



## **The Doctrine of Extermination**

### **Bertrand Russell**

An impartial examination of the conditions of international conduct today allows no other conclusion but that the standards of behavior which were held by nazism and fascism have become general and accepted. The world was expected to react with horror to the doctrine of extermination. War, so it was contended, had certain rules. Among these were the avoidance of torture, the concentration on military objectives, the respect of prisoners and their "rights." It was also believed that entire civilian populations were not to be slaughtered in a manner reminiscent of Genghis Khan. War, therefore, was thought to have a conceivable political end and, although all such conflict amounted to atrocity, the scale was never extended to include entire masses of defenseless people.

The bombings of Tokyo and of Hamburg, each of which killed more people than the atomic bombings, heralded something new. These cities contained civilian populations and were without particular military significance. The object of dropping napalm jelly-gasoline upon Tokyo was to so demoralize the population through extermination of great sections of it, as to effect the defeat of the enemy. As Lewis Mumford has pointed out, this was the theory of mass extermination; it was because of such behavior that the war against fascism was presumably being fought.

All of the allies in the war against fascism, among whom are the world's primary antagonists, have fully adopted the national policy of genocide. The Soviet Union, China, the United States -- and all of their satellites -- believe in mass murder, indiscriminate extermination of entire populations whether belligerent or not, and in systematic genocide. This is the explicit and proudly proclaimed military consequence of their national policy. It is because the moral corruption and cultural degeneration of our world have advanced to this degree that the governments in question not only propose this horror, without compare, for other peoples but for their own. Each government makes victim the children of its country because of the acceptance of the fascist belief in mass extermination as a viable political practice for an entire nation.

**The testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere has had the consequence of condemning millions of people to death because of bone cancer, blood cancer, genetic and somatic damage.** Among the first victims of American testing have been American children. The number so affected is very large although the government of the United States lies about the treasonable consequences of its policy for its own people. Similar things are true of the Soviet government.

There is a further improvement on the barbaric doctrine of mass extermination which is to be foisted upon the school children of the respective countries for their loyal adoration and advocacy. This improvement is the effect upon future generations of human beings. The governments of today are saying that their limited vision and judgement are to be sufficient for all future generations of human beings. The germ plasm of our species is being drastically damaged. The possibility of future life is daily threatened and made unlikely.

Often it is said that political analysis must be scholarly and unimpassioned. I have tried to describe the conditions of our daily life. I cannot think of words of sufficient emotive strength to register my disgust with the policies of the governments of East and West. I believe that every sane human being must do all in his power to prevent these policies from being enacted or continued.

They are still dying in Hiroshima and in Nagasaki. Hundreds each year are dying because of the damage done through the fallout over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With what right does the government of the United States poison the atmosphere, which is the atmosphere for all the peoples of the earth? **What would that government say if the Pakistanis and the Indians in their dispute over Kashmir poisoned the atmosphere of the planet in the course of that dispute?** With what right do these governments make the peoples of the world hostage to every petty squabble they might entertain?

The Americans maintain a fleet between the tiny islands belonging to China and the Chinese mainland itself. They maintain rockets trained upon the mainland of China, but they wax indignant at the existence of an independent state whose policies differ from their own, namely Cuba. For the moment I am not passing judgement on this disparity of attitude. I am pointing out that the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union behave with colossal arrogance and with total indifference to the consequences for humanity of their particular paranoias.

I am heartened that there is still present a will to resist and I am convinced that until people fully comprehend the magnitude of what is being done in their name there is small hope for peace in the world. It is not sufficient to point out the evil of others, for that is often a reflection of one's own actions.

