

# WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

## The Folly of Bombing

AFTER THREE YEARS of relative quiet, during which the war has been manifested to the people of London, in its more oblique aspects, political, industrial, propagandist, the return of air raids during the past weeks has brought the workers back to an experience of the physical and direct aspect of war. Almost overnight the major concern of the average worker has shifted from his troubles with the National Service Officer, the employer or the Income Tax Inspector, to the possibility that any day now he may be blown up, burned or suffocated—an

eventuality which provides the least satisfactory solution to his personal troubles or his conflicts with his oppressors.

The authorities have set out to minimise the effect of the attacks by writing down the casualties and damage. Only a few isolated deaths and a few unspecified bombed buildings are mentioned in the press. For mysterious reasons of 'security', or, more exactly, to retain in a fool's paradise those who have not yet experienced the direct effect of the bombing, no lists or totals of casualties or damage are



*'Just like old times again'*



published and no idea whatsoever is conveyed of the true nature of the destruction. This policy, however, is double-edged. Reading our newspaper, we compare the scanty information with the news our acquaintances bring of damage in their own localities, and are forced to realise that, even if we are not being told lies, we are certainly not getting the whole truth. This deliberate distortion, which we can all disprove by the experience of our friends and relatives, is spreading an even deeper distrust than before of the motives of the government.

The people of London are almost entirely annoyed with the raids, and display nothing of the defiance which the newspaper men were fond of talking of in the blitz of 1940-41. The talk of 'we can take it' is heard nowhere, and many people express a feeling that the raids illustrate the senseless waste of war. For the most part, they show an even greater desire to be finished with the war, and daily more and more people are blaming the British government as much as the Nazis for the trouble they experience. Encouragingly few people think that anything will be served by retaliation on the German workers.

Meanwhile the attitude of the ruling class is shown, in macabre caricature, by Churchill clowning past a bombed building and remarking 'Just like old times!' Old times or new times, it's all the same to politicians and industrial magnates, with their comfortable deep shelters and their distant country retreats. They are likely to lose neither their homes nor their lives, and the worst that faces them is the destruction of a fraction of their property, which will be repaid in due course by the insurance company. They neither know nor care what the poor experience in the air raids.

Once again, as in London in 1940-41, as in Berlin and many other German cities to-day, the workers, who never wanted the war but were led into it by the force or fraud of their leaders, are being killed or injured and are losing the miserable possessions of the Jerry built houses and slum tenements to which they are tied by the serfdom of war-time industry and the virtual impossibility of finding homes in the safer parts of the city or in the country districts. A few offices have been damaged, one or two fashionable shopping streets have been hit, and a great newspaper noise has been made of this, but the casualties among the propertied classes are obviously minute—considered even proportionately—to those among the workers.

The difference between the chance of the workers in an air raid and that of their bosses can be seen easily by a comparison of the thickness of population of a working class district with that of, say, the Park Lane district. A block of working class flats, like one destroyed in the recent raids, may contain five hundred or even more people. A mansion in Mayfair, standing in its gardens, may

occupy a very slightly less area and contain a dozen or so people, even if they have not migrated to the country. The disadvantages of the poor are further increased by the fact that the main target districts, which contain factories and railway junctions and termini, are always inhabited by overcrowded workers.

Throughout the air raids and, indeed, since before the war, the ruling class has shown the same callous indifference to the human suffering caused by air raids. The record of the government has been completely bad. The means of shelter they provided were, in almost all cases, laughable in their inadequacy and often tragic in their results. Before the war, when the workers in thickly populated districts were asking for deep shelters, the government not only refused to do anything itself in the matter but even obstructed the efforts of local councils which attempted to obtain consent to build deep shelters.

The shelters actually provided were mostly of three types, all of them providing comparatively little safety. There were the surface shelters, often built in a flimsy manner with inadequately strong materials, as in the case of the shelters at Hammersmith, which collapsed under comparatively slight blast. There were the ridiculous little metal Anderson shelters which were often hurled into the air or buried under piles of debris. There were the large basement shelters into which hundreds of people were herded and which on several occasions turned into mass graves when bombs came directly through the buildings above.

In hardly any cases were adequate shelters provided, and where facilities already existed, in the form of the Underground stations, the authorities attempted to prevent their use as shelters until the people defied the regulations and occupied the stations. Similarly, no adequate facilities were provided for the bombed-out, who were often crowded for weeks on end into insanitary and unsafe rest centres in the middle of heavily bombed areas. This, of course, was in spite of the fact that there were hundreds of empty mansions in the West End whose owners had fled to quiet and safety in their country estates.

In these raids the government have so far shown themselves no better than before. The deep shelters, other than underground stations, are being kept closed for 'emergency'. What constitutes an 'emergency' is to be decided by the government, which would appear to mean that after there has been a phenomenally bad raid the deep shelters will be opened to the survivors.

Mothers of children who had returned to London were informed, when they applied for re-evacuation of their families, that nothing could be done, as they had taken it upon themselves to bring



the children back. After three years of calm, however, the mothers had some justification in bringing their children back from billets where they were often unwelcome to the comparatively better care of their own homes. Nor did this answer take account of the hundreds of thousands of children who have been born since the beginning of the war. It is true that the authorities have since talked of re-evacuation but their original reaction shows more truly the nature of their attitude to the workers and their children.

This callous neglect of the safety of the people in air raids is typical of the attitude of the rulers to the tools or victims of their war ventures. They are willing to kill thousands of German workers by bombing; they are equally willing to allow thousands of British workers to die from lack of adequate shelters. When the heavy bombing of the German cities began, Churchill recommended the worker to leave his home and seek refuge in the country. When, however, an English provincial city was bombed the inhabitants of the working class districts went into the country and attempted to gain shelter in mansions and country clubs. They were

turned away and had to sleep in the open on commons and in fields.

The return of the air raids, if it has no better result, shows us even more clearly that we, equally with the German workers, are the victims of a ruling class whose main concern it is to establish and maintain its own rule and which has no interest in common with the workers. Workers in London rendered homeless by the bombing stand to gain nothing if workers in Berlin are made to suffer in the same way. To desire this kind of retaliation is merely to play the Government's game of dividing the workers and setting them at each others throats. Resentment can most justly, and most effectively, be expressed against the governing class which drove the workers into war and at the same time callously refused to give them any real protection from the air raids which everybody knew were inevitable once the war started.

British and German workers gain nothing by bombing each other. They will only win their rights and their freedom when both have shaken off their rulers and the war has ended in a revolutionary struggle against government and militarism.

## ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

**ATROCITIES** THERE is something very unpleasant about the way in which atrocity propaganda is used—waxing and waning to suit the needs of the governments. Ponsonby, in his book, *Falsehood in Wartime*, gives interesting quotations describing the way in which the French government in the last war employed a whole staff of men to paint scenery and construct models which were then photographed and sent out as authentic atrocities perpetrated by the enemy on the innocent. And an American Manual for Officers, quoted in *War Commentary* before the Americans came into the war, describes how it is necessary for the morale of the troops to instil into them by whatever methods the idea that everything their own side does is right, while the enemy must be painted in colours which can only incite fanatical hatred. In short, atrocity mongering is not an activity directed towards stimulating the humanitarian emotions, but solely to fan the flames of hatred necessary for the efficient prosecution of warfare. It is perhaps needless to add that the atrocity story provokes a state of mind which leads to reprisals, so that even if no atrocity existed before, the atrocity story ensures that they soon shall exist in grim reality. After that it is only a matter of giving increasing publicity to such inhumanities as inevitably occur in war, and represent them as the rule rather than the exception. And with suitably efficient propaganda to the troops, such as the Nazis and the Bolsheviks undoubtedly possess, atrocities may very well in fact become the rule rather than the exception.

In the last war, the rank-and-file soldiers started off well enough disposed towards each other, as the Christmas 1914 fraternizations showed; but the Propaganda Ministries were soon able to change all that.

Recently the government has been at some pains to whip up feeling against the Japanese, and undo the (for them) unfortunate report of the International Red Cross last October stating that no atrocities investigated by them have yet been confirmed. No pains have been spared

to give to Allied soldiers in the Far East a dread of what is in store for them if they are captured. The same technique is used by the other side. On 22nd February, the *Daily Mail* described how a British soldier gave a blood transfusion to a Japanese prisoner, thereby saving his life. "His leg was gangrenous and he at first refused to eat. He finally took food when a British officer agreed to eat out of the same dish to prove that it was not poisoned . . . To-day, the Jap is on the way to complete recovery. He told his captors that *all Japs had been told that if they were captured they would be killed or mutilated.*" That Allied propaganda aims at giving exactly the same impression would be comical if the issues involved, and the effect of the propaganda, were not so gruesome.

Although men, when inflamed with an officially inculcated blood lust, sometimes commit acts of brutality, one should not fail to recognize and execrate the calculating callousness of governments who utilize such occasions to augment the horrors of war for their own base ends.

## ELECTORAL REFORM

THE great publicity devoted to electoral reform during recent weeks has a number of important aspects.

Until some definite proposals appear from the Committee appointed to investigate the matter, it is impossible to see just how the ruling class will so manage affairs as to give the illusion of granting concessions to justice while retaining power in their hands. It is, however, certain that the people will gain nothing more in the way of a real say in the administration of their affairs than they did by any other reform act. At most there will be a redistribution of power and spoils among the various groups of politicians.

Meanwhile, it is significant that this and other internal problems, such as post-war housing, should have been brought to the front at the present juncture, just when the government are beginning to drop their talk



of an early victory. Perhaps it wouldn't be cricket to suggest that the politicians wish to divert attention from their activities in other directions.

One minor point is the bitterness with which the Tory backbenchers defend the more glaring unfairness of the electoral system. But, after all, why should a chap who has always had three votes be expected to make do with one like a dirty labourer?

## MORE BLOOD AND TEARS

MR. CHURCHILL'S latest piece of demagoguery presents us with an imposing façade which, when we come to examine it, in reality means very little except that the war is going on for a long time yet, that the British people must expect to suffer greater privations, and that all the promises of a cleaner and better world after the war are so much propaganda to encourage people to fight.

Dealing with the Italian campaign Churchill is apologetic for slow progress and hold-ups due to geographical and climatic factors, while his attitude towards the Italian government is to support the supporters of Mussolini—King Victor Emmanuel and Badoglio. In essence this attitude is exactly parallel to that of the Nazis, willingness to support any Quisling who will hold down the workers for the invaders. Not that he need fear that the Italian "democrats" would not do the same thing, as the Liberal, Benedetto Croce is reported to have said: "This absence of a proper government is what is best calculated to lead the people to anarchy and terrible revolution."

Power politics is the byword in British relations with the rest of Europe; now that Tito's forces in Yugoslavia are superior to those of Mihailovitch, Tito is to be supported. But in Greece the situation is less determined and is therefore passed over with a few smug phrases about bringing into effect a reconciliation between the opposing Greek factions. The advance of the Red Army into Poland has made its effect. Churchill now does not guarantee any particular frontier, suggests the Curzon line as an Eastern frontier, and suggests that what Poland might lose in the East to Russia she will gain in the West and North from Germany. And coupled with this statement is the assertion that the Atlantic Charter, originally intended to apply to both victor and vanquished, is not for German consumption. So much for the promises of politicians!

The greatest significance of Churchill's speech is probably connected with the morale at home. He threatens that we may expect heavier air raids on this country, and talks of new secret weapons which are likely to be used. Churchill's own prestige has suffered two symbolic blows in the bye-election results at Skipton and West Derbyshire, and he is now anxious to emphasise the difficulties under which the government is working in order to bolster up his own waning reputation. But increasing numbers of workers are rejecting the hero of Sydney Street, the Black and Tans and the General Strike, and before long they will send him to where he rightly belongs.

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## WITHOUT REGRET

WE should be humbugs if we professed the deep sorrow of convention at the news of the death of Charles Bedaux or the manner of his death. Bedaux's name is to millions of factory workers the label of the most diabolical "labour method" ever devised by inhuman mind. Based on a study of "time and motion" the system entails close observation of individual specimen workers who are treated as zoo specimens or else spied upon from behind columns or machines. The most annoying part of the outfit is a stop watch. Having tabulated so many motions and so many seconds, a time limit is set on the job and the human lemon squeezing act begins.

Almost everywhere, particularly in Britain and the U.S.A., where the system has been introduced, fierce, spontaneous strikes have occurred, usually successfully.

When Bedaux proposed to visit the U.S.A. a few years ago accompanied by his pal the Duke of Windsor, an instant strike threat stopped the pair's excursion.

How many poor, nerve-wracked wretches have, in time of economic depression, been driven by Bedaux to the death he himself sought? We regret only his victims.

Now, had he lived in the Soviet Union this super Stakhanovite would have received the Order of Lenin, a fat salary and royalties.

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## BY-ELECTIONS

THE recent crop of by-elections tell us little, except that the electors are tired of the Government and that Churchill delight—blood and tears.

In a constituency where a Conservative gained a seat by a small majority over his Labour opponent at the last election the Labour voters are reluctant to vote for the hated Tory candidate even when he is the son of a land-owning peer and the seat is claimed as an almost family private property.

That Labour M.P.'s and trade union leaders should go to Derbyshire to speak on behalf of such a Tory candidate is too much for even loyal Labour voters. The result is a present of Labour votes to that strange and nebulous something for everybody, Commonwealth. That the new party will be able to retain a substantial proportion of these votes at the next General Election is doubtful.

Meanwhile, the Communist leaders see their opportunities slipping. Until now they have denounced as "Hitler's agents" those who broke the electoral truce. Now they propose to break it—in the name of the same "fight against Hitlerism". Further, they are seeking an alliance with Commonwealth, now that it is meeting a little success. Such vulgar opportunism is unequalled in political history. If the Commonwealth circus is seeking new turns they will find plenty of double-somersaulters, contortionists and tight-rope walkers among their Communist pals.

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## MINERS SUMMONED

A thousand tons of coal was lost yesterday because nearly 700 miners, summoned by the owners, were thronging the police court at Rotherham, Yorks.

The summonses were for breach of contract by an unofficial strike at the Waleswood Colliery.

And the summonses against 655 of the men were dismissed as bad in law, while cases against 18 others stand over.

Mr. W. E. Wise, for the men, pointed out that the plaintiffs named on the summonses were Skinner and Holford, two men who had been dead for some years.

Daily Herald, 19/2/44.



# The Menace of Optimism

By George Woodcock

OPTIMISM IS AN attitude which, in a revolutionary movement, should be regarded as justly suspect. By optimism I do not mean the belief in the possibility of the achievement of revolutionary aims—without such a belief we should not be revolutionaries at all. I mean rather the belief in the certainty of the achievement of revolutionary aims, which has produced an easy complacency in many movements and has often ended in a quietism and inaction which make no resistance at all to the forces of reaction.

'Revolutionary' optimism is usually based on some kind of pseudo-historical outlook, derived from a belief in the inevitability of progress and based on a misinterpretation of the theory of evolution by the nineteenth century social theorists, from Huxley on the right to Marx on the left.

Evolution was interpreted by these people as a purely mechanical process of steady improvement in the natural world, the tree of higher species rising steadily from its lowly uni-cellular origins to its crest in humanity. Human society was conceived as analogous to the phenomena studied by the biologist, and was therefore regarded as being comprehended in the same evolutionary process. For the animal world and for human society development was certain and inevitable, being based on a mechanical and deterministic law of constant progress. This idea of constant progress became the characteristic concept of the Victorian thinkers who, according to whether they were Christians or atheists, believed that man and the world were steadily improving in accordance with the Purpose of God or the Purpose of Evolution.

This naïve belief in progress was held by almost all parties of the time, the Socialists no less than the Manchester business men. For the Socialists, however, God and Evolution tended to be frowned on, and a new deity, History, appeared on the scene. History, which is in reality merely the chronicle of events, was abstracted by Marx and turned into a purposive process by which the evolution of human society progressed according to the dialectical struggle of opposites, each stage of human society producing its own destroyer. At the end of the dialectical process, Marx saw the final triumph of the proletariat, whose dictatorship would eventually usher in the Utopian society. Whether Marx actually believed in the inevitability of this process, or whether he stated his beliefs pragmatically is not certain, but it is obvious that almost all of his followers have taken his teachings as literally true and anticipate the eventual triumph of their particular creed with as much certainty and as little reason as the early Christians anticipated the imminent return of Christ.

This belief in the eventual certainty of a just society which would come by the mechanical laws of evolution or history, had a pernicious effect on the revolutionary movement, in that it enabled many rogues to divert workers' movements into the respectable sidings of reformism and caused many honest radicals to accept circumstances which they would have rejected if they had not believed that the revolution must eventually triumph. Among the social democrats and among the non-Marxist labour movements of Anglo-Saxon countries there arose the doctrine of evolutionary socialism. According to this doctrine, revolutionary action was unnecessary because, if evolution operated in the social field, human society must inevitably progress until Socialism were attained. The social democrats therefore restricted themselves to obtain-

in reforms under the present system, convinced that in the end capitalism could be reformed out of existence. The opposite Marxist school, while still regarding the Socialist society as inevitable, accepted revolution as a means of evolution. They held that through a revolution the old order of capitalism could be broken down, the dictatorship of the proletariat, represented by a taking over of government by the revolutionary party, would lead, through the evolutionary process, to the final withering away of the state and the establishment of the classless society.

On the strength of these arguments, the social democrats became a group of politicians co-operating with the capitalist governing class, and the Communists became a political clique hunting power for themselves in the name of the workers. Both sects in this way betrayed the revolutionary movement and humanity in general.

How wrong were the believers in evolutionary or historical inevitability of progress has been proved effectively enough by the course of events during the last twenty years. But before we examine these events it is as well to give some attention to the bases on which the optimists built up their contentions.

Scientists no longer hold quite the same ideas on evolution as were expounded by the followers of Darwin. Generally speaking, they have been inclined to abandon the conception of iron laws governing the universe and its processes. Instead, they tend to think in terms of probabilities, and to discount mechanical conceptions of natural processes. In the organic world evolution is seen as by no means an ordered progression. Some species, and individuals of some species, have failed to evolve. Amoeba, for instance, still propels his single cell through the ditches as he did in the dawn of life. Other species have evolved in a specialised way which, because of its lack of adaptability, has led to eventual racial suicide—the dinosaurs are the classic example of this wasteful process. In yet other circumstances individuals, or whole species, have degenerated in a way which shows that devolution exists in the organic world as a counter process to evolution. Moreover, where evolution has proceeded to its greatest achievements, these have been reached in an erratic manner which seems to make doubtful the existence of an exclusively determinist process of evolution. Many biologists now consider that evolution moves not in a gradual stream, but in jumps or mutations, of which the majority are disastrous rather than beneficial. Anthropology indicates that in the evolution of man several semi-human species appeared and died out before the arrival of *Homo Sapiens*. And in man as he exists to-day there are many physical and mental relics of the past which are often not only useless, but even dangerous—such as the vermiform appendix, and which do no credit to the hypothetical evolutionary purpose.

Evolution in human society seems to work in an even less purposeful way. According to the anthropologists of the nineteenth century there was a general tendency for men in all parts of the world to rise from the primitive food-gathering stage, through a pastoral stage, to the food-producing stage. Beyond this, the Marxists saw them progressing from barbarism through feudalism and capitalism to Socialism. The process was held to be determined and inevitable. These theorists, of course, failed to give due importance to the fact that many peoples, before the arrival of the white races in the nine-



teenth century, had not yet proceeded beyond the food-gathering stage, and that other peoples, such as the Polynesians, lived in a society that seemed a much degenerated form of a higher civilisation.

To-day the theory of a general evolution towards a higher civilisation is being dropped by the historians, and increasing evidence points to the probability that civilisation arose in one area, the Nile Valley, and thence spread over the earth. There is no convincing evidence that any civilisation other than the Egyptian grew independently from the food gathering communities that preceded it.

If this theory is true, it seems to negate any idea of the inevitability of social progress. This idea is further weakened by the fact that the upward progression of every human civilisation has so far been followed by a decline into barbarism.

Again, developments in civilisation have up to the present represented progression only in certain limited senses—mostly in technique. In the most important social field—that of human relationships—civilisation has displayed a universal retrogression in comparison with primitive societies. The class system and the perennial wars which have marred even the best civilised societies, such as the Hellenic and the Chinese, can be regarded only as a devolution from the peaceful communism of primitive man.

The only conclusion that we can reach, from a study of history and anthropology, is that in social relationships there seems to be no progressive and determined process of evolution. And, indeed, even if there were an evolutionary purpose determining the growth of society, there is no reason to suppose that such a purpose should have for its objective the establishment of a free society. To suppose that would be to superimpose on Evolution the wishes of the social revolutionary—to make it, in fact, an anthropomorphic deity.

If we return to the present world situation, we shall find nothing to confirm us in an optimistic belief in the inevitability of freedom. The social currents which seemed to promise progress in the nineteenth century have ended in the two most violent wars in history, the rise of totalitarianism and the tragic betrayal of the Russian, Spanish and Chinese revolutions. Those who thought to see the gradual unfolding of an evolution towards a just society have seen a universal decline in the equality of social standards. If we are to judge wholly from historical processes, we can make no certain promise of a successful social revolution. We can say with some certainty that capitalism will decline, because other social forms have always declined in the past, but we should be adopting an unwarranted gift of prophecy if we were to declare, in the face of the evidence, that evolution will inevitably replace capitalism by a free society.

Anarchists do not believe in historical determinism. We believe that economic and other social factors may play a great part in moulding the thoughts and actions of men, but we also hold that the ultimate decision which determines the nature of human relationships rests with the men themselves. We do not derive hope from any hypothetical purpose in the world, we do not abstract from events a god called History and place our destiny in his hands. Instead, we believe that the ultimate determinant of the character of social change is the will of men. Those men who exercise their will consciously are likely to mould society.

In the past social changes have been prepared, one may concede, by economic circumstances such as changes in the methods of production. But the actual change has in every case been precipitated by a number of men who desired an altered environment uniting to exercise their will for change and to overthrow the old society. Up to now, it has always been a minority who have by the

certainty of their will, dictated the nature of the change, to the disadvantage of the majority who had no definite idea of what they wanted.

In almost all so-called civilised societies, then, the mass of the people have always been subject to those who have had the will and the means to exercise power over them. The people can free themselves from this domination of the few, not by waiting for evolution or history to establish the free society in easy stages, but only by themselves developing a conscious will to freedom which will be manifested by their actions in such a way that, in times of social flux, it will be more powerful than the social and economic circumstances that militate against the attainment of human freedom. Freedom will not drop into our laps as a present from the gods. It is something we must strive for and win by our own efforts, by the strength of our own will to freedom, translated into action.

Anarchy is not inevitable. In the world the only inevitability is change, and if we wish that change to result in anarchy, then we ourselves must determine its direction. Anarchy will come only when men cease to rely on external forces, and are themselves prepared to bring it about by the exercise of their own will to freedom.

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# Political Use

TO MANY OF us who do not accept the brutal standards of our materialist era it seems incredible that any government could exploit a famine for political purposes. But looking at recent history it is the only conclusion we can draw.

That is the lesson of the great Irish potato famine of the last century, when potatoes were still exported to England. And it is most certainly the lesson of the present famine in India, as this paper has continually pointed out.

It is well-known that, after the last war, the blockade of revolutionary Germany and Austria was continued for 7 months after the armistice. As Gen. Smuts recently admitted: "... we actually allowed the position in enemy countries to grow worse, the existing famine conditions to spread, until the Armistice period inflicted in some respects greater injury and suffering on the civilian populations than the war itself, and became a more bitter memory."

Even worse was the Allied attitude to Russia:

"The Supreme Economic Council would not contemplate the supply of relief to Hungary, while the Communist régime of Bela Kun lasted. When relief to the U.S.S.R. was urged in 1919, one of the conditions proposed was that hostilities against the invaders of the Union should cease. In 1921 when finally relief was granted, this condition had become inoperable as the invaders had disappeared."

—Prof. John Marrack in *When Hostilities Cease*.

The writer goes on to point out that goods were supplied without any conditions to the White adventurers Yudenitch and Denikin.

In the Spanish war, the insurance companies refused to insure ships going to Government ports to bring food to the starving people. Remember "Potato Jones" and his brave era of blockade runners?

It is significant that in the recently published *When Hostilities Cease*—Fabian Papers on Relief and Reconstruction, almost all the writers stress the dangers in this respect. Prof. Harold Laski writes:

"This is the language of sober fact and not of defeatism. It is what happened after the last war; in a large measure it is what happened during the Russian Revolution, in an even larger measure, it is what happened during the Spanish Civil War. It is imperative for us to take to heart the lesson of the Russo-Finnish war. There it was obvious that the flow of relief derived not merely from the desire to aid the suffering, but from the anxiety to strike a blow in an ideological conflict... Only as we are united by a

# of Relief

system of common values can we construct relief institutions that are the agents of hope and not the instruments of fear."

Prof. Laski's "system of common values" will never be achieved by our society which has rejected all values except those of the jungle.

From the study of UNRRA in the January *War Commentary*, it looks as though that organisation will have just as bad a record as its counterparts of the last war. There remain the voluntary relief organizations. Will they be able to help starving revolutionary Europe?

There are 3 reasons for our attaching special importance to the voluntary bodies. First, *because* they are voluntary—they justify our faith in man's capacity for mutual aid and co-operation; secondly, *because* unlike the other relief organizations, they have no political or commercial axe to grind; and thirdly *because* voluntary relief gets there sooner, *because* of its "more fluid nature and lack of red tape", and *because* its workers are more efficient. This was pointed out in *Relief and Reconstruction in Europe* (Royal Inst. of International Affairs) and in Dr. Mackenzie's *Medical Relief in Europe*.

It is desirable that the work of the various voluntary bodies should be inter-related, and this has been done by co-ordinating them in the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad which was set up under the auspices of the Inter-Allied Post-War Requirements Committee, whose chairman is Sir Frederick Leith-Ross. This man's record as negotiator of financial help for Fascist Germany and Italy, and as the controller of our merciless blockade, was mentioned in the article on UNRRA, but his influence on the economies of devastated Europe is even more to be feared.

It was not a hopeful portent when we found Senator Russell, one of the five "world-tour senators", recommending "that the relief and rehabilitation of occupied countries be under military rather than civilian control."—(*Daily Despatch*, 8/10/43) and when, in the Indian famine, Mrs. Nehru, "just back from an area south-west of Calcutta", charged that the non-official relief organizations had to conform "to the most incredible restrictions and regulations."—(*News Chronicle*, 12/10/43).

The last blow in the Campaign of restrictions on the liberty of action of the voluntary bodies has been struck by the announcement that they "are to function only under the strict control of UNRRA."

After the last war, the countries which, for political reasons were denied relief by the British and American governments, could rely for some assistance on the voluntary organizations. This time they won't even get that.

COLIN WARD.





## MONEY NO OBJECT

The Communist Party, hoping for an electoral pact with the Socialists and other "progressives," announces that it is adopting 52 prospective Parliamentary candidates.

Since the party was formed in 1920 three Communists have sat in the House of Commons: Mr. Walton Newbold (Motherwell 1922-23), Mr. S. Saklatvala (North Battersea 1922-23 and 1924-29), and Mr. Gallacher, who has represented West Fife since 1935.

Out of 64 fights in the last 15 years, Communist candidates have lost their deposits 51 times. Mr. Harry Pollitt has lost four deposits. Mr. Wal Hannington and Mrs. Isobel Brown each fought three elections and forfeited their deposits each time.

The deposit is £150. So it cost the Communist Party £7650 in forfeits alone to get its three M.P.s.

*Evening Standard, 24/2/44.*

## I.W.W. ACCUSES

**WE CHARGE**—That under the guise of the "war effort," a deliberate, cunningly planned, sustained and systematic attack is being made upon labour standards.

**WE CHARGE**—That the purpose of this attack is to ensure that the workers of this country will not greatly benefit from the "war prosperity," and will not be in a position to force concessions from the employing class after the war's end.

**WE CHARGE**—That the leaders of this attack upon the workers are not—except indirectly—the old line reactionaries—but the allegedly "liberal" and "progressive" heels of capitalism.

**We CHARGE**—That it is the very pose of "progressivism" and "liberalism" which makes them dangerous, in that, while the employers are unable to use the familiar weapons of force, the weapon of treachery is much more valuable.

**WE AVOW**—That though figures can't lie; yet liars can figure—and that we suffer to-day from the greatest collection of figuring liars the country was ever afflicted with.

*Industrial Worker, Chicago, 15/1/44.*

## IN THE "WORKERS' FATHERLAND"

British diplomats in Moscow have sent urgent messages home asking that their gold-braided coats, cocked hats, and swords be sent out to them immediately as they are now expected to wear them at all formal receptions.

Now that the Germans are being driven back there are more opportunities for social life in Moscow, and the Russian Government has made it known that it wishes all diplomats to wear full uniform on formal occasions.

There has been a marked tendency recently in Russia to make uniforms of officers and high officials smarter.

*Sunday Dispatch, 27/2/44.*

## KEEP SENSE OF PROPORTION!

Readers will notice the change of address for the *Socialist Appeal*. This is a step forward for our Party and our paper which has been undertaken despite the greatest difficulties. We are moving from the famous "loft" at King's Cross from where we conducted our "class warfare" to quote the gutter press, to more suitable premises. Here our office staff and the party members can work under reasonable conditions.

The change has acted as a stimulant to the party nationally and especially in London. The taking of new headquarters is regarded as a mark of confidence in the future of the working class and of our party and press.

*Socialist Appeal, February 1944.*

## ITALIAN PUZZLE

In Italy, the Christian Democrats and the other moderates want to preserve the monarchical institution, and it is noticeable that since the Bari Congress, fulminations against Crown Prince Umberto have ceased.

One proposal recently canvassed as that Prince Umberto should ascend the throne after his father's abdication, but make over the Royal authority to some regent, himself joining the Army.

The Liberations Parties are afraid that the dynastic riddle may continue to absorb their whole energies, while Marshal Badoglio's Ministry digs itself in.—Reuter.

*The Observer, 20/2/44.*

# Through

## CHIANG KAI-SHEK CENSORED

It is now doubted in London whether the promised English translation of Generalissimo Chiang Kei-shek's remarkable, even sensational, book, "China's Destiny," will ever be published.

As originally written the book, which sets out to explain China's position in the world in terms of the past and the future, contains some blunt charges against the Western Powers for their former conduct of Far Eastern matters, and against the dissident factions within China.

Above all, the book is an apologia for the Kuomintang Party. "If China had no Kuomintang," wrote the Generalissimo, "there would be no China. If the Kuomintang revolution fails it means the failure of the whole Chinese nation."

*The Observer, 27/2/44.*

## WARNING FROM PORTUGAL

Dr. Salazar, the Portuguese dictator, is now one of the sensitive thermometers which indicate the trend of Conservative opinion on the Continent.

On Tuesday of last week, for example, the Doctor made a speech in Lisbon of which only a few platitudes were reported in the British Press. Salazar, however, said a great deal more. He warned his opponents at home who were preparing democratic doctrines for the day when Allied victory might encourage the Portuguese to replace the Salazar dictatorship. "There will be no intervention from the Allies to help democratic forces in Portugal," Salazar added.

"Because after the end of this war the greatest need and even a greater one than hitherto will be for order. This is recognised by the most eminent representatives of the United Nations."

This assurance to Salazar which he claims to have received can have been made only by either Churchill or Roosevelt or by both. What exactly it aims at is not clear, but its meaning must be evident. Anyhow, Salazar proceeded to draw his conclusions from it. He continued:

"However, the crisis of order which will inevitably arise after the war makes it essential to recognise as absolutely indispensable the cohesion and harmony of the countries of Western Europe. This is the only alternative to a general identity of internal policies which would lead to the spreading of disorder and would open up a series of difficulties for the victorious group."

*Tribune, 18/2/44.*



## DIED IN PRISON

Members of the Nationalist party walked out of the Central Assembly (the lower House) to-day as a protest against the refusal to permit its leader to make a statement on the death of Mrs. Gandhi. The Council of State (the upper House) adjourned for half an hour as a mark of respect.

The Indian press to-day sharply criticised the Government of India for declining to release Mrs. Gandhi from prison before her death last night.

*Manchester Guardian, 24/2/44.*

# the Press

## DON'T STRIKE — C.P.

The sporadic strikes in various coalfields underline the necessity of the mine-owners co-operating with the unions in removing the anomalies created by the Porter award.

In the meantime, the miners should follow the advice of their leaders and give the award a trial.

To remain on strike can only hold up negotiations and delay the redress of grievances.

Strikes to-day injure the nation by depriving it of coal, alienate public sympathy from the miners and help the reactionary mine-owners.

By remaining at work, the miners will strengthen the hands of their leaders and secure the more speedily the remedy of their grievances.

*Daily Worker, 31/1/44.*

## BUREAUCRACY

The growth of Government and Public Offices during the war is responsible for a lament by the editor of Whitaker's Almanack for the current year. In issuing the 76th volume, he calls attention to the increasing space devoted to official appointments.

The following figures show the upward climb in Government and public offices as shown by the number of pages allocated to them by Whitaker:

Year.	Pages.
1869 (the first issue) .....	8
1939 .....	80
1943 .....	101
1944 .....	108

I do not want to be pessimistic, but I doubt very much if the editor will have many pages released for other purposes for some time. The roots of bureaucracy once established are hard to pull up.

*Evening Standard, 16/2/44.*

## WORKHOUSE FOR "HEROES"

Mr. W. J. Edwards, Labour M.P. for Whitechapel, has asked Mr. Bevin about 192 ex-Servicemen reported since October as living in institutions in the north.

Mr. W. L. Richmond, of the Yorkshire Casualties Poor Assistance Committee, said he believed these were many more of these men in other parts of the country.

*The Daily Mirror, 18/2/44.*

## "D.W." MUST SEE SECOND FRONT

Not only should the *Daily Worker* have a special war correspondent but the whole editorial board including the editor, Bill Rust, Cayton, the racing expert, and the Dean of Canterbury, as chaplain, should be allowed to go if they wish.

It is a national scandal that the people who have shouted loudest for a Second Front in Europe should be prevented from being in the middle of it when it really begins.

I am quite sure that there would be plenty of soldiers who would be prepared to sacrifice their places in the invasion barges so that the representatives of the *Daily Worker* should get a good view of what goes on.

The case that the *Daily Worker* has made out against Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, in unanswerable.

"Grigg must go" is the *Daily Worker's* latest slogan, and we all agree without asking where or when he is to go.

Grigg's action in the matter is disgusting, he is sabotaging the *Daily Worker's* war effort.

Just think that Grigg has only been a Cabinet Minister for a couple of years and that he only got into Parliament at a by-election at Cardiff because the Communists chalked the pavements and held open-air meetings urging the working class to turn out and vote for him.

And then, when the Communists have helped to get him into Parliament and into the War Office, this is how he rewards them!

*"Konoblast" in Forward, 5/2/44.*

## CYNICISM

Opening his wallet, Tommy Trinder showed me last night a 50-lira note issued by Amgot in Italy. Printed on it are four slogans: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want.

I remarked that the slogans were not printed in Italian, but in English.

"Yes," said Mr. Trinder, "that is so that the natives shall not be corrupted."

*Evening Standard, 22/2/44.*

## V.D. MENACE IN AMERICA

Wartime increase in venereal diseases—over 35,000 cases have been reported in the Canadian Forces alone—has aroused a nation-wide campaign in Canada to educate the people in avoiding these dangers.

Colonel Donald Williams, chief V.D. control officer, estimates that 300,000 Canadians are suffering from syphilis and that 30,000 will die of the disease.

Casualties in the U.S. Navy this year from V.D. will be enough to man twelve battleships, six carriers, twenty-four cruisers and eighty destroyers. That was the military estimate quoted yesterday by Patricia Lochridge in the *American Women's Home Companion*. She said Army casualties will be enough to form twenty-six combat divisions.

*The Daily Mirror, 18/2/44.*

## A LESSON

Some resentment was expressed when other Americans at a West Country N.F.S. dance last night ordered coloured troops out of the hall.

Applause greeted the M.C.'s announcement that, as the coloured Americans were ordered out, all white Americans were also requested to leave.

The community would have no difference made between white and coloured troops, he said.

*Daily Herald, 19/2/44.*



# LUXEMBURG, ANTI-MILITARISM and ANARCHISM

By Willi Freimann

THE EARLY SOCIALIST MOVEMENT did not deal specifically with the issue of anti-militarism. Even the Communist Manifesto of 1847 confines itself to the advocacy of building a political movement with a declared revolutionary aim, without mentioning militarism. Indeed the whole "scientific socialist" movement, from Karl Marx to his followers Lassalle, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel, avoided the question. Marx's attitude to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 is well known. It raised a difference of opinion within the First International which was later to become an issue of profound importance to the international revolutionary movement. Marx, from the first, held that the war was from the German point of view purely a war of defence. Even after the French had been crushingly defeated at Sedan he maintained this view, and when his friend Kugelmann suggested that the war had now ceased to be defensive, Marx told him that it was only his deplorable ignorance of dialectic which prevented him from realizing that a war of defence was bound to have aggressive features in it! And when the French section of the International addressed an appeal to the German people, Marx spoke scornfully of "the imbeciles of Paris and their ridiculous Manifesto". Engels, too, was opposed to any independent anti-militarist action on the part of the French working class. "If one could have any influence at Paris," he wrote to Marx at the time, "it would be necessary to prevent the working-folk from budging until the peace."

Very different was the attitude of the Anarchists. From the middle of the eighteen-sixties Bakunin was stressing the internationalist aspirations of the working class, and in 1870 he urged a working class uprising in France to destroy both the Empire of Napoleon III and the invading armies of Bismarck. During the last quarter of the century the militant workers came more and more to accept the anarchist view that standing armies are tools for reactionary *coups d'état* and social oppression; that wars are conducted by the ruling class in its own interest at the expense of the workers; and that they must therefore be countered by a General Strike leading to Social Revolution. Vigorous anti-militarist activity was stimulated by the anarchist slogans: "Down with Military Justice, Militarism and War!" "Solidarity with those who, individually or collectively, refuse military service or are punished for desertion!" Such calls led to the establishment of revolutionary cells within bourgeois armies, and meetings and demonstrations of recruits and conscripts. The cruel persecution which the anarchists received as a result of this propaganda only increased the sympathy and support of the workers. In view of all this, the alarmed socialists began to modify their line to the extent of encouraging soldiers to refuse to act as strike-breakers or blacklegs, and to refuse to turn their rifles on their working class comrades, but to turn them instead against their officers.

The French Anarchists, under the slogan, "Not a man, not a cent for Militarism!" attempted to organize an International Anti-Militarist Association. It was boycotted by the Second International, but nevertheless grew rapidly in France. Its international congress at Etienne emphasized the importance, in the even of war, of strikes of reservists, and the refusal of soldiers and sailors to obey orders. It recommended the General Strike and full support for militant class struggle.

## THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND WAR

Karl Liebknecht was the first Social Democrat to take up the Anti-Militarist struggle, in his famous pamphlet *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*. But the German Social Democratic Party, clinging to legality, refused to commit itself to any definite policy on the question. When Liebknecht was accused of High Treason before the High Court, Bebel in the witness box opposed the organization of an anti-militarist body in Germany because the Party would not expose itself to the risk of suppression and persecution of its members. Liebknecht, in spite of this shameful desertion, accepted the party discipline, and thereby failed to give the lead to the undoubted support of a great mass of German workers and soldiers who fearlessly demonstrated their sympathy.

Having thus sold out to Capitalism, the Social Democrats then proceeded to compromise with the revolutionary forces of Labour. They signed the Stuttgart Resolution (1907) and the Basle Resolution (1912) which demanded from all socialists that, in the event of war, they should "utilise the political and economic crisis to rouse the masses and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist rule". It seems clear that these resolutions were framed as a concession to widespread anti-war feeling, the fruit of long-standing anarchist propaganda and struggle!

## SOCIALISTS AND ANARCHISTS IN 1914

When the war came the Socialists abandoned the revolutionary class struggle of internationalism altogether, and deserted their promise of two years before at Basle, that it was the "undisputed and fundamental duty of all Socialists to awaken the revolutionary consciousness and determination of the proletariat and help to pass to revolutionary actions". Even Liebknecht at first failed to oppose the Party Line and voted for war credits.

By contrast, the great German Anarchist Erich Muehsam, representing thousands of German Anarchists and Syndicalists, stood firm by the principles of revolutionary international solidarity, and was imprisoned for his strong anti-war and anti-militarist opinions. The authorities regarded him as the most dangerous of the German revolutionists. Meanwhile, although Karl Liebknecht later (2nd December 1914) voted against war credits (he was alone among the Social Democrats in the Reichstag to do so) and joined Rosa Luxembury, Mehring, and Clara Zetkin in organizing a policy of resistance to the war, this fact could not repair the damage to the working class for their first attitude of passivity had thrown them into complete confusion.

In November 1914 Malatesta wrote in the London anarchist paper *Freedom*, "At the risk of passing as a simpleton, I confess that I would never have believed it possible that Socialists—even Social Democrats—would applaud and voluntarily take part, either on the side of the Germans or on that of the Allies, in a war like the one that is at present devastating Europe. But what is there to say when the same is done by Anarchists—not numerous, it is true, but having amongst them comrades whom we love and respect most?" Denouncing the few pro-war Anarchists, *Freedom* published the International Anarchist Manifesto Against the War, signed by 34 internationally known Anarchists of all countries.

While the Social Chauvinists were trying to prove the "absurdity" of revolution, Malatesta reaffirmed an



earlier prophecy of Bakunin's, and declared immediately after the outbreak of war: "In my opinion victory will be on neither side. After a long war, with tremendous losses in life and property, and the exhaustion of both groups, some kind of peace will be patched together leaving all questions open, thereby preparing a new war, which will be even more murderous than the present. The only hope lies in revolution!" Rosa Luxemburg made a similar declaration two years later in her famous "Junius" pamphlet.

### ROSA LUXEMBURG

Rosa Luxemburg was arrested on 19th February, 1915 and served a year in prison. Like Lenin, she opposed the pro-war Marxists Kautsky, Plekhanov, and Hyndman. But the arguments she used against them were those which the anarchist anti-militarists had used for years before, from Bakunin and the Anarchist declarations in the International down to Malatesta in 1914. Even her "Junius" pamphlet, written in prison and published in April 1916, which exposed the "liberating mission" legend used by both imperialist camps to fool the workers, and in which she stated that both groups of powers were fighting for conquest and that therefore the workers of the world should side with neither group, contained nothing which was not to be found in the rich anti-militarist literature of the Anarchists. Similarly Karl Liebknecht's call to the German workers to turn their rifles against their own government and declare a military strike, was an echo of the Etienne declaration.

Although claiming to lead the masses, the revolutionary socialists—Lenin in Russia and Spartacus in Germany—were compelled by events to adopt the slogans of the revolutionary workers. Lenin not only abandoned Bolshevik principles for revolutionary slogans, but also adopted for the Bolshevik Party the name "Communist"—a term which had come to be associated with the Anarchists. Plagiarising the latter, he declared: "We Marxists are opposed to all and every kind of State"; and "the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and all other Deputies are the sole power in the State, the harbinger of the 'withering away' of the State in every form". These ideas would have been unthinkable from such a source had not the logic of events borne out the anarchist teachings, and forced them on those who aspired to 'lead' the workers.

Rosa Luxemburg also shows the same movement towards anarchist ideas (though with greater sincerity than Lenin), and frequently seems to echo Bakunin. Consider the following statements which she made about the Bolshevik State of Lenin and Trotsky; "Freedom for supporters of the Government only, for the members of the party only—no matter how big its membership may be—is no freedom at all". "The suppression of political life throughout the country must gradually cause the vitality of the Soviets themselves to decline. Without General Elections, freedom of the press, assembly, and speech, life in every public institution slows down, becomes a caricature of itself, and bureaucracy rises as the only deciding factor. No one can escape the working of this law. Public life gradually dies and a few dozen party leaders with inexhaustible and limitless idealism direct and rule . . . In the last resort cliquism develops and dictatorship, but not the dictatorship of the proletariat: the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, i.e. a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense, in the Jacobin sense."

Thus Rosa Luxemburg. And now Bakunin: "Whoever says State says fortress, stronghold, forced separation of one section of mankind from other State-imprisoned sections. Whoever says State says rivalry, competition, permanent wars of states, conquest, robbery, patriotic and glorified massacre—without and within—oppression, legal and regulated exploitation of the people for the benefit of a ruling minority. The necessary revolutionary policy of the proletariat must have as its immediate and only

aim, the destruction of the State. We cannot understand how anyone can talk about international solidarity who wants to preserve States—the State being by its very existence a breach of solidarity and therefore a permanent cause of war. We do not recognize; not even as a revolutionary form of transition, either a national convention, nor constitutional congress, provisional government, nor a so-called revolutionary dictatorship, because we are convinced that the revolution is only in the masses, sincere, honest, effective, and that when concentrated in the hands of a few governing persons, it will inevitably and immediately change into reaction". Events during the last war taught Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; since then their worst fears have been realized, and have proved once more the correctness of Bakunin's vision.

### WORKERS' ACTION

But though Luxemburg and Liebknecht came to recognise the dangers of the leadership principle, they still sought to direct the revolutionary masses. While the conspiratorial leaders were debating the workers acted. Paul Froehlich, in his book on Rosa Luxemburg, says: "The hour of revolt was fixed—and postponed again and again. *In the end the conspirators had just time to place themselves at the head of the workers of Berlin when they finally acted on their own.*" The Spartacist leaders had a special influence on the insurrectionary masses because they had opposed the war, and adopted the revolutionary working class slogans of the Anarchists which corresponded with the realities of the situation. They failed because they could not wholly free themselves of the superstition of leadership. Instead of leaving them to follow their natural revolutionary impulse, they separated themselves from the workers.

While the armed working class had already gained ground by direct action and driven the Social Democratic government of Ebert into panic, Liebknecht wasted valuable time in endless discussions with the leaders of the Independent Socialist Party. The workers, awaiting Spartacus' signal for the general assault, grew tired. Later on Noske, the Social Democrat butcher who crushed the revolution in blood, admitted that Spartacus could have seized the Government buildings and the Chancellor's Palace on the night of January 5th, 1919; but they hesitated at the critical moment, which was seized by the counter-revolutionaries to take the initiative and occupy the Reichstag under the very noses of the surprised Spartacists.

Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were brutally murdered by the counter-revolutionary Social Democrats on the night of January 15th, 1919. Their graves and memory have been desecrated by Hitler's Nazis. And, as Froehlich says, "many of her close collaborators, and in particular her Polish comrades in arms, lost their lives in the Lubianka and other prisons as victims of Stalin's campaign of extermination against the Old Guard of the revolution". Nothing can dim their bravery and heroism. But we must none the less learn not only the lessons of their defeat, but also recognize the source of their strength. Though Rosa Luxemburg would perhaps never have become an Anarchist, she would certainly never have degenerated into a Stalinist, as her fearless and biting criticisms of Lenin prove. Meanwhile the parallels offered by the present war are too obvious to need stressing.

**Don't forget to buy your  
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## From the Ranks

### INEQUALITIES OF PAY

The Authorities in an attempt to foster friendly relations between American and British troops, interchanged a number of American soldiers with a number of soldiers from this regiment for a period of three weeks. Before our lads went to the American regiment, the Commanding Officer told them to go out with the Americans in the evenings and spend freely and the P.R.I. will refund the money. To quote his words he said: "If the Americans want double whiskies, buy them double whiskies, it will not cost you a penny".

It was obvious that the British soldier would not create a good impression if after duty he could not go out with the Americans because he only had shillings to their pounds, so to cover the difference in pay the Army gave our lads a few pounds extra to put them on equal basis, financially and socially with their American comrades. This will never foster friendly relations for as long as the Americans can buy whiskey to our beer, go to the best seats in the cinema while we go to the cheapest, attract the girls with their abundance of money, there will be ill-feeling between the troops of the two countries. The only way to prevent this is to put all of us on equal pay, not for three weeks but for always.

Trooper L. W.

### FRANK LEECH FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

*We have received many letters from soldiers expressing their solidarity with Frank Leech, who went on hunger strike while undergoing imprisonment, as a protest against conscription. We regret to be unable to reprint them all but we are reproducing the following letter from a soldier-comrade who expresses the feeling of many others.*

Frank Leech of Glasgow is in jail for daring to stand on his feet and demand the elementary rights of that which we are supposed to be fighting for—FREEDOM.

He is a soldier, as every living individual is, whether in civilian clothes, or uniform, who objects to conscription and regimentation.

He is fighting, not for the furtherance of the Capitalistic régime, but for a far greater cause—HUMANITY. He is fighting for a society where all men may come to a full enjoyment of an individualistic freedom, and not the "freedom" as envisaged by our present Fascist minded upper class.

The "Churchills" and the "Bevins" can do as they

wish with the resources and people of this country, but if any person dares to demand a little of that freedom we have been fighting four and a half years for, he is dubbed as "red" or "Bolsky", if in the Army, and treated as a criminal if a civilian.

A ludicrous state of affairs, surely, because if the freedom we are fighting for is as splendid as our leaders would have us believe why are so many forced by the government to participate in the "battle for civilisation", and not allowed to use their individual judgment.

Surely there would be no shirkers among a really free people, fighting to retain their freedom? What we are fighting for now, is for that freedom which allows MONEY to keep as wage slaves, all men, as it has done since Capitalism first "reared its ugly head".

Fight on Frank, there are many in military prisons who have never heard of Anarchy, but who are comrades in arms of that cause we all are fighting for: the real freedom and brotherhood of mankind.

Gunner A.B.

### WAR OFFICE "GENEROSITY"

Ex-Private M. R. A., of Portsmouth, having served twelve years, was recalled in 1939, discharged four years later and awarded £20 gratuity.

Because he had been awarded £8 ten years ago for his previous service that amount was deducted from his present war gratuity. "This gratuity," the War Office inform me, "is inclusive of any gratuity he had previously received."

Then all that I want to say is that to give a man a gratuity at the end of his twelve years' service, and deduct it—ten years later—from a gratuity he had earned in this war is paltry in the extreme.

*The Daily Mirror, 17/2/44.*

### FOUR MONTHS' WORK STRIKE

The work strike on the part of 21 conscientious objectors at the Federal Correctional Institution, Danbury, Conn., in protest against the policy of racial segregation in the institution's dining room, was ended recently, the War Resisters League announces.

Friends of the men have reported that on Dec. 22, Warden Myrl E. Alexander spoke with the strikers and proposed a programme for establishing a cafeteria system in the dining hall, under which inmates will be able to eat with whomever they wish. The strike, which began Aug. 11, was then terminated.

Although all 21 men agreed in the settlement of the racial problem, five of them, who felt that they must protest against conscription and against being imprisoned for conscience's sake, are still refusing to co-operate with the prison administration and are still on punishment status with their privileges restricted. *The Call, 7/1/44.*





# Preparing for Freedom

THE PROBLEM OF child education in an anarchist society will not prove a difficult one. Children are essentially logical in their thinking and will not need to have the principles of freedom and equality explained to them; indeed, it might almost be said that any political system that cannot be readily understood by a child is a faulty system. Try to explain banking, the intricacies of compound interest, and the machinations of big business government, and you will find that a child's puzzled questions, far from being as naïve as is generally supposed, are in every way justifiable.

Our problem is how to educate, not the children of the future, but the adults of to-day. At present, education is used as a method of keeping the young and the mature mind in a well-defined rut that suits those to whose advantage it is to discourage clear thinking. There are many people to-day who can see glaring faults in the education that has for so long ruled in our schools, but many of these will be perfectly content to accept the reforms trotted out by the government as a sop to would-be reformers. The few proposals for improvement that have so far been made are useless: increasing the school leaving age is of no value if the standard of education is not raised. In fact, such a move will only increase the pressure of propaganda, the continued insistence that what your government does for you is the best that could be done for you. Schools, like the large majority of churches, exist to enforce this so-called "discipline" and to inculcate an unquestioning, submissive state of mind. A few weeks ago Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham said: "What does freedom mean? It certainly does not mean lack of discipline. You will eventually thank your stars that you joined the disciplinary service because it means a hell of a lot. You are not even free to play football unless you obey the rules." He was talking to air apprentices at a naval training station, but his attitude is one that is to be found everywhere, from the time of first going to school to the time of joining the armed forces in some imperialist war. In 1818 Hazlitt, referring to the clergymen of the Church of England as "the most devoted tools of power," condemned them for being only too willing to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, but far from willing to fulfil the other part of the celebrated piece of advice, and very, very far from willing to render anything at all to the poor, those most in need of help.

Things have changed but little. Schools and churches profess high aims, but their actual conduct is of doubtful honesty. History is still taught on a largely nationalist basis, and it is significant that the leader principle is extolled.

We are faced with a generation of adults who believe in leadership. It will be hard to lead them away from this false belief, when they are so accustomed to newspaper sensationalism, cheerleaders, the worship of film stars, and to the idea that a single man at the head of a government is responsible for all the planning, all the work, and all the fighting. Despite the admiration that the people of this country undoubtedly feel for the people of Russia, it is more frequent to hear the majority speaking of "Uncle Joe" than of the struggling soldiers. "Joe" is more than a symbol—to those who find it impossible to think of thousands of people, he is the one man who represents the war effort of the Soviets.

A recent *Sunday Pictorial* article reviewing W. J. Brown's *So Far* discussed the unsatisfactory nature of the coalition government and spoke hopefully of a movement of "progressively-minded candidates" who would straighten

out the mess. The reviewer agrees with Mr. Brown that this is necessary, but fears that people will say, "All right, Bill, but who is going to LEAD the movement?" A leader is, it would seem, essential. Herbert Read's recent denunciation of the Cult of Leadership was an admirable exposition of the stupidities of such loose thinking.

With this attitude so common, education must encourage scepticism. Dogma and the unquestioning acceptance of plausible nonsense will always make for war and exploitation by the unscrupulous. All ideologies must be subjected to the test of reason. Attack all beliefs until you are sure that they are sound. Communists refused for a long time to accept capitalist propaganda, but fell willingly for equally foolish prattle of a different kind. It is no good rejecting one god and embracing another just as dictatorial and unreasonable.

How are we to go about cleaning up the sloppy mind in preparation for the better world that we hope will come into being? The first essential is to encourage people to believe good of their fellow-workers. At times this is difficult, and scepticism would seem to be more in order. But until those who wish to create the new

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order can trust one another, there will be many insurmountable difficulties. In any argument about the practicability of anarchism, the same question crops up: "What about those who'll try to take advantage and seize power? There will always be men who want to get to the top." No man believes that another will co-operate with him, though no man will ever doubt his own willingness to live honestly. The present system encourages such suspicion and sets man against man, saying that it is good to indulge in "healthy competition." It dangles the carrot of future security and power before the nose of the gullible man who continues to believe in the capitalist system as long as there is some possibility of his becoming a capitalist himself someday.

Even if anarchists can do no more than encourage the enquiring mind they will be doing good, though at the risk of being accused of intellectual nihilism. There is, however, no need to stop there. After the criticism, the anarchist can help by suggesting alternatives, and winning the confidence of his fellows. All must help—writers and labourers. There are plenty of opportunities every day: strike action is the most notable and certainly the most direct method. It is useless to leave it all to the few writers who support the cause and hope that their few

books and periodicals will win the support of the public. The individual worker counts.

We must begin now to educate men and women to resist the impact of post-war propaganda, which will be terrific. We must educate them to realise that Beveridge plans, even if fulfilled, are not enough. And at the same time, while showing up the faults of the existing order, we must discourage vindictiveness. There must be none of the hangers-on who manage to attach themselves to nearly all revolutionary movements, anxious not to improve the living conditions of the majority but to drag down those against whom they have a grudge.

Each man must be given a sense of personal responsibility. At present that sense is fostered just enough for a citizen to feel that he has a parliamentary representative for whose election he was to some extent responsible. Beyond that, he does not go, except in a few cases where a vague mistrust is felt. Unless that mistrust can lead to something more definite, to a desire to alter such a state of affairs, it will do little practical good.

And finally, the contrast between the old way and the new way: men must be shown that under an anarchist system their opinions will be respected, their help welcomed, and their talents encouraged.

J. F. BURKE

## STARVATION IN SPAIN

A MEDICAL paper carries a report of the researches of a Spanish doctor into the diseases caused by the food shortage during the civil war. More and more it is becoming evident that starvation is a more or less permanent feature of our time. The industrial depression of 1929-32 provided the mass of material in this country which formed the basis of several researches into malnutrition: Nor was semi-starvation confined to this country; it was widespread enough to preoccupy the Health Section of the League of Nations for several years. But in Spain the existence of massive starvation is particularly tragic. When the revolutionary peasants, under the influence of the Anarchist Syndicalist C.N.T., seized the land from the Fascist landlords, they immediately set about the radical improvement of agriculture. In Aragon, the peasants formed voluntary collectives, to which 75 per cent. of the small proprietors willingly adhered. By improvements in cultivation, in irrigation, and in stock breeding, they produced extraordinary results in a very short time. In the first year after the revolution of July 1936, the wheat crop showed a average increase in yield of 30 per cent., while in the first eighteen months the number of pigs and cows was tripled. Gaston Leval states: "In many localities—besides the Levant and certain parts of Catalonia—the rearing of cows was only begun after the revolution. A selection of the existing livestock was made, and careful attention given to the healthy animals, while the diseased ones were eliminated so as to ensure that children would have nothing but wholesome milk."

These were the fruits of revolution, when the Spanish people were able to act through their own elected committees without regimentation from above. But with the triumph of the counter-revolution and the firm establishment of the Negrin government at Valencia there came a change. Led by the Stalinist Minister of Agriculture, Uribe, the government began to hamper in every possible way the work of the collective farms. "Our collectives did not receive any sort of official aid. On the contrary, if they received anything at all, it was obstruction and calumnies from the Minister of Agriculture (Uribe) and from the majority of institutions that depended on this minister." (*Tierra y Libertad*, 17/7/37). Finally, the collectives were physically broken up by the Communist brigade of General Enrico Lister. This is

how it was that during the winter of 1938 and the early months of 1939 the Spanish people were starving, existing mainly on lentils. With their physical resistance undermined, it is not surprising that the military resistance to Franco collapsed.

The *British Medical Journal's* report refers only to results of malnutrition during the war itself. Since that time frank starvation has been the lot of the Spanish workers and peasants under Franco's terror. The *B.M.J.* comments: "The cruel involuntary 'experiment' of the dimensions experienced in Spain provided evidence of types of neurological disorder caused by nutritional deficiency of some sort or another. The same 'experiment' is, unfortunately, to be expected on an even larger scale in Europe after the war." This prophecy is, indeed only too likely to be fulfilled; starvation was a feature of the post-war period after 1918. But in the present war, the famines are already spread all over the world. Not only in Spain, but in the Low Countries, Greece, Italy and Sicily, and on the vast Asiatic scales in India and China. If the post-war period is to exaggerate these already existing famines, the outlook is ghastly indeed. Yet through the present tragedy in Spain, one can remember the experience which can bring hope to the suffering post-war period—those months of increased food production during the first year of the revolution, when there was no central authority strong enough to strangle the initiative of the people; when the workers and peasants, working through their own self-acting syndicates raised production in Spain to a higher level than it had ever attained before or since.

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## Fiction and Freedom

I am writing in answer for books we can recommend. I have called myself a Socialist but find out that I have been an anarchist all along. The following novels strengthened my ideas.

*The Harbour*, Ernest Poole.

*Main Street*, Sinclair Lewis.

*The Mysterious Stranger*,

Mark Twain.

*Yankee at Court of King Arthur*,

Mark Twain.

*Prince and the Pauper*, Mark Twain.

*Confounds their Enemies*,

Eugene Sue.

*Bluhedale Romance*, a magnificent romantic allegory, an account of an effort to put the author's ideas of Equality into action at Brook Farm, Roxbury, America.

CLARA COLE.

★

I liked the interesting book review by "A.M." May I suggest to him also the titles: *Storm over Spain* by Marian Mitchell, *Assignment in Utopia* by Eugene Lyons, and an anthology *For Liberty* by Henry Bood and S. Carlyle. Also, a book called *The Revolt Against Civilization* by Lothrop Stoddard.

R.J.G., Leicester.

★

In your excellent article on "Fiction and Freedom" in your Mid-Jan. issue you invite readers to send the names of other books of sound propagandist value. I therefore write to point out the omission of two of Ethel Mannin's books from your survey, though I was glad to see you had two of her titles included.

Her last novel *The Blossoming Bough*, has chapters devoted to the Spanish Civil War, and the revolution behind the anti-Fascist struggle is clearly explained, her hero joins a P.O.U.M. militia and is eventually 'bumped off' by the Communists. In her recently published book of short stories, *No More Mimosa* (which incidentally is dedicated to the Spanish anarchist—member of F.A.I.—whom one notices helped with the Spanish chapters of the *Blossoming Bough*, ac-

cording to the acknowledgments the author makes) there are several stories of the Spanish Civil war from the anarchist angle.

There is a story entitled *After Madrid*, which is a story of Spanish anarchists escaping after the fall of Madrid; and a story entitled *The Last Night in Gandia* which tells the dramatic story of their evacuation, and of Colonel Casado's gallant gesture in refusing to board the British ship unless all were taken, not merely the members of the Consejo. This should be of so much interest to the readers of *War Commentary* that I hope you will print this letter in your next issue, and I do not remember seeing either of these books reviewed in *War Commentary*. The Spanish anarchist case is also explained by Ethel Mannin in her book *Women and the Revolution* which I notice you advertise, and this book has a prefatory letter to Emma Goldman. The case for a stateless society is also set forth in Miss Mannin's recent *Commonsense and Morality* and in her *Privileged Spectator*.

Very sincerely,

A.A., Bedford.

★

A note in appreciation of Albert Meltzer's article in the mid-January *War Commentary* on "Fiction and Freedom"; and in response to his request for the names of novels which he did not mention dealing with Anarchism, I'd like to recommend Ralph Bates's *The Olive Field* and *Lean Men* (the latter in two Penguin volumes) and Robert Young's *The Song of the Peasant*. All three deal with Spain, and if Ralph Bates was, at the time the two books mentioned were written a devoted Communist, the novels remain very excellent material. Young is not so well known, but *The Song of the Peasant* is equal to Bates's best work, and contains moving descriptions of the street fighting in Barcelona in which Durruti and Ascaso took part, and the latter met his death, and extracts from either of these scenes would provide inspiring propaganda material for a "Book Review" article in *War Commentary*.

It is not, of course, a work of fiction, but I am amazed that *War Com-*

mentary has not given a word of notice to Gerald Brenan's recently-published *Spanish Labyrinth*, and take this opportunity of saying so. Surely it is not possible that the Editors know of the very notable study of Spanish Anarchism which this work contains, and have banned reference to it in their columns?\*

W.C., Edinburgh.

\*We have not "banned reference" to Gerald Brenan's *Spanish Labyrinth* from our columns. On the contrary; it is because the book needs a full-length review that we have not had the opportunity to deal with it in *War Commentary*. A review dealing at length with this book will appear in Vol. III of *Now*.—Ed.

★

## A SAILOR WRITES

I value *War Commentary* greatly, for I feel the need for much reading, thinking and talking before I can truly say I am an anarchist, for it is not enough to talk or merely think in terms of Anarchism, one must express in one's life the whole meaning of freedom . . . and *War Commentary* acts as a guide, and a link with others like-minded.

Books are necessary, but I feel that the propagation of the meaning of Anarchism is dependent upon the person . . . for it is my experience that at the sight of the words "for Anarchism", some men are surprised, others amused, and all conceiving of the anarchist as the cloaked terror with a bomb. But a little explanation, and encouragement to read one or two articles, particularly "Through the Press" (items they cannot deny, and whose interpretations they find also undeniable and in accordance with much of their own thinking) breaks down preconceived ideas and awakes interest. And after all I don't look like a bearded, cloaked, underground plotter.

Thus the individual by his own integrity, by his understanding both of self and fellow men, by his firmness of faith gives the example, and his own life is then the expression of anarchism. In the life of every man as a being free from poverty, ignorance, self-deception, prejudice and illusions will the richest expression of life be fulfilled.

P/O H.F.



# Death Roll in India

AMERY'S STATEMENT IN the House of Commons that so far one million people had died from famine and disease in India is manifestly absurd. It is one of those governmental "understatements" which are nicely calculated to allay anxieties by admitting the fact of famine while at the same time whittling down its importance and extent.

In the first place it is admitted that the famine and disease embraces the whole of Bengal, with a population of over 62 millions; and that even as Indian famines go, it is a severe one. Yet death rolls higher than Amery's figures have been reported frequently in Indian famines. Thus in that at Orissa in 1866, one third of the population, about one million people, died. In 1874 in Madras 5 millions perished, while the famine of 1878, in Northern India, resulted in 1,250,000 deaths (Romesh Dutt: *Indian Famines*, London 1901).

Other sources give a picture of conditions (and they are not likely to exaggerate) which by no means support Amery's modest estimate. Major-General Stewart, Commander of the Bengal garrison, after a tour of the province stated in a recent broadcast that "there was hardly a single homestead which had not lost a member by the disease (malaria), or had someone down with it." Bearing in mind the population of Bengal, this statement, even if one assumes that it is exaggerated (which is unlikely, coming from an Army official) implies a stupendous mortality.

Malaria is particularly fatal to famine-stricken populations, and the means for dealing with it are practically non-existent in India. As early as March 1943 it was reported that the quinine supply amounted to less than 25 per cent. of the requirements. Since then (2/12/43) Amery has admitted that there was a deficiency of certain drugs.

Regarding the ravages of Cholera, Graham Stanford cabled (2/12/43) that "It is reported from some villages that the entire population is stricken and that dispensaries have had to close down because the doctors have also succumbed." Cholera kills a tremendous number of Indians in "normal" years; its toll of a population enfeebled by famine is bound to be much higher still.

The Anthropological Department of Calcutta University has declared (*News Chronicle* 21/2/44) that the deaths in Bengal above the normal (*sic*) from disease and famine, is 3½ millions. This figure is likely to be much nearer the truth than Amery's.

It may be objected that these higher figures rest solely on conjecture. That is inevitable when the means of direct measurement are lacking. But Amery's figure must be just as conjectural, for (according to the *Times* Calcutta correspondent, 27/1/44), "During the famine, village officials and local authorities ceased making returns of vital statistics." The same authority added that until the statistics for the last six months of 1943 are collected and compared with the average mortality for the corresponding period in the past 5 years, "nobody is in a position to make more than a wild guess at the famine death-roll."

It seems that Amery and the Government of India are anxious to make sure that such "guesses" shall be as "wild" as possible, for they have stopped issuing reports on the Public Health on the rather extraordinary grounds of paper economy!

It must be remembered, finally, that most reports refer to Bengal alone, although the famine is raging in other provinces as well, e.g. Madras (population 49.84 millions), Bihar (36.34 millions), Orissa (8.73 millions), Cochin and Travancore (7.5 millions). In the light of all these considerations, Amery's figure of one million must be regarded as a fantastic understatement.

There is, however, a further point. In announcing that the Indian famine had resulted in one million dead, Amery was no doubt seeking to give the impression that the famine was over. This however is by no means the case, though the press has included very little news from India recently.

One of the most disastrous effects of famine is that it very often reduces the working population to such an extent that they are unable to get in the harvest, or ensure next year's crop. Fears of this sort have already been expressed by observers in India, and they are far from being groundless. In addition to aggravation of famine due to this cause, there is the fact that distribution is now in the hands of the government. The *News Chronicle* (21/2/44) reports that anxiety is being felt in Bengal already about the distribution of the "record rice harvest". It declares that in 3 months time the Himalayan snows will melt and whole districts will be flooded and the roads rendered impassable. Those districts which have failed to receive adequate supplies by then will therefore face a repetition of the famine this year also. The *News Chronicle* estimates that by May 15th, the Central Administration and the Bengal government will know whether their distribution plans will have succeeded. They do not seem to anticipate success in this respect with any great confidence.

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