#5

From time to time THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION calls attention to published material which we feel contributes to clarification or understanding of critical issues affecting world peace. We have found the reprints herewith illuminating and worthy of study.

Eulah C. Laucks, President
P.O. Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA. 93108

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

THE NEXT WAR

WHY FEAR OF WAR ISN'T MUCH USE

FROM JOHN HERSEY'S Hiroshima: *"Mr. Taminoto . . . was the only person making his way into the city; he met hundreds and hundreds who were fleeing, and every one of them seemed to be hurt in some way. The eyebrows of some were burned off and skin hung from their faces and hands. Others, because of pain, held their arms up as if carrying something in both hands. Some were vomiting as they walked. Many were naked or in shreds of clothing . . ."*

But why go on. We know all that: 100,000 dead in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dresden, Hamburg. The horrors of war have not been kept a secret. We've read about napalm, cluster bombs, free-fire zones in Vietnam, starvation in Biafra. Photographs have helped us to see. We're well-informed. Everyone agrees war is a terrible thing; no one has been able to do anything about it.

One thinks of war the way one thinks of his own mortality: in flashes of great clarity—suddenly, vividly, intensely—and not for long. It comes and goes. A picture, the odd sentence buried in a

Commonweal, A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Yearly subscriptions, U.S. and Canada, $20; foreign, $22. Special two-year rate: $35; foreign, $39. Single copy, $1.

news story, a piece of film on television—like a pain in the chest, a lump under an arm—will make us see that this is real, such things happen, they might happen to us. We live with war the way we live with disease and old age. People really get cancer. The nursing homes are filled. Wars really happen. We know all that.

The fear of war is not of much use. We've been afraid of war for nearly 35 years, since the end of the last big one. In the meantime we've been in two smaller wars. We've spent a trillion dollars for old wars, present wars, potential wars, other people's wars, future wars, and we've done it with a good working knowledge of what war involves. It is not only fear we've experienced, but the awful sense of futility and resignation, the anguish of knowing what waits in the wings, the shame of not caring, pity, guilty forgetfulness. None of it matters, none of it works.

Before long, if the papers are to be believed, the United States and Russia will sign a second SALT treaty limiting—perhaps directing would be a more accurate word—the development of nuclear arms. The Senate must then decide whether or not to ratify the treaty. The argument is sure to be an emotional one, but whatever the outcome, nothing fundamental will change. Both sides will retain a capacity for destruction on a scale beyond the limits of human imagination, however well-informed. Some of us will allow ourselves to pretend for a time that SALT matters because it is a step, a symbol of commitment, a gesture of hope and possibility. But nothing will change.

From a report of the bombing of Nagasaki by William L. Laurence in the New York Times, *September 9, 1945.*

"I watched the assembly of this man-made meteor . . . and was among the small group of scientists and Army and Navy representatives privileged to be present at the ritual of its loading in the Superfort. . . . It is a thing of beauty to behold, this 'gadget.' Into its design went millions of man-hours of what is without doubt the most concentrated intellectual effort in history. Never before

had so much brain power been focused on a single problem."

This struggle—if such a mismatched conflict can be awarded the dignity of the word struggle—has already been lost. The development of nuclear weapons has been a headlong torrent. Their destiny is to be used in war. When the logic of events is a terrible one it becomes clear only in retrospect, after the facts have already crushed hope. Imagine for a moment that a nuclear war has taken place. Don't concern yourself overmuch with the details of when, or where, or between whom. There are plenty of possibilities. You have survived, as so many survived Hiroshima and Nagasaki. You have time to reflect, whatever may be still waiting in the wings. Ask yourself: did anything, in the years after 1945, ever suggest a different outcome?

One would not have to spend years in a library to find the answer. It is plainly before us now. The capacity for destruction has been growing at an exponential rate for 35 years, without any change in the autonomy of nations to prepare for, threaten, or wage war. The confrontation of the United States and the Soviet Union has been profound, complex, broad in scope, volatile, intermittently critical, and ceaseless, just like the other great confrontations of history between Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage, England and France, Germany and the rest of Europe.

Once great powers are set upon a collision course it is difficult to deflect them. Diplomacy and prudence may ease them by one potential occasion for war after another, but eventually prudence fails, the diplomats cannot find words to disguise the unacceptable, and war follows. This pattern is the great commonplace of history. There is a kind of fatality about it. In 1890 the elder Helmuth von Moltke wrote, "If the war which has hung over our heads, like the sword of Damocles, for more than ten years past, ever breaks out, its duration and end cannot be foreseen. The greatest powers of Europe, armed as never before, will then stand face to face. No one power can be shattered in one or two campaigns so completely as to confess itself beaten, and conclude peace on hard terms. . . . Woe to him who first sets fire to Europe . . ." Europe dreamed then, as the world dreams now, that great armies might be maintained with impunity. Crisis followed crisis for more than 20 years, while the diplomats imagined they might always find a way out, until the summer of 1914.

Was the pattern of confrontation and crisis before the First World War fundamentally different from the pattern which preceded the Second? Have we any reason but hope for saying it is different now? Have the two SALT agreements done more to limit missiles than similar efforts before WW II to limit navies? Has the United Nations been appreciably more effective in deflecting war than the League of Nations? It has taken 35 years for us to agree to build only enough nuclear weapons to wreck the world. Time is not making Hiroshima fresher in memory. The rise of China has only muddied the waters. Looking forward we imagine there is still a way out. Looking backward we see there was none.

But you can't write the history until it's happened. The details are necessarily obscure. Only the pattern is clear. Something alters the atmosphere, probably the fact or prospect of a strategic defeat. Perhaps the Eurocommunists come to power in Italy and France, and turn out to be Stalinist after all. Perhaps the King of Saudi Arabia joins the Shah in exile, and their successors invite Moscow to buy oil at five dollars the barrel. Perhaps the Chinese change their mind and drive for Hanoi, or the Russians determine on a pre-emptive strike against Lop Nor, or

the Poles and Czechs find a way to secede from the Warsaw Pact, or Moscow and Peking patch things up and sign a 50-year Anti-Imperialist Friendship Treaty. These are the nightmares of the world's statesmen. Any one of them would leave some great power feeling desperate and vulnerable, a prescription for clouded judgment. Such things have happened often. War follows. No mystery will attach to it, in retrospect.

From Hersey's Hiroshima:

"Father Kleinsorge went to see her several times. On his first visit, he kept the conversation general, formal, and yet vaguely sympathetic, and did not mention religion. Miss Sasaki herself brought it up the second time he dropped in on her . . . She asked bluntly, 'If your God is so good and kind, how can he let people suffer like this?' She made a gesture which took in her shrunken leg, the other patients in her room, and Hiroshima as a whole.

'My child,' Father Kleinsorge said, 'man is not now in the condition God intended. He has fallen from grace through sin.' And he went on to explain all the reasons for everything."

Let me concede that none of the experts agree. They are almost giddily optimistic. In public, of course, they speak in solemn tones of the dangers—of proliferation, of Russian military supremacy, of a runaway arms race, of accidental war, or war between marginal nuclear powers, even of all-out spasm war. But in private they explain why they're not worried: war between the great powers just doesn't "make sense." There is nothing to be gained commensurate with the loss. Every nuclear power soon discovers just how destructive these devices are, and grows sober in response. The devastation would be "unthinkable." You'd have to be "crazy" to attack a nuclear power with nuclear weapons. "Common sense" precludes their use.

This attitude is nearly universal in professional circles. It is held by defense intellectuals, intelligence analysts, military strategists, high civilian officials of the Defense Department, Rand Institute consultants, generals, arms negotiators, and just about everybody else in the national security community. There are two related reasons for its prevalence. First, pessimism cannot serve as the basis of a career. If it doesn't happen in two years—war, the extinction of whales, devaluation, the end of the oil, whatever—your judgment has been discredited. Bertrand Russell and C.P. Snow have been ridiculed for predicting nuclear war "in the next ten years" back in the mid-1960s. All the warnings will have been amply justified if it takes place in the next *hundred* years, but no official can go on predicting disaster for longer than one Congress without losing the ear of his colleagues.

The second reason is even more briefly stated: the experts are as frightened of nuclear war as anyone else. They don't want one, and allow themselves to be privately hopeful, much in the manner of oncologists determined not to worry about getting cancer.

But that doesn't explain why they base their private optimism on common sense. Common sense is hardly what we depend on for the solution of most serious problems—poverty, the drowning of dolphins in tuna nets, an unfavorable balance of payments, segregated schools, crime, lead from car exhaust, famine in the Sahel, fraudulent advertising, toxic food additives, high medical costs, religious prejudice, the dumping of Japanese steel, oil dependence. These all justify, and in varying degree get, serious attention and practical efforts toward reform or amelioration. A nuclear war would make such problems look immaterial. Why do the men who know most about nuclear weapons depend on something so demonstrably feeble as common sense to prevent their use?

Because there is nothing else.

From an interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski in the New York Times *of December 21, 1978:*

"SALT fits into our broader effort to enhance national security, an effort which we pursue not only through improving our own forces, but also, where appropriate, through arms control . . . In this context, I can assure you that we will never constrain our ability to meet our national security needs. A satisfactory SALT agreement will allow us to maintain the effectiveness of the United States strategic arsenal as a deterrent against nuclear war, based on a credible retaliatory capability in the event war should break out."

If peace is the universal aspiration of man, war is his natural condition. An academic study of international wars between 1816 and 1965, published in 1971 by J. David Singer of the University of Michigan, concluded that 93 wars had taken place during the 150-year period, that 29 million men had died in battle (civilians were not included), that there were 6.2 wars in the "average" decade with dramatic high points every 20 years or so, that Europe was the most war-prone part of the world (followed by the Middle East), and that on the average a war began every three years. The technology of war obviously improved by leaps and bounds during the period, while efforts to control, limit, prevent, or end wars made no appreciable progress whatever. It does not take a statistician to extrapolate the future from a pattern of such pronounced consistency.

Presently the world is armed as never before. At least seven nations—Russia, the United States, France, Britain, China, India and Israel—have nuclear weapons and sophisticated means for their delivery. It is possible, but unlikely, that any country would fire off all it's got, even if backed into a corner, and it is still less likely that all the nuclear powers would fire off all they've got. This means that a nuclear war would not end the danger of nuclear war. Very possibly the opposite would be the case, once national leaders got over their initial surprise at not having completely destroyed the world.

Nevertheless, the most favorable moment for true arms control is immediately after the shooting stops, while the odor of the consequences is still in the air. The last such opportunity came to nothing, as the habit of militarism reduced the horror to fine words. I do not think it is a counsel of despair to suggest that the time to prepare for the next favorable moment is now.

THOMAS POWERS

A PULITZER PRIZE NEWSPAPER

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

De la Guerra Plaza
Drawer NN, 93102

Telephone 966-3911
Want Ads 963-4391
Circulation 966-7171

A lesson poorly learned

Gen. John A. Logan, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, was a bit out of step with most of the country in 1868. He issued an order designating May 30 as a "decoration day," for the "purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion." But to many people, memorializing the victims of war had a deeper purpose than decorating. Besides, a Memorial Day had already been observed during the Civil War in the northern states, and soon the idea was adopted by southern states. Logan's Grand Army urged that the day be Memorial, not Decoration, Day.

It is a day (moved now to the last Monday of May) for re-opening the memory to the victims of the whole grisly tragedy of war, our ultimate error in human relations. It has taken the entire scope of history for us to learn the futility of it, and still the lesson is poorly learned. Somewhere in the world today, the blustering and bullying goes on.

And we live constantly on the edge of it. We tinker, in false pride, with our newest weapons, and our rivals for power do the same. Sophisticated missiles, fatal to innocent infants as to hardened career soldiers, are hidden in the ground like treasures.

On this very day, the talk of a complex treaty to limit the arms of the Americans and the Russians goes on. Responsible and deeply concerned people study the science of war, and compare weapons, and count nuclear warheads, and debate whether we can achieve enough balance to keep either side from dealing the first blow. The whole unhappy struggle toward the prevention of war is based more on the advance of weaponry than on the advance of diplomacy. We remain children playing with fire.

Memorial Day is the day we mark, by legislative resolution, as a time for remembering all those who didn't survive our largest follies. There was a time when, in our fervent defense against mad tyrants, we regarded certain of our wars almost as divine crusades. But added time and added experiences have taught us a little more about ourselves, and the lessons have been costly in terms of good lives lost.

Perhaps one of these years, as we learn more, there will be less need for a Memorial Day.

Vision Belongs to the World

BY FRANK K. KELLY

One world has never been enough for me. The stars have beckoned me ever since I first walked alone at night and saw those silver spangles glittering in a black sky.

The stars to me meant glory, the glory of the Creator, the splendor of heaven on high. I had been taught by a beautiful nun to believe that God made them all for me to enjoy. I yearned for those burning lights, those great shining places. I believed that all human beings were bound for glory, that the Creator shared his power and love with men and women, created in his image. I still believe it.

As a youth, I felt sure that man would leap to the stars long before visitors from other planets reached earth. And the arrival of men on the moon took place exactly as I had pictured it when I was writing for Astounding Stories and other magazines in the 1930s.

Even the life-support suits and gleaming helmets of the American astronauts appeared to be replicas of those worn by space explorers in a full-page illustration for my story, "The Radium World," printed in Wonder Stories magazine in February, 1932.

I was a teen-ager then, and sought to escape the drudgery of earth—where I worked for 25 cents an hour in an Indianapolis box factory. And so I blasted myself into space by writing stories of interplanetary adventure (there was no depression in other solar systems). Among the perils I risked in outer space were the dangers of a "black hole," which appeared in a novelette of mine in 1934. That same year I created underground lunar cities in "Crater 17, Near Tycho," which was published in Astounding Stories.

But it was not just my work that foreshadowed Apollo. The moon seemed such an easy hop to so many early science-fiction writers that I was almost surprised that it took until 1969 to stage the real event. After all, I'd lived it for 30 years or more.

Then, the conquest of the moon, experienced vicariously through writing, filled me with an exalted sense of the limitless wonders of the universe. I was eager to leap forward to other galaxies, to fight wars among the stars if necessary, to have encounters of a thousand kinds. The moon merely triggered my sense that the universe stretched on forever.

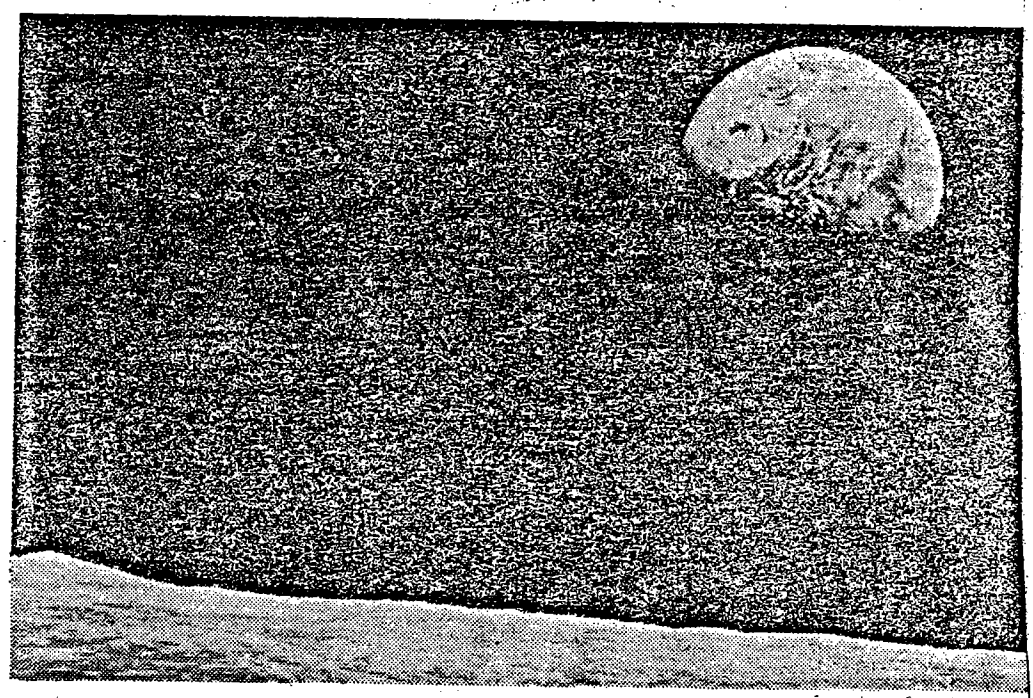
Later, when I watched the real landing on television, it confirmed the possibilities I had explored in my dreams. Something inside me said, "Now nothing can stop us."

I realized that the costs had been enormous, and I knew how far it would be from the moon to Jupiter, and then to the nearest stars. Yet I believed that humanity could not turn its back on the tremendous journeys ahead.

The pictures transmitted by the astronauts showed the earth as a fragile blue ball in space. That ball vibrated in my mind with a joyous resonance. What a splendid planet the earth was, how beautiful, how marvelous that intelligent life had evolved there.

The vision of that blue ball belongs to the world, a gift from the first human beings to see the earth as a whole. We may try to banish that image from our consciousness, or talk of how it might have been better to spend the money to build a better civilization here on earth. Indeed, the fallen Skylab may seem to us a symbol of our space program. But that image from Apollo remains indelibly with us, as do the spectacular Voyager 1 and 2 photographs of Jupiter and its moons. The wonder and terror and beauty of the universe are part of us, just as we are part of it—we are the stuff that stars are made of. □

Frank K. Kelly, former vice president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, is the author of "Starship Invincible: Science Fiction Stories of the 30's," to be published this fall by Capra Press. He lives in Santa Barbara.



From:
Laucks Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA. 93108

FIRST CLASS MAIL

TO: