

Hiroshima and after!

Another date has been added to History's gruesome chronology of horror. Hiroshima, August 5th 1945, marks the application of a new technique in the sordid science of slaughter. In one catastrophic flash a city has been destroyed and "all life seared to death". While the monument of dust still towered above the ruins, the news was released upon a world almost satiated with carnage.

Yet it is significant to observe that although the use of the atomic bomb hastened the end of the war in the East, the announcement was received with little popular enthusiasm.

Before 1939 it was comparatively easy for the ruling class to convince the workers of the need for a large navy, army, and air force. Armaments, they maintained would ward off would-be aggressors and thereby ensure peace. Their solicitude for our safety seemed almost genuine. Years of grim experience, however, have proved the Socialists' contention that armaments are no insurance against war. New methods of persuasion will be needed next time to herd the population into the future shoddy equivalents of Anderson shelters, particularly since we are told by the US War Department that "an atomic bomb could be made 1,000 times more powerful than the type used on Japan".—(*Sunday Despatch*, August 12th, 1945). There will be very few near miss stories!

The reaction of the military mind is summed up by General Ismay, who in 1941 stated on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, "although personally, I am quite content with the existing explosives, I feel we must not stand in the path of improvement".—(*Times*, August 7th, 1945).

Let there be no mistake! The disastrous effect of this latest device to uplift humanity will in no way prevent its use. In fact because of the power of destruction, it becomes obvious that the element of surprise will be a major advantage in war. It may well be that a matter of hours will decide which group of capitalists will emerge victorious from the next edition, which gang will be jet-propelled on the next Crooks Tour, to sit at the fleshpots of some future Potsdam Conference.

Unfortunately for the British and American capitalistic class it will be impossible to monopolise the development of nuclear power. Sir James Chadwick, chief scientific advisor to the British members of the Combined Allied Policy Committee in Washington, has admitted that any nation with reasonable industrial facilities could start now and produce an atom bomb in 5 years' time, without assistance from Britain and the USA. Its antecedents are the past ages of patient research. From the 1890's when the Curies conducted experiments in radio-activity, up to the recent perverted achievement, the efforts of such scientists as Professor Rutherford of Manchester, Niels Bohr of Copenhagen, Dr Lawrence of California University, Professor Joliot of France, and others in Germany, Japan, Russia and elsewhere, prove indisputably that in the modern world production is a social function. In brief, as reported by the US War Department the bomb was created "not by the devilish inspiration of some warped genius, but by the arduous labour of thousands of normal men and women".—(*Sunday Despatch*, August 12th, 1945), i.e., members of the working class.

Needless to remark the news has produced a spate of advice, comments, explanations, warnings, and prophecies from people qualified and otherwise. Among the latter, Mr G. B. Shaw, in the *Sunday Express*, August 12th, 1945, unable to explain, yet urged to say something reverts to hollow flippancies, and reminiscences of childhood days. Dr Joad, emulating Churchill thanks God, "for one of the innumerable dispensations of Providence by which this country has been preserved", and asks querulously, "Will nobody stop these damned scientists, put them in a bag, and tie them up! Or into a lethal chamber?"—(*Sunday Despatch*, August 12th, 1945). Although goaded to repeat the question when we see such waste of print, or hear his brain storms distorting the ether waves, we know that the fault lies not with the scientists, but with the system of society which corrupts their discoveries.

General Fuller in the *Sunday Pictorial*, commenting on the cause of war, says "there are several . . . but in the economic age in which we live, the one which seems to me to tower above all others, is the 'profit motive'". To socialists the profit motive is the only explanation of war in the modern world.

As long as Capitalism remains, there will be no slackening of research for even "better and more beautiful" methods of destruction, no tightening of the purse-strings which have already disgorged £500,000,000. Meanwhile the producers of wealth will be sampling the elusive fruits of rationed victory amid Portal shanty-towns and unemployment queues.

There is no need to enlarge on the physical results of atomic warfare. Combined with jet-propulsion, mass-murder is possible by remote control.

It is, however, relevant to examine a few of its effects on the current political fallacies of the defenders of "private enterprise".

The USA is now as vulnerable to attack as the rest of the world. Geographical situation offers no advantage, and in consequence the last crumbling bastion of isolationism is breached. This is clearly demonstrated by her policy of expansion especially in the Pacific.

All ideas of warfare are obsolete, or at least require drastic revision, and already, at the end of the worst war in history, the spectre of the next conflict haunts the celebrations of peace.

Sooner than we realize nuclear power may be harnessed to industry. In the inevitable scramble for production and profit gluts, slumps and unemployment figures will reach new levels and defy solution by the obsolete plans of the Beveridge type.

These are just a few of the problems of Capitalism: that Hydra-headed system which the Labour Party now administers in Great Britain; but will never control. Many supporters of the Labour Party are still deluded by the idea that Nationalisation is a major step in a policy of gradualism which will "reform capitalism out of existence". The sledge-hammer blows of events will nail this tragic error!

Wars are inherent in the private-property system itself, and are likely to wipe millions of workers out of existence, while the futile pin-pricks of reform leave its structure untouched.

Who can now suggest that the policy of the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain, though correct in theory, is one for application only in some remote future? Who would question the practicability of our case?

There is no time for complacency! Let us face the fact that time is on our side only if we seize it by the forelock and use it to our advantage.

Socialism, the only solution to the problems which confront us, is the need not of the century, but of the hour!

Sympathisers, men and women of the working class, we urge you to join with us in the struggle for emancipation.

You have but two alternatives! Either the poverty, servitude and degradation of Capitalism, culminating in war, or Socialism in which the inventive genius of man will be used for the welfare of all society.

Your choice is as simple as it is vital! On it rests the future of humanity!

(October 1945)