

In God's mercy we outran Germany

By WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

BY THE YEAR 1939 IT HAD BECOME WIDELY RECOGNISED AMONG SCIENTISTS OF MANY NATIONS THAT THE RELEASE OF ENERGY BY ATOMIC FISSION WAS A POSSIBILITY.

The problems which remained to be solved before this possibility could be turned into practical achievement were, however, manifold and immense; and few scientists would at that time have ventured to predict that an atomic bomb could be ready for use by 1945. Nevertheless, the potentialities of the project were so great that his Majesty's Government thought it right that research should be carried on in spite of the many competing claims on our scientific manpower.

At this stage the research was carried out mainly in our universities, principally Oxford, Cambridge, London (Imperial College), Liverpool and Birmingham. At the time of the formation of the Coalition Government [May 1940] responsibility for co-ordinating the work and pressing it forward lay in the Ministry of Aircraft Production, advised by a committee of leading scientists presided over by Sir George Thomson.

At the same time, under the general arrangements then in force for the pooling of scientific information, there was a full interchange of ideas between the scientists carrying out this work in the United Kingdom and those in the United States.

A REASONABLE CHANCE

Such progress was made that by the summer of 1941 Sir George Thomson's committee was able to report that, in their view, there was a reasonable chance that an atomic bomb could be produced before the end of the war. At the end of August 1941 Lord Cherwell, whose duty it was to keep the informed on all these and other technical developments, reported the substantial progress which was being made.

The general responsibility for the scientific research carried on under the various technical committees lay with the then Lord President of the Council, Sir John

Experts worked at Bushy Park

The men who knew

BLAST FELT 300 MILES FROM BOMB TEST

Steel tower turned to vapour

THERE is reason to believe that the vital part of the atomic bomb with its almost incredible power of devastation is not much bigger than a golf ball.

PLANE KIDNAPS SCIENTIST

Snatched from Nazis to help us

This ends war as we know it

THANKS, BRITAIN

Says Professor

4.30 a.m. LATEST

THE JAPANESE INVESTIGATE

JAP TOWN DESTROYED

Vaporised

Ball of fire

TWO GERMANS

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD

Daily Express article about the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima

Southwark-based Bubble Theatre Company is launching an oral history and performance project to discover how the dropping of the first atomic bomb, on 6 August 1945, was reported in London and how residents reacted as more details of the scale of the destruction of the Japanese city became available.

Researchers will also research the reactions and experiences of Japanese-born Londoners and look at how the event led to the creation of the peace movement and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Bubble Theatre aims to weave these many different voices and experiences together and to present them through an intergenerational performance. In building a unique and striking portrait of the ‘post Hiroshima’ story, Bubble Theatre aims to connect Londoners with an important piece of living history.

The project will run in tandem with another in Japan. This follows a visit by members of Japanese theatre companies to an earlier Bubble Theatre project that charted reactions to the London Blitz. Memories and stories gathered during the atomic bomb project will be shared with a new project in Hiroshima.

More than 180 volunteers will be recruited from the local community to work with experts and artists to research the period from 1945 through to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963. After the full effects of the bombing, including radiation sickness, became more widely known in the UK, politicians, philosophers, scientists and church leaders came together to campaign against nuclear weapons with peaceful protests, marches, music and artwork among the responses.

Project volunteers will look into the way the bombing and the aftermath were reported, how the families of soldiers, sailors and airmen who had been serving in the Pacific, or had been held in Japanese prisoner of war camps, reacted and what stories the earliest peace protestors have to tell.

The resulting archive of memories and documents will be publicly accessible through a new website and made available to the Hiroshima Peace Museum.

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: “The reaction of Londoners to one of the defining moments in 20th-century world history is an important subject for study and dissemination to a wider audience as we approach the 70th anniversary of this event.”

Jonathan Petherbridge, Creative Director of London Bubble, said: “We are very proud that our work on the Grandchildren of the Blitz project, supported by HLF, has now led to an exploration to the responses to the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and the production of what we hope will be linked events in London and Hiroshima. The support of the HLF over the last four years has allowed us to develop our skills and thinking as researchers and creative explorers of heritage. In turn this has led to shared knowledge, increased community engagements plus two significant theatre pieces, and now the opportunity to test our ideas on a event of international significance. We are excited and trepidatious in equal measure!”

Further information

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