The Law Of Force Or The Force Of Law

by

Donald Harrington, Minister, Community Church of New York

The holiday season is here once again, spreading its magic over our hearts. Snow covers the ground. The stars are dazzling in the crystal cold. From far away we hear the angels of God sing their lovely songs of peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace to all mankind.

But what are we doing for goodwill and peace here upon the earth? What can we do? There are certain things we all can do, urgent and explicit!

1. We can banish hate and fear from our hearts, refusing either to hate or fear any man, including those our leaders call our enemies.

2. We can seek more contact with those with whom we are at odds. We should be the last to fear continuous personal interchange with the Russians, and should take every opportunity to get them over here to see our land, and to let our people travel in their land, and to see their thoughts and ways.

3. We can urge our government to reverse its present sterile policy of "no negotiations, no discussions" with our enemies. We should be always ready to discuss and negotiate. This does not mean that we must appease.

4. We can strive mightily to substitute the force of law for the present law of force in the world.

There are two ways of life contending in the world today. One is the law of force. Here the ruling authority is above the law. The rulers can suspend or ignore any or all laws, and make their decisions according to whim. Their secret police are omnipresent, all-powerful and above the law. Men rise to the top in accordance with their capacity for ruthlessness and their ability to manipulate naked power. They stay on top just as long as they can play all opponents off against one another. In the Soviet Union, to a large extent, force is the law. Government maintains itself and rules by force.

The second way by which men may live is by force of law. Here there is a common law, created by elected representatives, which is supreme over all men from the President to the humblest citizen. No man is above the law. All men enjoy its equal protection. Within its confines rulers rise to power and return to their civilian place by the processes of peaceful persuasion. Programs are adopted and administered and changed, by the process of persuasion. Under the rule of law, force is confined and man may make the necessary changes in an evolving society in peace. The United States of America has been the great experimental ground for the force of law as opposed to the law of force.

In the world at large today, the law of force is still the final arbiter. Each nation maintains its position by naked force, protects its interests by violence, entrusts its future to compulsion. Under the law of force in international affairs, should we not expect the country most versed in violence, able to wield power most arbitrarily and ruthlessly, with the least responsibility to its people, capable of manipulating both its resources and public opinion most completely, to be the final victor? How much longer will we try to wage a worldwide struggle with the Soviets, playing the deadly game according to their rules?

We Americans need now to state our world objective as that of securing world law, enforceable through the United Nations to replace the present world anarchy and violence. We must actively implement that objective with proposals, negotiations and resolutions in the United Nations. We must make it clear that world law is the price of peace, and that those who oppose it are the real allies of communism.

Brotherhood and peace are still the distant goal without which life cannot go on. Justice under law administered in the spirit of love is the way.—(Published in "Toward a World Disarmed"—Dec., 1957)

BACK TO THE CAVE?

The race of men took thousands of years to get out of the cave. Now we face the nightmare of going back again. This is the dismal picture painted in a so-called "top secret report" turned over to a somewhat reluctant Administration by a committee originally headed by H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., former president of the Ford Foundation.

The essential facts about the report have leaked out, as they naturally would. The text has been a little slower in emerging, although it appears that the President's Oklahoma City speech on November 14 was influenced by it. The Gaither committee very sensibly assumed that our urban population could not be protected from the blast effects of atomic bombs or projectiles. By the time people started for the shelters, there wouldn't be any people—not within the effective range of the explosions.

The committee looks rather to the protection of survivors from fall-out. For this purpose it conceives of what our dispatch called "a vast network of fall-out shelters," which might cost as much as 20 billion dollars. Val Peterson, former Civil Defense Administrator, recommended earlier this year a shelter program costing between 30 billion and 40 billion dollars. The Gaither proposal is more of a bargain, if there is such a thing in this alarming field.

Naturally, the man in the street and the prospective occupant of the fall-out shelters will have certain questions to ask. How could the water and food supply of the shelters be guaranteed? One or two bombs, even of the old-fashioned sort, could contaminate the water supplies of great cities, in addition to breaking the mains. How long would it be necessary to stay underground? What would the survivors find when they came out? Where would everybody be? What kind of life could be resumed? Could a nation which presumably would have lost its communication facilities continue to function as a nation?

In other words, the man in the street might wonder what 20 billion dollars or any number of billions of dollars devoted to fall-out shelters would buy. If they bought only a few more days of uncertain life, the investment might not pay adequate dividends.

We cannot lightly or in a spirit of fatalism reject such suggestions as this. But, as the committee itself concedes, the horror of atomic war may be a lasting deterrent, and though we have atomic weapons and some kind of fall-out shelter system, the war of the future, if it happens at all, may be of the so-called "brush-fire" variety—the kind that now seems by comparison ironically innocent and almost romantic. Such reports as this may be of benefit even to our adversaries if they point up again the imbecilic folly of atomic war.—Editorial, New York Times.

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APRIL 15-18, 1958

CHARTERED BUS TRIP TO NEW YORK CITY, THE UNITED NATIONS, WASHINGTON, D. C. All Student Winners of the High School World Peace Study & Speaking Program, and their teacher-coaches are eligible to participate in this Trip.

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JULY 25-27, 1958

FIFTH ANNUAL WORLD AFFAIRS INSTITUTE, Blue Ridge Assembly Grounds, Black Mountain, N. C. Mark this date on your calendar now!

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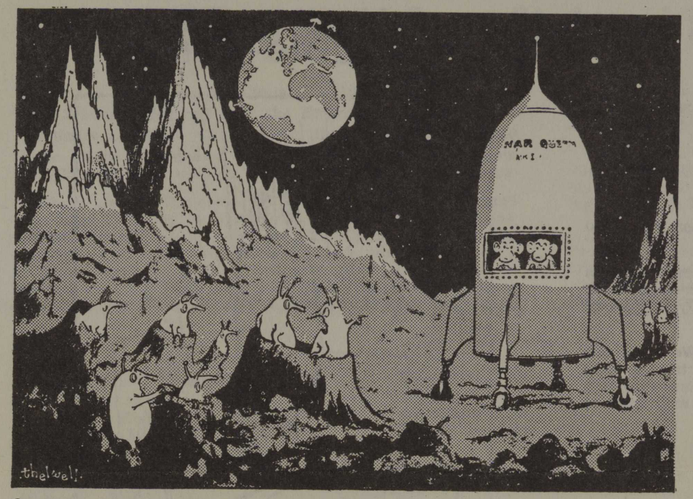
ULY 26, 1958

ANNUAL A.F.A. MEMBERSHIP MEETING—to be held during the Fifth Annual World Affairs Institute, Blue Ridge Assembly Grounds, Black Mountain, N. C.



One must admit that they look much more intelligent than one might have thought from the way they behave on Earth.
(News Chronicle, *London, cartoon by Thelwell*)

Tomorrow's World

By

George Holt

N.A.T.O.

This would have been a happier Christmas if our leaders had been able to bring back to us from Paris a really nice present.

They have failed to do so.

Some day, the leaders of the world will present the people with the gift they keep promising—peace. But they will do so when they go shopping with their pockets full of the only coin that will buy it.

To date, the leaders have tried to buy peace with the equivalent of Confederate money—legal tender that has no value on the present day market.

Recent months have witnessed defeat after defeat for American world leadership. The latest is the recent NATO conference.

Our leaders went to Paris to store up the defense alliance against the Russians. They went with their minds full of military preparations.

They proposed to our allies that American missile sites and American missiles be placed on the soil of those countries. They seem to have expected that a little pep talking would persuade our allies to accept.

When Mr. Bulganin wrote letters to these countries pointing out just how easy it would be for the Russians to destroy their cities if American bomb sites were installed, the European statesmen were understandably unenthusiastic for the American plan.

When the Americans, furthermore, treated the Russian letters as propaganda threats and nothing more (they were propaganda threats, but they might be more) the Europeans found themselves distrusting these glib Americans as much as they did the threatening Russians.

It has been reported that the Americans were surprised and chagrined when they found, on their arrival in Paris, that these feelings were so strong. It would seem that our leaders had not done their homework.

Imagine the policy makers of the greatest nation on earth being surprised at the attitudes of the leaders of other nations, their own allies, with whom they are supposedly on the closest and most friendly terms.

There will be the usual statements of good will; there will be the usual claims of success; there will be the usual orations about the "age-long and beautiful ties binding our nations to their common heritage," et cetera. But the conference was a failure.

To a world terrified at the pace of approaching disaster, we hear that "limited accords" were reached; that "public satisfaction" was gained but that the details "were left for further negotiation"; that, in fact, only a couple of the NATO countries will probably accept missiles while the rest either will not take them or do not want to.

And we hear nothing about peace.

There is only one coin that will buy peace. That is law and the machinery to enforce it.

The United Nations has been by-passed again. The United Nations has been left weaker than before. The choice the United States took, to back NATO and the arms race rather than the UN and peace, has backfired.

The Russians have claimed that the Paris meeting really shows how disunited the West is. That is a perfectly true statement. But why should anyone be surprised? Defense alliances in the past have always either fallen apart or resulted in conflict.

1958

1958 had better be the year in which the United States reasserts its leadership of the Free World.

1957 was the year in which the United States did more to dissipate that leadership than had been done in any previous year.

The task ahead is no easy one. Failure has its own kind of momentum. It gains speed as it continues.

There are times when mistakes can be turned to advantage. The man who is wrong, but who admits it frankly, proposes basic solutions to improve the situation, and rolls up his sleeves and gets to work, very quickly regains the respect which his mistakes had forfeited.

That is what the United States must do.

The United States was wrong in 1957 in its response to the Russian ICBM and Sputniks.

The United States was wrong in the Disarmament Conference in London by not standing for true disarmament and challenging the Soviet Union to declare itself for or against

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