

## *The UN: Faith and Failure*

**This Kind of Peace**, by T. R. Fehrenbach, *New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1966. 402 pp. \$6.50.*

**The Missile Crisis**, by Elie Abel, *New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966. 220 pp. \$4.95.*

TO HIS GROWING list of writings on World War II and on the world since 1945, including the best-selling *This Kind of War* (1963), the versatile Fehrenbach—Korean war veteran, erstwhile cotton farmer and insurance executive, and currently Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserves—now adds the book under review. Its purpose is to illustrate how and why the United Nations came about, who made it, what it was meant to be, and finally what it ultimately became. In fulfilling this purpose the author has given us, of necessity and all to the good—for what could be duller than the tale of the United Nations told in a vacu-

um—a brief history and interpretation of the salient developments in international relations of the last twenty years (1945-1965).

He does not claim to have written a complete history of the UN, for to him that would have had to be a history of the world, but he does attempt to show the UN and the world of political power relationships as they really are, not as we would like them to be. The attempt is eminently successful, for his interpretation of the recent past is based not only on his personal experience of the times in which we live, but also, and refreshingly, on a sound knowledge of the nature of man, of politics, and of history, gained from his extensive reading of the times in which others lived. Therefore, over and above the narrative of events, the book is permeated with the essentials of his interpretation, his *Weltanschauung*; a sense of the role of political power and geopolitical realities, of the factors of necessity and the logic of the times in given situations, and an ever-present historical consciousness, so often lacking in writers these days, which sees the present in the light of the experience of past ages.

Fehrenbach has organized his book into three parts, subdivided each part into chapters with sprightly titles, and packed each chapter with facts and interpretations, with pen portraits of all the leading statesmen, and with sketches of the historical background of all the major crises of the period. Hardly a sentence is without significance to an understanding of the story the author tells, the interpretation he presents.

Part I, "The Faith," covers the period from 1941 to 1945 to reveal the origins of the United Nations and the difficulties of its institutionalization in the midst of the war. The threads of this diplomatic development run from the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, involving the Big Two and Anglo-American differences, to the Declaration of the United Nations of January, 1942, then to the Big Four and the power realities of Dumbarton Oaks of Au-

gust, 1944, and thence to the Big Three and their differences at Yalta, and finally to the San Francisco Conference and the birth of the United Nations Charter. In explaining this development Fehrenbach has much to say of solid substance on the nature of political power and power politics, on American ideas about war and politics, on the reality and the myth of Yalta, and on British, Soviet, and American relations. In concluding this part the author displays his organizational ability most skillfully by interspersing his account of the important but dull subject of the organization of the United Nations and the creation of its Charter with descriptions of the scene of the San Francisco Conference, of the delegates, of the social life—depressing, amusing, appalling—with historical allusions to the famous Congress of Vienna of 1815, and with a sketch of the bloody fighting in the Pacific and in Central Europe that bitter spring of 1945. As for the UN, the changes—from the Big Power alliance of Dumbarton Oaks to the international cooperation provided by the Charter—are clearly enumerated and analyzed.

Part II, "The Failure," covers the period from 1945 to the signing of the cease-fire in Korea on July 27, 1953. Here, Fehrenbach sets forth in great detail the salient developments in international affairs of the period, analyzes the policies and characterizes the statesmen of the nation-states involved, and explains each development in terms of his realistic interpretation of power politics and of the role of historical experience. In fact, he opens this part with philosophical considerations of the nature of history, of historic logic, of 100-year patterns of European history, and of specific historical evidence, to explain, among other realities, the hostility between the Western powers and the USSR which re-emerges at Potsdam. Thereafter he combines in his account an analysis of the foreign policies of the USSR, Britain, and the United States, and the role of the UN, with the narrative of the events of the period.

As the account proceeds, patterns of pol-

icy and conduct are delineated, errors and changes noted, controversial interpretations discussed, and subsidiary themes developed. Here a few of Fehrenbach's insights and conclusions may be cited as illustrative. The American policy pattern of containment and restraint grew out of the threat of Soviet expansionism. The Soviet policy pattern emerged in the Communist attempt to take over Greece in 1947. The elements of this pattern are a "war of liberation," which "looks like a civil war," and a "privileged sanctuary" (Yugoslavia) for the Communist guerrillas. Both policy patterns continue to the present. The UN had no means of coping with a U.S.-USSR confrontation like the Berlin blockade. Each American administration continued to advertise the UN as a cornerstone of its policy, but only for political consumption, since American policy-makers and implementers had removed all real action to outside the UN. By 1950 the United States began to play the enemy's game from Saigon to Berlin. Every strategic loss the West suffered in Asia from 1945 through 1965 stemmed from the refusal to commit ground troops.

In Part III, "The Future," which covers the period from 1953 to 1965, the author once again weaves together the policies, personalities, and actions of the UN and the nation-states, the developments in international affairs, and his realistic philosophical interpretation. Here again, a few of his insights and conclusions may be cited as illustrative. In the Suez fiasco of 1956 the UN policy of Dag Hammarskjöld looked like a success, but in reality it was outside pressures, not the UN, which forced an end to the Suez action. The UN in the fifties found that its most important task was to aid the dissolution of the European colonial world order. In 1961 the U.S. was equally trapped with the UN in the Congo chaos. In the Bay of Pigs fiasco the United States chose good propaganda over good geopolitics, an error no Russian ever made in the Cold War. Castro's Cuba was the great watershed of

U.S. policy and the great watershed of moral doubts in official Washington about the right of the United States to act. The case of Vietnam has followed the Korean parallel closely. And on page 348, "this kind of peace" (which is not peace at all) is defined by the author as "an era of protracted limited conflict."

Finally, in the midst of his delineation of the international crises bringing his book to a close—Cyprus, Goa, Kashmir, Algiers, and Indonesia—Fehrenbach gives us a summing up of the theme of the United Nations, demonstrating that there are three UN's, not one, an extensive recapitulation of issues, insights, and analyses, made elsewhere in the book, and a final summation of his *Weltanschauung* which he reveals has been drawn in part from the writings of E. H. Carr, Arnold Toynbee, George Kennan, Robert Strausz-Hupé, Nicholas Spykman, and earlier geopoliticians, not to mention Thucydides and Machiavelli.

This reviewer has found the book exciting, amusing, thought-provoking, and instructive, as should the rest of the reading public. He misses only the power reality of Communist espionage in helping to explain, for example, French defeat at Dienbienphu through treachery in Paris, and American defeat in Korea through the treachery to the West of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, onetime members of the British Foreign Service.

One of the many crises, sketched and judged by Fehrenbach in his account of the last twenty years, the Cuban missile crisis of October, 1962, is the subject of the little book by Elie Abel, the seasoned foreign correspondent and present chief of the NBC News bureau in London. Abel gives us an hour by hour, day by day, description and analysis of a crisis which clearly was the gravest confrontation of Soviet Russia and the United States since the invention of the atomic bomb. "Through thirteen beautiful October days in 1962," he writes, "the young President of the United States played nuclear poker with Ni-

kita Khrushchev and won. How close we came to Armageddon I did not fully realize until I started researching this book." That research included not only the available literary evidence but also oral testimony gleaned by the author from talks with Robert F. Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, John McCone, and others.

The subject itself is indeed dramatic, full of suspense, and world-shaking in significance, and the author has made the most of it, for in his hands these attributes are enhanced by his skillful organization of the historical material, the form of his presentation, and the classic style of his writing: clear and concise, restrained and polished. The result is a fast-moving, exciting, all-embracing reconstruction of a few days of history, more tensely absorbing than a slice-of-life novel or a mystery thriller.

The author begins his story on Sunday, the 14th of October, juxtaposing the challenge to the Kennedy Administration of Republican Senator Kenneth Keating, to confirm or deny his information that six intermediate-range missile sites were under construction in Cuba, with McGeorge Bundy's televised defense of the views of the Administration, that Soviet military aid to Cuba was no threat to the United States, and introducing the nagging suspicions of CIA's John McCone, that the USSR was turning Cuba into a strategic base. There follows a flash-back to the episode of the Bay of Pigs, to the Naval air reconnaissance of the summer of 1962, and to the role of the U-2 over Cuba, culminating in the meritorious photo-analysis contribution of Colonel John R. Wright Jr. of the Defense Intelligence Agency, which pin-pointed the location of Soviet missiles in Cuba, photographed that Sunday, the 14th.

In his second chapter, the author sets forth the developments of the next day, Monday, the 15th, skilfully weaving into the story of the dissemination of the discovery of the missiles, the social activity and whereabouts—at dinner, aboard a

plane, or giving a speech—of the various high officials concerned. Then, as he continues the narrative, he infiltrates an analysis and explanation, based on hindsight, of why Khrushchev made the mistake of putting missiles in Cuba and why Kennedy ignored the information about them which had been available before October 14th.

By the next day, Tuesday, the 16th, the thirteen-day crisis has emerged which the author masterfully delineates through the remaining thirteen chapters of the book, culminating in a postscript. At the center of his narrative are the meetings of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council which met in total secrecy two or three times a day throughout the first week. Here Abel presents the roles, reactions, moods, and views of the participants at the time, or recalled by them later, the positions taken one day and changed the next, the arguments for and against this or that policy, and the relation of personality clashes to the discussion. Interspersed in the account of these meetings, and often related to the decisions made by the Committee, are all the other aspects of the story.

To indicate the scope of Abel's coverage and the flavor of the whole, but not to give away his secrets, a number of these aspects may be cited here. There are detailed accounts of the military and diplomatic preparations as the crisis mounts, and of military and diplomatic actions following upon President Kennedy's ultimate decision. There are important conversations sketched: to mention a few, between Robert Kennedy and Soviet ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin, between Alexander Fomin of the Soviet Embassy and John Scali of ABC, between Robert McNamara and Admiral George Anderson, and in London between Dr. Stephen Ward, the well-publicized osteopath, and Soviet Captain Eugene Ivanov. Interesting side lights are revealed on the role of the press and the logic of British intelligence experts with regard to the problem of security, on

the role of Ivy League lawyers and the problem of America's allies, and on the role of Bell Telephone executives in the dissemination of information. The important roles in the crisis, of the United Nations, the Organization of the American States, American embassies abroad and foreign governments, are described, as well as the less important roles of such peculiar individuals as Lord Russell. And, finally, even the weather is not overlooked by Abel as, with particular dramatic flare, he contrasts the golden October sunshine of Sunday morning, October 28, 1962, with the macabre expectations of the men around the President awaiting Khrushchev's answer to the American ultimatum, and quotes symbolically a remark of George Ball to McNamara, as they walked into the White House: "It reminds me of the Georgia O'Keefe painting that has a rose growing out of an ox skull."

Photographs from the Defense Department files, an end paper situation map, and an index, increase the value of this most complete account thus far of the Damoclean crisis of October 1962.

Reviewed by HENRY M. ADAMS