On World Peace And Its Alternatives

By BILL LIEBLICH

Norman Thomas, six times Socialist candidate for President of the United States, spoke on political realities in the nuclear age before a crowded RMC Grand Hall last Tuesday, March 27.

The large audience gave Mr. Thomas a standing ovation at the conclusion of the Forum Committee program.

He began his talk by stressing the tremendous margin by which social progress now lags behind scientific achievements. He then discussed the nature of the problem which the world is now facing with regard to the nuclear arms race.

"WAR IS USELESS," he said. "There cannot be victory in a nuclear war, except that the winner will have less miserable survivors."

We cannot afford a nuclear war, he continued, placing heavy emphasis on the fact that liberty cannot survive a nuclear war. "I do not think there is any chance for the victor in a nuclear war to emerge in decency or liberty," he said.

MR. THOMAS expressed regret at our government's willingness to continue the cold war which, he aid, will lead inevitably to a war so destructive that liberty will not survive and which in itself results in stronger military and industrial complexes and an attitude which is dangerous to freedom.

"You will either save freedom in peace," he said, "or you will not save freedom at all."

Mr. Thomas outlined what he termed "four strands to braid the lifeline to peace." The first of these strands, he said, is universal disarmament. This would involve a radical change in our economic structure, he admitted, but is nothing less than an absolutely necessary step to avoiding nuclear war.

THE SECOND strand, he continued, is "a United Nations much improved." The U. N. needs stronger authority, Mr. Thomas said, and the ideal situation is "world peace through world law."

The two other strands which he cited are orderly disengagement from commitments which endanger world peace, such as our commitment to defend the government of Chiang Kai-Shek, and the development of a peace race and a cooperative war on poverty.

A question and answer session followed the speech. The audience applauded several of Mr. Thomas' points in both his talk and his replies to questions.

THE FREQUENT Presidential candidate had comments to make on figures on both sides of the political spectrum. He referred once to "the enormous follies of Mr. Welch" and termed members of Welch's John Birch Society "ignorant bigots." He also mentioned the stifling effect on Houston of such influences as the city's school board.

President Kennedy's popularity had a ready explanation from Mr. Thomas: "His speeches appeal to liberals; his lack of action appeals to conservatives."

Barry Goldwater was characterized as "the hope of a large number of people who still believe in miracles."