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February



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By Rockwell Kent

ON August 6th, 1945, standing on the great air field of Tinian Island in the Marianes, Chaplain William Downey spoke this prayer for men departing on a mission:

"We pray Thee that the end of the war may come soon and that once more we may know peace on earth. May the men who fly this night be kept safe in Thy care, and may they be returned safely to us. We shall go forward trusting in Thee, knowing that we are in Thy care now and for ever. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

The bomb run lasted four minutes. The bomb went away at five-fifteen. As to what happened, the words "My God!" are the only entry in the co-pilot's diary. With the death, in the name of Jesus Christ, of the 78,150 people at Hiroshima we wrote the darkest page in all history.

There have been greater disasters than that which was visited upon the men, women and children of Hiroshima. Although but 68,000 died in London in the Great Plague of 1665, 100,000 of the people of China perished in the great flood of the Yangtze River in 1911 and 900,000 in the flood of the Hoang-Ho River in China in 1887. But such disasters we have termed "the acts of God." No wonder that mankind lived in fear of God.

In the four years and a half that have elapsed since the destruction of Hiroshima, we have spent billions of dollars "perfecting" the atomic bomb until, following upon the news that an A-bomb had reached a "perfection" that was a hundred times more destructive than the Hiroshima bomb, the news of the development of the hydrogen bomb bursts upon us—a weapon, authorities tell us, ten times as potent for destruction as the most destructive A-bomb and

for which, in fact, atomic energy will but serve as a kind of percussion cap. Mankind has now in its control forces of destruction far vaster than Almighty God has ever chosen to reveal. The fear of God has given place to fear of man.

The possibilities of disasters have always been present to the human mind, and it has ever been the purpose of mankind to increase his knowledge of their causes as a premise to controlling them. Advances in medicine have made improbable, if not impossible, the recurrence of such epidemics as the Great Plague. Knowledge of the methods of flood control has lessened such disasters and put their final elimination on the agenda of human progress. There is nothing in the nature of atomic energy that need cause mankind to fear. We don't fear energy itself; we don't fear force. The trembling fear in which we live today is fear of those who hold it in their hands. The fear that grips mankind today is fear of Washington.

And now again, confronted as we are by the threat of unparalleled world disasters, it is up to us not to despair but, in accordance with mankind's historic role in his upward march in civilization, to "increase our knowledge of their causes as a premise to controlling them."

The cause of "Washington," dear friends, is *us*. And though we may find countless alibis for the miscarriage of democracy—of which the order to proceed with the manufacture of the Hell-bomb is disastrous evidence—the emergency is of such compelling magnitude that we must either rouse ourselves to full awareness of the vast betrayal of all human life which is in progress, to the fury which is appropriate to the projected crime, and to action that will halt it now and forever or ac-

cept—not the condemnation of history, for there will be none—but the utter doom to all life on this planet which is imminent.

Some people are gifted—or, as it may be, cursed—with unforgetfulness. It was years ago that I read the story of Hiroshima as it was circumstantially told in the little book of that name. I have never forgotten the horror I felt at what we had done. And I have never forgotten nor changed the conclusion that I came to: that whoever would advocate the use of such a bomb again in any cause was just not human. For the degree of human depravity shown by those in Washington who have not only advocated the use of the bomb but have ordained increasing its potential villainy, for those who—still not satisfied—have called for the production of the Hell-bomb, I know no words.

PATRICK HENRY, addressing the Virginia House of Burgesses, spoke these memorable words, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" We hear a lot from Washington these days about our liberty and how the Hell-bomb may preserve it. But the words have a different ring from Patrick Henry's: "I know not, nor do I give a damn, how others may think, but as for me give me my special form of private enterprise or give death to all mankind."

The words of the Declaration of Independence, "life, liberty and the Pursuit of happiness," are significant in their order. Mankind desires all three but, lacking two of them, has always clung and still will cling to life. A sonnet of the poet Wordsworth concludes with lines that might be read as an apostrophe to mankind in general and to Americans in particular in this crisis:

*... what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should
thunder as before
And Ocean bellow from his rocky
shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard
by thee!"*

Despite what we are being told, it is not liberty that now hangs in the balance but life itself—all human life. It is, then, for a cause greater even than liberty that the American people must rouse themselves, for ever confident that, granted life, man will at last emerge upon the plains of peace and liberty and happiness.

Reprinted from the February 1950 issue of *Fraternal Outlook*.

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April

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By Rockwell Kent

I HAVE just returned from Europe where, as one of four American delegates, it has been my honor to participate with representatives from all the continents of the world in mankind's holiest cause, the cause of peace. As one of the American delegates I bring to our people, living as they have believed in the shadow of a war of final annihilation, the glorious news that the peoples of the world, seven hundred million strong, are on the march for peace.

I have been to France and was one of the delegation received by M. Herriot, President of the Chamber of Deputies. I have been in Denmark and Sweden where, with the spokesmen of other nations, I have addressed mass meetings of the people. I have been in Helsinki and felt the growing strength of the demand for peace by the people of Finland.

In the course of my flight from France to Czechoslovakia, the pretty Czech stewardess came to me and asked if I had felt a shock. I told her, "No," and asked her what it might have been. "We have just passed through the Iron Curtain," she said.

Yes, I have been behind the Iron Curtain. I have felt the warmth of welcome extended to us by the people of Prague. And I have been in Moscow one whole week. I saw a great city teeming with people—people well clothed and busy to the last man and woman in the pursuits of peace. I saw the cleanest city in the world—cleaner even than Stockholm and Copenhagen. I saw stores filled with consumers' goods and crowds of people at the counters buying. Our delegation visited an automobile plant and saw big trucks leaving the assembly line under their own power at the rate of more than thirty an hour. We saw and marvelled at the work-

ers' club and its facilities for the recreation and instruction of youngsters. Some of us visited a great collective farm; others the University. We toured the art galleries and the crowded Metro. To our hosts, who with justifiable pride asked what we thought of it, I replied, "Yes, it is really beautiful. But in New York we have an even finer one; only it has no trains. It is called the Metro-politan Museum." We visited the tomb of Lenin and reverently laid a wreath. And we Americans laid a wreath on the grave beneath the Kremlin walls of our own John Reed.

In honor to our mission we were received at a midnight banquet by the leaders of the peace movement of Moscow, the greatest of its scientists and artists. And, as spokesmen for peace, we were accorded the extraordinary honor of presenting our peace proposals to the Supreme Soviet in special session at the Kremlin.

Every night we were taken to the opera, ballet, theater or cinema. The halls were crowded, and we saw none who by their ostentation might be judged as rich or, by outstanding lack of it, as poor. One night, returning home alone, I lost my way. I wandered countless blocks in Moscow searching for a policeman to direct me home. I couldn't find one and was forced to turn to friendly passersby.

But our mission in Europe was peace. It was in no degree concerned with politics. It was peace on the basis of international tolerance and non-interference with each others' affairs. We were no more concerned with criticism of the Soviet Union for its restrictions upon the personal liberty of people to spit on the street than the peace mission from Europe, had it been granted its visas to visit us, would have been concerned with New

York's dirtiness. As representatives of America we held it to be our own business that ours was a capitalist country, and the business of the Eastern Democracies that theirs were socialist. Believing with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Stalin that countries of differing political systems could live on terms of friendship and good-will, we asked for nothing but that atomic warfare be forever outlawed and armaments reduced.

It should be heartening to the people of America, who have been taught to fear the East, that the farther eastward we travelled the warmer became the welcome to the spokesmen for peace. Coming from America and visiting first a country of the Atlantic Pact and meeting with delegates from other western European countries, we learned that whereas the people of the western world want peace because they live in growing fear of war and death, the peoples of the East want peace because of their great love of life.

ADDRESSING the leaders of the peace movement in Moscow I was constrained to say, in sorrow, the truth: that in speaking for peace I did not speak as an official representative of the American government. And, recalling that that government had authorized construction of the Hell-Bomb, to add that, in justice to myself, that government was not representative of me.

Yet that government is our government; and it is our deep obligation, as citizens, to make it in every respect representative of the humanity of the American people. For the American people, I will say in conclusion, as human beings tenacious of life and yearning for peace and lasting security and happiness, the people of Europe have only deep respect. It is for us, then, by our actions in defense of peace to show ourselves in every way worthy of their respect. The peoples of the world call upon the people of America, regardless of their color, creed and political faith, and in open, holy defiance of the war pressure that is being put upon them, to unite with them in the greatest of all causes, "On earth peace, good will toward men."

Reprinted from FRATERNAL OUTLOOK, April-May, 1950, issue

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