

TWICE TOLD TALES for CHRISTMAS

I. Told by Muriel Lester:

When victorious Russian troops marched into Vienna near the end of the war, living there was an F.O.R. family, Roman Catholic, as many European F.O.R. members are. A son from the family had been killed on the Russian front. At home lived the parents, their second son, and their beautiful teen-age daughter.

The troops' entry was orderly, but the family knew that after the occupation was completed there would be a few days during which soldiers would be allowed to do whatever they pleased. It is generally so with invading armies--not just Russian, but British and American as well. What, then, was the family to do with its treasures and valuables? Strip its home quite bare and hide or bury things that the soldiers might carry away? And what was to be done with the daughter? How could she be safely concealed? Should she, as some neighbors were suggesting for their daughters, take poison rather than suffer Russian outrages?

Fully realizing the seriousness of their plight, the family prayerfully considered what to do. The point became clear to them that the invading troops were boys who were hundreds of miles from home, who had been conscripted into the Russian army, and ought during their stay in Vienna to be offered some home life. The decision therefore was to hide or bury nothing, for the daughter to remain at home as if friends were coming, and for the family to ready the house and the cupboard for the expected guests.

In a few days the expected lawlessness began. The clack of military boots, the thunder of doors being crashed with rifle butts, human shouts and screams were often heard. Inevitably footsteps sounded up the front steps of the house of the expectant family.

When the Russians reached the front door, expecting it to be locked and therefore a barrier to be beaten in, they found it open. This utterly surprised them and took the first prop from under their previous designs.

Looking in the door they saw a man descending the stairway. Not in flight or fear but with calm and ease. Out came another prop.

He came straight to the door, welcoming them. "Won't you come in? We have been expecting guests and are delighted to have you with us!" They stepped inside.

The next thing they noticed was a crucifix on a shelf across the hall from them. Several of them crossed themselves. After all, one-third of the Russians are Christians.

"Won't you remove your coats and caps and stay awhile? The rest of the family is waiting to meet you. And I believe there is some coffee that will soon be ready in the kitchen." The coats and caps came off and in the process, of course, guns came to rest on the floor.

In came the visitors, minus guns, to meet the rest of the family, including the daughter. Coffee was soon served. Questions about the families of the Russians soon elicited questions about the young man whose picture stood on the piano. "He was killed during the war." To the question, "Where?" came the hesitant, but nevertheless candid, reply, "In Russia."

The mother sat down at the piano and commenced playing folksongs. Although she began with the Austrian ones, the similarity of folksongs in various parts of Europe elicited an enthusiastic response from the Russians. Soon the whole party was singing and the mission of the Russians forgotten.

Thus time flew until finally the soldiers remembered that they must be back in barracks in a short while. Hurriedly they put on their hats and coats and picked up their guns. Thanking the family for a wonderful time, they asked if they could return. To which the answer was, "Please do. And bring your friends!"

II. Told by our Finance Chairman:

If Russia has the bomb, and America has the bomb, then the only answer to the problem of this twin-horned dilemma is world peace. Our work as a Peace Council, as usual, is obvious. To do even a small part in this tremendous task the Council must have your financial help. We are asking approximately 800 readers of this paper to make a sacrificial contribution to maintain this work. If every reader would send in an annual gift or pledge of ten dollars, the mind of this community and the mind of our nation would begin to arrive at the mind of peace.

You have received the initial publicity and opportunity for pledging in this campaign for the support of our work for another year. In the reconciling spirit reflected in the tale told above, will you not act upon these requests immediately? To talk of world brotherhood can be a waste of time, but to act upon it means to gain the precious time needed to bring into realization that world of peace on earth and good will to men which you and I want.

PLEASE SEND BACK THAT PLEDGE CARD RIGHT AWAY.

BETTER YET, SEND YOUR CHECK ALONG WITH YOUR PLEDGE CARD.

Surely you 800 readers can furnish the Syracuse Peace Council the \$5,200 it must have to maintain this very vital work.

C. PHILIP TORRANCE,
Finance Chairman

CHRISTMAS PEACE I In his New Republic column Harold Ickes comments on the fact that Russia has the bomb. "There is room in the world for the living together, in peace, of conflicting ideologies. There always has been... The only chance of living out our lives free of fear of others is so to comport ourselves that we do not cause others to fear us...."

"Only the mutual understanding and love that is the result of a determination to do unto others as we would that others should do unto us, will make either an individual or an international life worth living."

CHRISTMAS PEACE II In his comment on the announcement of the Russian bomb, popular columnist Drew Pearson grew reminiscent and quoted his own column written just after the explosion of the first American bomb in 1945. "Only diplomacy of the most revolutionary kind, based upon the Sermon on the Mount can counteract the revolutionary weapon of the atom bomb. Many of us have forgotten that Christ was a revolutionary. Sometimes the world has forgotten this just as woefully and completely as it has forgotten the principles which He taught."

SWITZERLAND OF ASIA? The Japanese constitution written under our direction forswears forever the right to make war. But look at the map and you will easily see why the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington are opposing the idea of a disarmed Japan. They want Japan as a larger Philippines; an American protectorate. They intend to hold it, with American air bases and a Japanese army. And the Russians, strangely, bitterly accuse us of violating the Potsdam agreement and the statutes of occupation.

YET ONCE MORE! "Staff officers of a number of western European armies have been discussing the difference that the raising of even five German divisions would make to the defense of western Europe against a possible attack from the east." The officers favor a German army to help adjust the manpower balance in any conflict with the Soviet Union. Without it "there are just not enough troops in the west to hold the Russians," - according to Drew Middleton in the New York Times.

Will there be with five German divisions? On which side would they fight? The Christian Century reminds us that from the day Germany was permitted to rearm before, the return to World War was only three years away.

FIRE WITH FIRE? "In order to solve the Russian problem," writes TRB, the distinguished Washington columnist, "it is felt necessary to revive the German problem. Everyone who has covered Pentagon conferences has heard generals comment wistfully at one time or another on how nice it would be to have a German army around again. It would do two things, see: cut US occupation costs; help hold back Russia."

But Percy Winner, reviewing the European scene, raises an embarrassing question "Hasn't the Western policy of building up a reactionary nationalist Germany as a weapon against the East old and not altogether comfortable precedents?"

Commenting on "the qualification about World War III having become when rather than whether," in America, he adds, but "For Europe the war has not yet become a fatal inevitability; the prospect of Europe as its battleground and Europeans its foot-soldiers has not yet been accepted by the masses;..."

It is for such reasons as these that a responsible observer at UN reported last week that the German situation is worsening steadily.

WHILE MILLIONS STARVE The U S government has in storage about 200,000,000 bushels of wheat for which American taxpayers have paid \$450 million. Comparably vast quantities of corn, rice, eggs, milk, butter, cheese, are also hoarded and space for the 1949 crops is lacking. Storage costs run to \$237,000 a day! (As of 6/30/49 the accumulated storage bill was over \$76 million.)

For what? To "support prices"? But now the fear is that the vast reserve will "undermine our economy." Alice in Wonderland economics! And imagine the deterioration of morale and of opinion toward America in the rest of the world where hunger stalks and such facts are known, as they are. Mr. Morgenthau, who was once Secretary of the Treasury and ought to understand these things better than we do, has proposed, via the New York Times, that we give it to hungry people! Incredible simplicity! If thine enemy hunger....

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