Eleanor Roosevelt

Opposition Can Be Valuable

NEW YORK

I AM SURE that the death of Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt in a plane accident in Canada was a terrible shock to his many friends, and is a loss to the service in which he had been so valuable.

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THE OTHER NIGHT I went to a meeting of a group that is attempting to form an organization of independents. It was proposed to be a group of independent Democrats but there were some Republicans present. Their idea was to make these independents active within their parties, if possible. If not, then they would get them working together so that they would wield some influence on the party machinery from the outside.

Steinhardt

I was amused by a good young Republican, a student in Fordham University, who asked me what the attitude should be of someone who held what I called reactionary ideas. He evidently believed that I did not think there was any place in the country for reactionaries or conservatives.

As a matter of fact, I doubt if there is much use in being a real reactionary. But I think there is a valuable place to be filled by the honest conservative. He is the balance wheel for those who want to move too fast and he does make progressive or liberal-minded persons examine their positions more carefully.

For that reason I think he plays an important role in political life. The opposition is always important in any government and the better the opposition the better the party in power.

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AS WE DID NOT have any meeting of the Human Rights Commission on Tuesday, I went to the United States mission office in the morning and talked for almost an hour with some students from Ohio State University. They are spending a few days in New York which will include a visit to the United Nations at Lake Success.

After that I had a talk with Clark Eichelberger of the United Nations Assn. Plans are being made for a United Nations Day and a United Nations Week and, as far as possible, these plans will be co-ordinated.

I hope it will be possible to obtain wide co-operation and bring before the citizens of our nation the need for greater knowledge and understanding of the work of the UN, which this yearly celebration should emphasize.

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I WAS IMPRESSED with the strong belief held by both Atty.Gen. J. Howard McGrath and FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover that the FBI's work would be hampered by revealing the contents of their files. That has always seemed obvious to me.

Therefore, the request to show them to a congressional committee seems foolish. One could not help feeling that real investigations and real safety lie in the FBI and not in congressional investigating committees.