

'Arms Bazaar' details futile world-wide arms race

by Shirley Whittington
If that news about the latest peace killer, the enhanced radiation warhead - the one that kills people but leaves the buildings intact - makes you nervous, you'll want to read *The Arms Bazaar*, by Anthony Sampson. It's the latest of his well-written accounts of what makes our modern world tick.

Sampson has already written about Britain, the world's major oil companies, and multinational conglomerates. His newest book deals with the salesmanship, the hoopla and the big deals of the heavy arms industry. His sources are impressive. He had access to Senate sub-committee hearings, and talked to experts and authorities in Washington, New York, London, Paris, Japan, and the Middle East. (One of his sources, by the way is a chap called Bob Woodward.)

Perhaps it was a visit to Beirut, under fire, that provided the inspired wording of the book's title. "Beirut was always unique in the Middle East for its cosmopolitan and free trade. It (became) the centre for free trade in weapons."

There's a good bit of fascinating history mixed in with the chronicles of bribery and deals in *The Arms Bazaar*. There are several fascinating pages on Alfred Nobel, the discoverer of dynamite and the founder of the most famous of the world's peace prizes. The Krupps get a lot of ink, and attention is paid to Vickers and to Carnegie, a pacifist who made a fortune in armour plate.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked the end of European supremacy in arms, and the birth of the US military and industrial complex. Lockheed, assisted by bribery, invaded Europe, and the Prince Bernhard affair is well detailed. In terms of his personal ambitions, Sampson

compares Bernhard to Spiro Agnew and notes that while the Prince was emmeshed with Lockheed, he was also secretly working for Lockheed's principal rivals.

The UN arms embargo on South Africa had an ironic consequence. Communists in that country were proscribed

or jailed, and yet every white household had a

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small arm, supplied by a communist country. Sampson charges that

controlled by four major powers, as they changed sides and interests. "The

arms race was in part a race between two policies inside America...the keys to restraint lay as much in the Pentagon and Congress as in Cairo and Jerusalem."

Shah an arms freak. As the income of the middle eastern countries increased so did their arsenals. The Shah of

Iran is an arms freak, and Sampson observes, "In California...in the summer of 1976, the Shah seemed to be lurking everywhere, under every balance sheet, inside every projection of future earnings."

Politics then, and economic development seem inextricably bound

up with arms sales. "If we don't sell arms, someone else will," is the rationale, an excuse which Sampson says dryly was originally made for the slave trade which was also regarded as essential to the free trade system and the economies of Europe and America. Britain took the

lead in abolishing slavery. The U.S., says Sampson, is the only power that can take an effective lead against the arms race.

His solution? Informed public opinion. "The more a public is informed and involved, the more prospect there will be of achieving a saner world.

Then, he says, governments of the world will be forced to reveal the full extent and implications of this deadly business which up to now they've kept secret for fear of arousing public opinion and "left wing extremists".

Reading *The Arms Bazaar* could be the first

step in such a public awareness movement. Honestly, it's not really hot weather reading, but certainly, put it on your list for serious perusal when the weather cools off a bit.

The Arms Bazaar, by Anthony Sampson. Hodder and Stoughton. Pub. \$12.95.

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Summertime when the living is easy, I find it difficult to settle down to write my weekly column. I look at our statistics sheets and call sheets that are kept each day in the offices of Contact for an inspiration as to what I will write about and suddenly there it is, right in front of me on those important statistic sheets. Housing is still one of the most critical needs. On adding up the calls of people that need housing of some kind, either rooms, apartments or homes they still outnumber by three to one the number of accommodations that Contact has on its books. If you, dear readers have any rooms, apartments or houses to rent please call Contact at 526-9333 so that we may help some of the people that are on our waiting list.

The other day Contact had an interesting call from a lady that works at the Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia. She had asked Contact to help her collect costume junk jewellery for the elderly ladies at the Centre. The brighter and gaudier it is, all the better. Please drop off any jewellery you can at the office of Contact and we will see that it gets to these ladies.

Contact's happiest happening this past week was receiving a cheque for \$100.00 from the group of ladies that do the beautiful quilting at the Senior Citizens Club. It is indeed gratifying to know that people are concerned about Contact and we do thank these industrious ladies for caring.

As I said at the beginning of this column I wondered what I could write today but by now you see there is always something doing at Contact so if you have any requests we can help you with please call Contact at 526-9333.

Happiness is helping others to help themselves.
Mary M. Gibson,
Administrator.

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