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## Books Noted

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## BOOKS NOTED

**ARMS CONTROL IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS.** By David V. Edwards. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. (1969). Pp. vii, 180. \$7.50. In an age where the major powers of the world could destroy the earth many times over, it is consoling to see that someone has at least given the problem enough thought to write about the prospects of restraining further arms buildups and dismantling those accumulated. From the outset, the author clearly states that his study "offers few certainties" about arms controls, but by describing those conditions which often lead a country to seek disarmament agreements, he hopes to contribute to an understanding of the prospects for future controls and to indicate ways in which a nation may improve those prospects assuming that it concludes they are desirable. The author's practical approach to the subject results in a succinct, orderly discussion of mechanical conditions under which we might expect nations to be interested in arms control; the stages by which nations, interacting, approach, attain, implement, and maintain arms control arrangements, including the major obstacles to successful control arrangements, such as inspection and cheating; and finally a prediction of what will happen to the factors precipitating a country to seek restrictions and how national quests may interact to produce control agreements in the coming decade. The value of this treatise to any reader, lay or politician, is that it offers him the wherewithal to individually judge and propose those measures of arms restraints that should improve and aid the efforts of each nation and the world. (MAS)

**STUDIES IN THE PROBLEM OF SOVEREIGNTY.** By Harold Laski. New York: H. Fertig (1968). Pp. x, 297. \$9.00. The republication of a fifty year old scholarly treatise implies a presupposition that the work is of current relevance. What, then, is the significance of Harold Laski's exposition on sovereignty to the modern reader? Many observers of international relations have noticed that the post-World War II cohesion of the Soviet and American power blocs is diminishing. For a partial explanation of the increasing assertions of independence by the less powerful countries, one might well look to this trenchant study, for *Clio* teaches by analogy.

Mr. Laski delves deeply into three episodes of the nineteenth century: the Disruption in the Church of Scotland, the Oxford Movement, and the Catholic Revival in England, all of which have the common ground of conflict between the Church and the State. Both sovereigns demanded unflinching loyalty. In each dispute, one party attempted to enforce absolute pre-eminence over the other; more accurately, this was the prevailing interpretation given to the claims to power made by both Church and State. In each case, both sides perceived a provocation from the other which justified their corresponding reaction, since each held its sovereignty to be all-absorptive and believed the other had impinged on its domain.

The author would characterize refusals to recognize spheres of respective jurisdiction, even where possibly co-extensive, as dangerously arrogant and eminently fatuous. To him, sovereignty is not to be regarded as omnipotent; rather, it is elastic and ephemeral. Sovereignty is ". . . an exercise of will behind which there is such power as to make the expectation of obedience reasonable." While both State and Church maintain an arsenal of coercive power, it is out of the good will of the governed that true sovereignty ultimately springs. This, in turn, depends on the nature of the demands

made by the sovereign. If they are excessive, the claim of the sovereign dissolves.

An excessive claim, according to Mr. Laski, might be one which is intolerant of variety. The successful sovereign must recognize that he governs neither a State nor a People, but persons. An attempt to harness their preferences and prejudices will result in a snatching of the reins from the ruler.

With these precepts in mind, one might conclude that the current disunity among formerly close allies is due to the shortsighted demands they make upon one another. Perhaps such delusive self-serving is inherent in the nation-state system. As Harold Laski suggests, the divine right of kings had its day, and so the sovereignty of the State shall also pass. (ADC)