

for politics, nor does one encounter "ethical questions" or "moral issues" in the course of "doing politics." The whole conduct of the office is an exercise in moral responsibility, and this responsibility is discharged by the prudent administration of the power of the state and allocation of the resources of the state in support of the national political purposes. Given the purposes, the power, the experience, the resources, one frames policy that is "fitting" for the situation. This is prudent politics and it is ethical politics.

I support Gessert in his understanding of the integral relationship of moral to political responsibility in the conduct of political office, but I must be critical of what appears to be a unidimensional interpretation of political ethics. What we experience as ethical conflict in politics is not a clash between morality (universal obligations) and immorality (national interest), nor between ethical politics (read "prudent" politics) and irrelevant appeals to non-prudential ethics, nor between conflicting assessments of what prudence entails in given situations. Rather, it is a clash between two orders of moral responsibility which derive from our relatedness to a particular political community and to the wider human community which always is coming into being but never fully is. When the two orders coincide, as they sometimes do, there are no moral problems. When they conflict, which they often must because of the original sin which produces divisiveness and self-preference, they beget dual moral obligations which are irreconcilable. To yield to the claims of either community appears to the other to be a rejection of moral responsibility.

The paper which Robert Gessert has written does not escape this duality. However much he may attempt to equate ethics with prudence, he does not avoid using expressions which suggest an order of value or commitment transcending both prudence and the national purposes to which it is subservient. Ethics is "the search for wise political purposes, militarily prudent operations, and just allocations of resources." Yet the search for purposes is an exercise in value interpretation and judgment which is guided ultimately by religious commitment or some functional equivalent, and the prudential worth of military operations is determined fundamentally by the outcome of the search. Certainly the "just allocation of resources," involving as it does a conflict not only between domestic and foreign commitments but also among domestic interests and responsibilities, requires a point of reference that can be found only among the "other considerations" of item four.

One can break out of the problem of the duality

only by denying either the particular or the more inclusive set of claims. One does the former by renouncing politics and the latter by reintegrating and resacralizing the political community into self-contained, self-validating tribal unity. Gessert would accept neither solution, but his position is shielded from the logic of the latter alternative only because he uses some elements from the "other considerations" more generously than he seems willing to admit.

The two ends of the spectrum illustrate the necessity of keeping the two motifs of eschatological commitment and love-motivated political service in a mutually contributory and corrective relationship. Paul Peachey struggles to maintain Christian identity through full and existential dependence on the divine confrontation, and this struggle seems to preclude his framing an ethic of power to guide the political community in its foreign policy decisions. Robert Gessert, the only one of the five writers who does not attempt a definition of specifically *Christian* political responsibility, prepares a political ethic which well may move towards theological anchorage in the primacy of the state if it does not incorporate theological-political inquiry into its method.

Of course, no one achieves a perfect correlation of the two motifs, and no one can. Their relationship is one of dialectic, not combination and integration. Each motif must attempt concretely to satisfy the claims of the other, and where one of them tends to fill up the definition of Christian political vocation the recovery of the truth and immediacy of the other becomes the primary ethical task.

## **correspondence**

### **"WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION"**

Chattanooga, Tenn.

Dear Sir: The article by Mr. Quentin Quade in the February 1966 *worldview*, makes one stand back and view with awe. Were Mr. Quade simply to state that to him communism is evil, and that in order to defeat its adoption by people anywhere he is willing to kill as many such people—and, incidentally, of our own youth—as may be necessary to make those remaining give up their project, this would appear to be his prerogative. But when he repeatedly asserts that his is a Christian stand, and thus seeks to bring the Prince of Peace into a partnership with him in his plans for killing, this to me is blasphemy on a scale difficult of comprehension.

Were Mr. Quade to reflect, he would realize the choice of communism is always one of alternatives,

and that the alternative to it is never the Kingdom of God. In China, as an example, the choice was and is between rule by Chiang Kai-shek and rule by Mao Tse-tung. One wonders what liberties the ordinary Chinese have had under either of these rulers which were greater than those they had under the other. Mr. Quade is probably aware that, aside from the question of liberty, under one of these rulers the common people have had universal education and that under the other they have not; that under the one they have had medical care and under the other they have not; that under the one they have had decent clothing and adequate food and under the other they have frequently had rags and the starvation of millions. Under the one they have taken pride in their progress and under the other they have been without hope of progress. Mr. Quade may make his own decision as to which of the rulers it was who showed concern for the people in each of the above instances while the other did not.

One can only suggest that Mr. Quade, instead of telling God whose side He is on, might do well to make sure he is on God's side before he starts the killing. Mr. Quade would probably be amazed at the suggestion that God sent the rod of his anger against His people in order to have them return to following His ways of justice and mercy rather than for them to kill Assyrians or others whom He loved. It would probably absolutely astound him to learn that should His people have returned to following His ways, the

Prince of Peace might have been able to handle the situation without calling on human killers for help.

KURT W. KRAUSE

#### *The Author Replies*

Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir: The letter of Mr. Kurt W. Krause commenting on my "Wars of National Liberation" article is quite intriguing. I did not attempt "to bring the Prince of Peace into a partnership..." with myself. Rather, I asked what the Prince of Peace told me to do about, e.g., Vietnam, and I concluded that He told me to work it out, recognizing that I might work it out wrongly. In other words, the argument is precisely over whether or not the Christian as Christian has an *a priori* key to correct policy. What I take to be the gist of Mr. Krause's first paragraph suggests that at least on Vietnam there is such a key. My "blasphemy," therefore, results from my failure to perceive the key.

The second paragraph, however, does not seem to fit the above categories. For in this, Mr. Krause seems to be arguing on prudential grounds, i.e., at least, relatively speaking, the threat of communism is not as dastardly as I portrayed it, the alternative may be no better, and so forth. These points are in fact the very issues which I said must be appraised en route to wise decision, and in raising them Mr. Krause seems to be saying my appraisal is in error. This I take to be progress, for I would rather be erroneous than blasphemous. QUENTIN L. QUADE

## Church and State: Is the Conflict Profound?

*Peter and Caesar: Political Authority and the Catholic Church*, by E. A. Goerner, Herder and Herder. \$5.95.

by Bernard Murchland

Peter and Caesar have never gotten on very well together. Like a marriage of convenience their relationship has always lacked the air of authenticity. Each lives in more or less constant fear that

Father Bernard Murchland has written widely on questions which have related religion to the social and political order.

the other will run off with a different partner. Whatever practical arrangements they have been able to agree on—and in the long stretch of history there have been many—seem to have been ineluctably vitiated by doubt and suspicion. Most of the history of Christianity has been circumscribed by this paradox. Indeed, it can be convincingly argued that this is a major reason for its present major predicament and ineffectiveness. Roman Catholicism, in particular, has long been obsessed with the notion of reality of power. One has only to recall the re-

cent deliberations of Vatican II to realize that the problem is still very much with us.

The intrusion of God into history through the Incarnation established two orders of life for the Christian—the supernatural and the natural. Professor Goerner characterizes the problem as "the confrontation between ends that transcend history and ends within history, between an order of being that is absolute and eternal and an order of being that is relative, that belongs to time and therefore suffers change." His book, and an able one it is, is an

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