Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, November 29, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/hoyer_correspondence

Part of the American Literature Commons, Social History Commons, and the United States History Commons

Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation


This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the Linda Grace Hoyer Collection at Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Linda Grace Hoyer Correspondence by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. For more information, please contact aprock@ursinus.edu.
Dear John:

Last night, listening to Degan shout, Johnny Andrews exhort, Elmer Davis plead (for the administration), and Edward R. Murrow report the news, I have a suggestion for bringing peace (of one kind at least). I pass it along for you to consider the next time you want Dixieland and get a news analyst. I don't mean the simple souls who read the news to us. They're good boys. We should get the news, however sad it is and at regular intervals. But the complex persons who are being paid by the big boys who sell oil and coffee and automobiles and Adams hats should I think be told to go and have a nice medieval tournament with full armor, horses, spears, and lots of bleeding. In less trying times, these I-tell-you-what I'd-do men are diverting. Now they are distracting and definitely a part of the good old days.

For example, last night Degan wails: "The American people should know that this is War-r-r-r-r-l How many of us haven't known it ever since the unlucky day one of our newscasters learned that Stalin had said we couldn't live with communism? Then, without even catching his breath Degan called Elmer Davis an "arm-chair general" for mildly suggesting (the night before) that perhaps the end of the war in Korea had been announced prematurely. And Degan went on until he was completely out of breath about the harm an arm-chair general can do. So, I'd have Degan put on his armor first. And let him joust where it can harm none but the equally frantic news analysts...or communists. Why bother us with his childish envy of good old Elmer Davis? And if news analysis really is needed in a democracy, let's have a school where the capitalists can teach them the same tunes and sing in harmony or shut up. Right now, they wouldn't sound worse if they got their checks direct from Moscow. After all, free speech is, like all other good things, to be used in moderation. Perhaps it was all right to yell at everybody when the plains were full of buffaloes. Now, it's making for more of the state of mind we already have too much of. We are an active people and not inclined to contemplation. Why try to make us contemplate our sad state? Let's have music on the radio, a prayer in our hearts instead of a question mark, and whatever tools we can handle in our hands. Why pretend that poverty and tyranny are new to us? This business of being kidded into a subservient state of mind is bad. Let not bury our spirits under the illusion that we once were much happier than we now are. That state of mind is sometimes called "having delusions of grandeur." Our ancestors had no such delusions when they stepped into the disease ridden boats that brought them to America. They had only the belief that they were doing the right thing. And, whatever we do now, we must believe that it is right. If we can't do that, we have no right to be alive. There is much that is inexplicable in the human mind and behaviour. But to those who are ready and willing, God speaks and maturity comes.

So, Johnny Andrews suggestion that we all go to church regularly any pray probably is the best one there is. Good luck, Johnny Updike. The noise we hear is just one of those adolescent get-togethers you mentioned in your commencement speech and not the end of the world.

Mother