

Hitler's defeat at such hands is a second and worse Versailles. This fear has converted many a German from an anti- to a pro-Nazi. Without this fear the Nazis would have hardly any more moral reserves at their command than the erstwhile Allies, allowance made for the initial victories. The bright future of plunder which Hitler promises his people only convinces the adolescents.

The dubious future of a federated *capitalist* Europe convinces no one. The only future which offers any hope and any credibility to the masses is that of socialism. But it is a future they cannot take on promise. They must make it for themselves. And the first step in that direction is to take upon themselves the task of eliminating Hitler. Over here in America the problem is the same, almost exactly the same.

A socialist revolution in the West would send an answering thrill through the German workers. It would come with idealism and sincerity; it would invite the world to join it in fraternity and love—yes, *love*. It would not be Stalin, it would not be tangled up with the barbarism, accidental to itself, of a backward country. It would have difficulties of its own, no doubt, blood, unpleasantness—for every step forward in history involves tragedy—but *it would come to a world that is ready for it*.

COMMENT

THE article which precedes this, *An American View*, is written by Clement Greenberg, who is a Trotskyite. It represents in extreme form a point of view that is constantly expressed by the English Left—by the *New Statesman*, *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle*, etc. Being put in such simple and violent terms, and from so far away, it enables the force of the argument to be judged with clarity. It is obvious that this view, which is widely held, rests on an over-simplification of the facts, and if put into practice would lead to disaster. For the weak point in the judgment of intellectuals is that they tend to be right about the course of events, but wrong about their tempo. They over-simplify, expect everything to happen too fast, because they do not allow for the time-lag of human affairs, the gap between thought and action, thrust and parry. Clement Greenberg has

over-simplified the structure of English society, the nature of the present war and the forces engaged in it: his argument is (1) only the working-classes can defeat Hitler; (2) England is ruled by the capitalist class, therefore England will be defeated, either through weakness or treachery, since the capitalist class is on Hitler's side; (3) therefore the working-class must take power and conduct the war themselves. He cites Spain as an example.

There is some truth in this—in fact it is ultimately true, as *Horizon* has put it, that 'the only thing which can defeat National Socialism is International Socialism'—but it is a foreshortening of truth to assume that Hitler himself can be defeated by anything except force of arms and the people who use them, in fact by the army, the navy and the air force.

These bodies are democratic, but not socialist, and at the top they are not democratic but show a tendency towards military dictatorship with an inclination to lock up artists and foreigners and to put the whole country under martial law. They accept Churchill as a leader; it is debatable whether they would fight better under Tom Wintringham—and without them the war cannot be won. They are even extremely patriotic because they do not think in terms of Marxist economics, but act from the profound English instinct which tells us when a continental power has become too strong, and when the strategic independence of our islands is threatened. Such instincts are ignored by Marxist calculators. What is the real class picture of England? At the top is a ruling class of great capitalists and landlords—some of these may be potentially pro-Hitler; below them come the enormous professional and commercial middle-class, which, though capitalist, could easily adapt itself to socialism, and which is morally and geographically anti-Hitler, because it believes in Democracy, Christianity and the British Empire. To ignore this class, which provides ninety per cent. of the officers of the services and the executives of the war effort, or to propose to sacrifice it to the revolutionary necessities of Marxism, is to make an appalling blunder, for an attempt to socialize it in a hurry would drive it into Fascism. Lastly comes the great working-class, which is anti-Hitler, but quite incapable of defeating him without the collaboration of the other. The importance of Churchill is that he is the leader of both the

fighting forces and the middle-class, and he is, as such, accepted by the working-classes. No other leader could retain the confidence of all three. It is because England is united at the moment that Hitler is not already here, and the sacrifice has been purchased with the lowest possible sacrifice of any one class or community. The only steps which can now be taken without disrupting that unity are increased taxation of the rich, and the removal from office of the men of Munich. To increase the power of the workers at the expense of the middle-class who officer them would be fatal.

One more point. Spain. Anyone would think from the way the Spanish Government is constantly referred to that they had won their war, not lost it; and one of the reasons they lost it was that the Navy shot their officers, and were consequently unable to navigate their ships and therefore to prevent Franco from bringing his Moors and Foreign Legion over from Africa. A People's Admiralty and a Peoples' General Staff are doubtful blessings. What we can learn from Spain is the danger of too much insistence on ideologies in wartime. The Anarchists could have got to Saragossa on the petrol they used in burning churches, the Communists hated Trotsky more than Franco, Anarchists and Socialists split and resplit like streptococci, and the instinctive units of that geographical entity, the young republic in arms, was destroyed. Madrid fought that Barcelona might have a revolution for Valencia to put down.

What we can learn from Spain, too, is the essential vigour of a country which believes in democracy, and really fights for it. The Spanish Republic had a very small middle-class, the struggle was between a working-class that had just achieved liberty, independence and some culture, and the land-owners, capitalists and generals who opposed it. The Republic was a democracy, not a plutocracy, the issue was as clear cut as at Marathon. This is revealed in their propaganda, which is full of certainty, not only certainty about war-aims, but certainty as to the kind of people to whom they appealed. In this number we reproduce four Spanish posters as a comment on the inadequacy of our own. They assume a high level of taste and intelligence in their audience; the drawings of Puyol and Mattéos make no concessions, *Los Nacionales* is not obvious satire, and the familiar air-raid poster is not afraid of encouraging

defeatism by presenting facts. It is doubtful whether the Spanish public had the taste and intelligence which the artists presumed; what is important is that they wanted to have it, that they believed in taste and intelligence, that they worshipped education, and that to them an artist or a professor was not a suspect high-brow, but someone more admirable than themselves. In England this is not the case. Our posters reflect confusion about our war-aims, suspicion about our artists, and ignorance about our public.

Posters in wartime are of extreme importance. They clarify opinion and crystallize feeling, they are the leading articles which nobody can skip. At present none of ours come up to the standard of Guinness or Shell, nor will they until our artists are encouraged to put all their inspiration into a statement of what we are fighting for. If the Ministry of Information does not provide that encouragement it could be given by competitions organized by the *Daily Express* or *Picture Post*. An Elizabethan called war the 'Great Corrector of Enormous Times'. We all know the times are enormous, we can correct them ourselves, if we have the courage and lucidity to perfect the aims which will unite and seduce, or we can drift along until they are corrected for us.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE AIR RAID ACROSS THE BAY

Above the dead flat plane of sea
And watching rocks of coast,
Across the bay, the high
Searchlights push to the centre of sky
Rubbing white rules through dull lead,
Projecting enormous phantom
Masts with swaying derricks,
Sliding triangles and parallels
Upon the abased wasted distances.

But through the shifting luminous figures
A black ragged horizontal sound
Moves, trailed by one distraught beam.

A thudding falls from remote cones
And pink sequins wink from a gauze screen.

Seeds of killing drop on cells of sleep
Which hug these promontories like little shells.

Fingers pick away
Human minds from human brains.

O man-made and inhuman god,
The shining ladders slant
Up to your heaven packed with more
Evil invention than all holy wisdom
Accumulated in history.
Your infatuated dervishes try
To tear out of each others' entrails
The bread and gold which mocking lie
All round them in the pregnant peaceful fields
And loaded under rocks.