

YANK

THE ARMY



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Atomic Horror

Dear YANK:

A lot of sentimental nonsense has been bandied about concerning the moral aspects of using the atomic bomb. As was to be expected, these pious cries of horror come from the musty libraries of well-fed clergymen and from others equally far removed from the war. They imply in their protest that the pre-atomic phase of this war was somehow more Christian and humane.

We have killed a dozen times more civilians in the orthodox air war in Europe than were destroyed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and at an infinitely greater cost in Allied lives over a much longer period of time. Hence, it is the efficiency of the atomic bomb which appalls these sentimentalists, not the loss of life. There has been nothing remotely Christian about methods of winning this or any war; the only question to be asked is, "Did the method employed bring victory with least sacrifice of life?" And Churchill has estimated 1,000,000 lives were saved by bringing Japan to her knees without an invasion.

The world might well be a happier place in which to live without the atomic bomb, but is there anyone so foolish as to presume that with scientists in all countries on the threshold of this discovery, it could remain a secret for any considerable length of time? One scientist estimates that in five years every major power will be able to manufacture atomic bombs.

In war or peace, with or without its use on Japan, the secret of atomic power was close at hand. Had the discovery and demonstration of the atomic bomb been delayed five or ten years, the chances of completely realizing its danger and destructive power or controlling its manufacture would have been immeasurably less than at the present time. Now we realize fully the magnitude of this threat against civilization.

To a few GIs the issue is plain: the U.S.A. must take her full responsibility in the family of nations, exerting her leadership for peace and toward control of atomic bomb production. Should we evade our responsibilities as we did between World War I and II, there would be our cardinal sin, and not in the use of the atomic bomb to end a war.

Albuquerque, N. M. —Sgt. VACHEL L. BLAIR