Rejected by Everyone in N.Y.

THE END OF THE MEANS

Everyone hopes that war may be averted. Almost everyone believes that the last war was lost by the United States. Opinions differ only as to why this happened. Many think it was lost because the high ideals in the name of which it had been fought, were not kept up by those who..etc. It is an old story, volumes have been written and are still being written on this subject. Others think it was lost because we should have had Hitler on our side instead of fighting him. This is also an old story; no volumes have been written about it as yet, but they soon may. During the war this was nothing but a whisper, soon it will be shouted openly from rooftops. Then of course there are those who say that the war was lost in the conferences somewhere between San Francisco, Paris, Lake Success.

Well, all of these theories are pure matters of fancy. The crude matter of fact is that the war has been lost militarily and militarily alone, and forever. Studying new strategies, alerting and radio-activating new microbes, inventing new diseases and spreading them mercifully on a world to be rendered safe for no matter what great ideals, are all perfectly useless activities. The war was lost and will stay lost because, as a matter of fact, it is no longer a means to an end. It has now grown to such proportions that, whoever thinks he may still use it as a means to his ends, will find himself used by it. That's the end from now on: Satan. We are just the means.

One does not have to be a believer in God or to endorse any particular theology to justify the use of the word Satan.

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

II.

Satan. Satan meaning absolute, lasting evil, here we have it in full. Because it is another fact that the atomic bomb outlives , in its effects, all Causes, holy and otherwise. It has been said by those in the Army's and Navy's Public Relations offices whose job it is to belittle it, that the atomic bomb kills less people than a good blockbuster, and the people of Hamburg, for example, who have seen tens of thousands shrinked to dwarfs in the ovens of their air-raid shelters after a good carpet-bombing, are, it seems, totally indifferent to what may be coming next. With all due respect for both these great authorities, the one on the distributing end, based on ballistics, the other on the receiving end, based on experience, we may still repeat that the nature of the two means of destruction is different. The blockbuster is molecular, it belongs in the stone-age of evil, the atomic bomb is nuclear, it belongs in the proud age of progress. And we may also add that the nature of the atomic bomb is that of <u>eternal</u> destruction. Why? Because billions of years (the half-life of the atom of Uranium 235, that is: the period of radio-activity) are "time" only as a matter of fancy. As a matter of fact they may be labeled "eternity" and no one will be able to prove afterwards that this was an exaggeration. After all, when we hear a young man say to his girl that he will love her eternally, we are apt to smile, but if that man were able to keep up that kind of a love for the duration of his life, let's say for sixty years, we would grant that, to all practical purposes, his love had been eternal.

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

III.

For tens of centuries man has been obsessed with the production of perpetual motion: something set into motion by him and kept moving forever. Now that childish dream has been fulfilled. We have perpetual fission. We may well be proud of it.

In the past, in the stone-age of evil, death was always overcome by life. Because, if death was fatal, as it will forever be, life was fatal , too. Fatally, wars were overcome, fatally, grass grew on the ruins, and the dead were forgotten, and the children of the victims got married to the children of the murderers, and the children born of these unions could refer to the truly fratricidal war between their grandparents in a cheerful mood. If this were not so, if the grudges of two generations ago could still be the grudges of our generation, the world would be inhabited by maniacs possessed with the idea of vengeance, people incapable of forgetting a past that had entirely forgotten them. How could such people ever live, work, face the future? We all know how ridiculous it is for the children of exiles to keep talking in terms of the empires, feudal estates, privileges and riches they had only known in the boring, though perfectly justified lamentations of their parents. Life is fatal and it should be fatal, or the walls of Troy would still be smoking in the eyes of the tourist. And it is a fine thing indeed that the living can never really speak of death, because language is life already.

Yet today, with the Atomic Age, we have come to the point in the history of this planet (if other planets are inhabited, let's wish those unknown colleagues of ours thousands of centuries of nuclear ignorance) where life is no longer fatal. [redacted] already,

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

If [illegible] There are places on earth already where man cannot live, and not because the temperature is too cold or the atmosphere too thin: beautiful places with all the appearance of a paradise, yet man can't live there. "Solly, velly solly" said the King of Bikini when he was told that news. If war should come, there will be many more places, more efficiently equipped with radiation, where grass will not "fatally" grow on the ruins, and man won't "fatally" forget the hatred that divided his fathers or grandfathers. [illegible] And neither will the children of the victims freely marry the children of their parent's murderers, nor will the children born of these unions "fatally" laugh at their grandfather's Holy Causes and unholy wars. On the contrary, time, for [illegible] the first time since the Universe exists, will be compelled, as if by an angry decree of the divinity, to work against its purpose. No longer Time, the Doctor, will go healing the wounds of man with miraculous drops. People will be condemned to know, not certainly the causes of that distant war, or the responsibilities, for that effect, all of that will mean nothing, that's the irrelevant part of the whole story: what they will be condemned to know forever is the [illegible] type of their blood, to avoid giving birth to monsters. For there will be monsters in the world (few of them, say the men in charge of belittling the bomb, very few if man knows his science) Man will therefore be condemned to stay the thing of which he is, today, so proud: a scientist: It is almost a joke, that science should become our curse. But so it is. Young men will have to be very, but very careful with whom they go out, in whose family they marry, in whose bloodtype they run. We can still read with amusement in our time the story of Candide and Cunegonde, the daughter of the proud Westphalian Baron.

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

The feudal nobleman Voltaire, inflamed with a great love of justice, tells us how the brother of the noble Cunegonde tried to kill Candide because he dared think that he, an unborn individual , could marry a young Baroness. Yet Cunegonde had by that time become old, ugly, had been sold on the public markets of Europe and the Near East as a prostitute several times, and was also infected with disease. But she was, to her brother, still too good to marry the "unborn" Candide.

We still read this, we laugh, we repeat to ourselves and to the world that all men are born equal, that this and a few other truths are, to us, self-evident. Well, in the future, after the next so-called "war", fought of course in the name of liberty and equality by both Americans and Russians (even though their conceptions of these great ideals differ, they both claim they have them), there will ACTUALLY exist inferior people in the world, scientific pahrias, the inferior by nuclear decree.

Life will resemble more and more a disease, or the treatment of one. It will forever be: "Adjust your Geiger-counters", "plan your respiration" , "watch your blood-test".

Now, even if we haven't read Marx, or Jefferson, or any of the others, we will know that, to the man in the street, in the gutter, in the South Pacific, as well as to the man in the Kremlin, in the White House, in the Laboratory of Nuclear Physics, freedom means freedom of breathing without instruments, freedom of going into the woods where a war may have raged a few centuries before, freedom of eating fish in the Bikini Lagoon or on the Cote d'Azur, or Venice, freedom of marrying the great-great-granddaughter of the man who crossed an invisible atomic geyser, and a lot of other simple things like that. Therefore Jefferson today would most certainly relegate his Declaration in the attic, if it hadn't been published

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

as yet, and say: "Let's now talk about freedom from Geiger-counters, freedom from nuclear physics, freedom from the ideals of the right or the left, the top or the bottom, in the name of which these invisible chains will be put on humanity for tens of centuries.

There is in the men who handle the destiny of others, be they the representatives of the bloodiest tyrants or the mildest haberdashers, a strange lack of imagination, of what the Germans call "Vorstellungskraft". They can't visualize things, they can neither smell life nor death, but only office-papers. They can neither be enchanted by the mystery of things, nor be frightened by a naked tree at night. They are solid, healthy, practical people, with their feet on the bomb, and their eye on promotion, and they speak of atomic radiation, bacteriological warfare, the rights of man, the aspirations and other matters of the peoples, just as if these were so many other office items. And it is natural that they should be like that.

If they had the least spark of "Vorstellungskraft", they would either exhale their last breath after the first day in office, or go in for other things than the doubtful pleasure of outwitting the next fellow at the game of who sits behind a larger desk and can ring more bells.

As for the scientists, they do have "Vorstellungskraft" but of a very peculiar, rather cold-blooded nature, and we have seen enough of that. The contribution of which they were capable, they have already given us and thanks ever so much. One can't hold it against them: they were doing "their duty". They know many fine, little things, such as the

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

atom, the nucleus, the microbe, the laws, abstract things the poor layman can't even imagine. But they don't know man, and, least of all, man's measure. Those among them who do, like poor Doctor Majorana, Fermi's late assistant, are considered weak: in fact, they kill themselves. Or they are strong enough to walk out and abandon the branch of science in which they excel; like Franco Rasetti, Fermi's assistant and the author of the best-known textbook of nuclear physics, who, having too much "Vorstellungskraft" withdrew from atomic research in 1939 and took to paleonthology, which he still teaches at Johns Hopkins.

Having thus established that both government officials and scientists have done all they could do, it seems clear that an entirely different category of people should now share the secret of the atom, and compare it with the various secrets of man they already possess: poets, artists, useless people, and especially women, young women in love or young mothers, for they are the ones who care. And right now they would say to the governments this and that side of the Iron Curtain, and to the scientists in their pay: "Stop playing with those dangerous things, you silly boys, and go home. Fight with fists if you have to, and go in for an armament race in oldfashioned stone-age weapons, if you have to, but stay within the molecular. Don't fill the world with monuments to the ideals of our time, in the form of atomic geysers which , speaking the sweet words of radio-activity, will remind those descendants of ours: 'This is a gift from the day when the world was made safe for something, godknows what, anything except life."

Gentl[illegible] Holy [illegible] and go,

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

VIII.

Gentlemen at the helm, come to your senses; stop brightening our future in a world we won't find, get your differences settled in a different way. Remember: Holy causes come and go: This ugly fountain stays

Niccolo' Tucci.

New Yorker Magazine, 25 W 43d NYC.

Fondazione Alfred Lewin