The United States has also stockpiled 130,000 Aerosol nerve gas bombs. Each one of these bio-chemical bombs kills all life in an area of 455 million square miles. This is eight times the land surface of the earth and 151 times that of the United States. The missiles which will carry these weapons are scattered over the planet and depend on warning margins as short as 30 seconds. These missile systems are connected to giant computers which take their information from radar, which is not capable of distinguishing all natural phenomena from missiles. It is quite clear therefore, that with each day that passes, the danger of eventual accidental nuclear war increases to a point of near certainty. An insurance company would say that there will be a mean number of accidents on the road each year and a certain number of air crashes involving civilian transport. We do not know which particular automobile or aeroplane will crash. We do know that if a certain number are in use, then an average number of crashes will ensue. Similarly, there is a mean number of accidents involving nuclear technology each year, due to electrical failures, false radar signals, miscalculations, and personal breakdown. During each period of international crisis, the variables multiply and the probability of disaster becomes quite high. It is no exaggeration to say that every moment of each day we risk

the imminent destruction of life on our planet. Governments are in the habit of lying about policies which they know are likely to result in opposition or disfavour. The American Government contends that no ill effects have occurred as a result of nuclear testing. It has not been able to explain why leukaemia has become the first cause of child mortality in the United States and congenital deformity the second cause. Both of these illnesses were very rare in America 10 years ago. Nor has this American Government been able to explain why children in the South Western States receive twenty-eight times the "safe dosage" of radioactivity, which is calculated for one year but received in one month.

The British Government maintains that the level of fallout never approximated the danger point. It does not explain why Sir John Cockcroft, the Director of the Atomic Energy Commission in Britain, stated after the Test Ban Treaty that at least once his Government considered banning all supplies of fresh milk. Sir John also said that any further atmospheric testing would make it necessary to ban fresh milk in Britain.

If during the Punic wars the contestants had used weapons which killed many thousands of those living today, we should not be persuaded by their convictions that their opponents were so evil that the murder of future generations was justified. One round of testing, however, resulted in nearly four million deaths over many generations.

The people of Africa are not party to the Cold War. It is not their conflict, but they suffer the consequences no less than those who are part of the Cold War, and a nuclear war will cause universal death.

Today, the people of Africa are assuming their role of increasing importance in the political affairs of the world. African states are controlling the affairs of Africans for the first time in centuries. This permits the leadership in Africa to play a decisive role in preventing the Cold War from becoming a nuclear war and in opposing the Cold War itself.

It is often said that disarmament is held up because the Soviet Union will not allow inspection of delivery systems and stock piles. This is not true and is said falsely by those who contend it. The position of the Soviet Union has been stated in many places including the draft treaty on General and Complete Disarmament of March 19th, 1962.

The position is as follows:

If the West agrees to the principle of general disarmament, the Soviets will call for internationally recruited inspection teams to be placed in every country before any measures of disarmament are begun. If general disarmament were agreed, the Soviets have stated that they would permit thousands of United Nations inspectors on Soviet soil before any

reduction of armaments is started. These inspectors could control, on the spot, the disbanding of 60% of Russian manpower and 100% of the means of delivery of missiles.

I am often critical of the Soviet Union and its responsibility for the Cold War and the danger of nuclear war. It should, however, be made quite clear that the main obstacle to disarmament at the moment is the refusal of the West to accept proposals which are without fault regarding disarmament. It must be possible to point out the failings of either side and the virtues of either side as the case may be. I should wish African states to demand that the West accept the disarmament proposals outlined by the Soviets and that the West cease lying about the Soviet position on inspection.

I am pleased that African states also follow a policy of non-alignment and support claims for the abolition of military blocs such as NATO, the Warsaw Pact, CENTO, SEATO, etc. The United Nations is becoming through the participation of non-aligned Afro-Asian states more reflective of the distribution of population in the world. It is important that it should acquire the ability to enforce decisions which will be binding on all the powers concerned including the United States and the Soviet Union. This may seem a remote prospect at the moment because of the inordinate power wielded by the United States and the Soviet Union, but, in time, this could be made a reality which could transform present world relations.

There is another way in which the arms race and the policies of the Cold War could be opposed by the African States. There are in existence organisations such as the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation which are seeking to develop a vast public opinion against policies of the Cold War and of the arms race. I am convinced that if we are to alter the drift to destruction it will be necessary to change Western policy and this could best be done by activating an immense opinion in the Western world. The issue is too serious and the consequences of failure are too grave for the forces opposing war to be divided and aimless. I should like machinery established in which all African states would take part, which would make available to organisations such as the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation the means of disseminating information systematically to the peoples of the West. If, for example, we were better able to make known in Britain that milk has been poisoned, we should be better able to prevent the mad policies of the Cold War from being followed by the Government of the United Kingdom.

The cause of peace is directly related to the possibility of development in Africa. The Great Powers spend at least one hundred million pounds a day on arms. It is difficult to imagine what this means, but those who have the

responsibility for the conduct of affairs in African states will now what this expenditure would mean to them if it could be directed towards the development of their countries. The one hundred million pounds which is spent each day on arms not only wastes the resources of the world for people who are without the essentials of life, but it imposes upon the developing countries the most appalling difficulties and restrictions. The wastage of resources and money on this scale make it very difficult to halt the population explosion and to develop quickly. The resources that are essential to such development are deflected through colonialism, neo-colonialism, international control of the world's resources by the industrial powers and the monopoly of technicians which the industrial powers use to perpetuate the race for arms. The ramifications of this inconceivable expenditure on arms are such as to affect every particular of the policies of African governments and the circumstances of life in their countries. The Governments of African countries are also forced to spend money themselves on arms. They are forced to use oppressive measures at home to combat Great Power efforts at intrigue. They are trapped by the difficulty of meeting the demands of their people when the political pressures upon them are so great from those who have the money, arms, techniques and the brutality to enforce their will in the world.

It is clear that the question of development depends on world disarmament. Development cannot proceed unless the arms race is ended. Unless the arms race is ended, resources will be depleted, populations will rise, development will be too slow, governments will be overthrown and the crises which rock our world will multiply until the thrust towards mass murder is realised in a final holocaust.

I am convinced that only those people who feel the cost of the arms race on their own flesh can bring the energy and impetus to the struggle against the Cold War which will be necessary if it is to be ended. The first victims of the arms race are the people of Africa and Asia. It is their subjection which has made it possible and it is their opposition which could end it.

We can only oppose powerful Western governments which are hostile to our aims if the African states which pursue non-alignment would join directly with those of us in the West who oppose the policies of the Cold War. It would then be a practical proposition to hope that public opinion could be sufficiently aroused to end the Cold War and the danger of annihilation. The people of Africa and Asia may be militarily weak, but they are many, and together their governments and the peace groups of the West could accomplish the peace we discuss so lengthily in articles, meetings and conferences.