

because private property, with its sequel of idle parasitism and poverty, has been abolished there, all property being held subject to the public welfare, whilst trade unionism, though enormously more general and powerful than in England or America, is part of the state machinery and admits of no dictatorship so absolute as that of an English trade union secretary. Here, then, was the real and overwhelming case for Mr. Haldane and Mr. Cockburn. It was simply not mentioned in the House; and the War Cabinet had the debate all its own way.

It would have been far more sensible to suppress the *Times* and all the other papers which have for years carried on, and are still carrying on, a campaign of insult, calumny, and clamor for capitalist united front against Bolshevism. But that is not how adult suffrage works. We should be only too thankful that Messrs. Haldane, Montagu, and Cockburn have not been shot, as they would be if the War Cabinet could possibly be as stupid and ignorant in high politics as the majority of its constituents.

S. O. Davies, MP

My agreement or disagreement with the war policy of the *Daily Worker* is as immaterial as my reactions to the war policy of the big imperialistic daily newspapers. I listened anxiously to Mr. Herbert Morison's speech in the House of Commons. With others I waited in vain for any evidence he could submit in justification of his unprecedented action. Apparently he seemed content with treating the House of Commons with contempt, and in exploiting its prejudices—all to the accompaniment of a barrage of cheap and reckless vituperation. Frankly, I must confess that I have never heard such an amazingly irresponsible statement made by any Minister of the Crown on a matter of such grave and vital importance. The Home Secretary in the short space of about forty-five minutes, in a speech he will never live down, completely and devastatingly gave the lie to all the protestations of the government that this is a war for freedom and democracy.

A subsequent perusal of Hansard has not allayed my misgivings and alarm. I have honestly sought for some concrete reasons, or some arguable grounds, that might have remotely justified this extraordinarily dangerous and unique action on the part of a Labor Home Secretary. In this I have failed, and have been forced to the following conclusions:

(1) That the suppression of the *Daily Worker* is a deliberate suppression of opinion, the freedom of thought, and its expression.

(2) The Home Secretary's admission that the *Daily Worker* had done no harm, and that he suppressed it in case it might do harm, revealed an attitude far more akin to fascism than to democracy.

(3) His refusal to proceed against the paper under 2C instead of 2D was obviously an act of pure malice. To plead, on the one hand, that the procedure under the former was too slow and, on the other hand, to admit that his

office had carefully watched the *Worker* during the last seventeen months, must be accepted as providing no justification for betraying the assurances of his predecessor at the Home Office.

(4) Thanks to the Home Secretary's action, I, and many others, find it impossible to dissociate the suppression of the *Daily Worker* from the imposition of industrial conscription and the releasing of certain fascists from prison. These three events were so timed as to create the widespread conviction that they were closely interrelated.

(5) Like the capitalist press I am compelled to accept the logic of this suppression of unpopular views. Mr. Morison had not even delivered his speech in the Commons before the press had anticipated his next step. Headlines such as "Police to Act against Red Agitators" appeared; a slogan wide enough to rope in every honest trade unionist, and every enthusiast in the Labor movement.

(6) This act is tragically reminiscent of the destruction of liberty in Germany, Italy, and France. It therefore behooves us, at whatever personal cost, to guard our hard-earned liberties with the unshaken conviction that a war that is made the excuse to rob us of any of those liberties cannot be a war for freedom and democracy.

H. G. Wells

I think that the publication of matter likely to be of use to the enemy, either by giving information or undermining morale, could be and should be controllable at the place and



time of the attempt. It should be dealt with as a specific offense. I consider the complete suppression of any periodical expressing any point of view however uncongenial to me is altogether undesirable. The *Daily Worker* and *The Week* have been first attacked because they are provocative in manner and represent a minority point of view, but manifestly, so long as they do not offend in the particular matters I have stated, the groups they represent are as much entitled to the enjoyment of free speech and criticism as any others. Their case is obviously only the opening one in a campaign of unlimited press intimidation.

Lord Ponsonby

Morison's decision with regard to the *Daily Worker* is only the first step in the gradual suppression of all criticism of the government.

All who value the maintenance of civil liberties will support the representatives of the *Daily Worker* in their protest.

If the government is afraid of Communist propaganda they should surely know that by driving it underground they will certainly

strengthen it and draw to its support many who are not Communists.

It is interesting to note with what astuteness the onus for taking this objectionable step had been placed by the Tories on members of the Labor Party.

H. W. Nevinson

(Noted journalist and author)

As an old war correspondent I have been largely occupied in following the course of the war, and I have not studied the policy of the *Labor Monthly* or of the *Daily Worker*.

If the policy of both or either is in favor of "Revolutionary Defeatism," as has been represented by the government authorities and many papers, I heartily disagree with it, and I do not believe it would be supported by any but a very small minority of the British people. As a nation I am convinced we have no wish to fall under the control of Nazism as other fine and gallant peoples have fallen. I think we shall not submit to it even with the object of creating a further revolution in its place.

But as a journalist of fifty years' standing I much regret the suppression of the *Daily Worker* by summary action under a regulation which was agreed to only under a pledge that it would not be used except in case of invasion.

The government has broken its promise and dangerously infringed upon the freedom of the press, which is one of the liberties we are proud to uphold.

Sir Richard Acland, MP

If I am to comment on the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* you must allow me to state my views on the total position.

I think the *Daily Worker* criticism of government failures on the Home Front was, in general, extremely valuable. (I do not necessarily endorse all in detail.) But I think the *Daily Worker* attitude toward the war was wrong, and was based on a fundamentally wrong analysis of the total world situation. I am not 100 percent certain that regulations 2C and 94A were the best that could have been devised to protect a nation which overwhelmingly desires to go on with a war from those who would reduce its will to resist, but these regulations had been fully discussed with members of the House of Commons whose zeal for individual liberty is unquestionable, and they had not challenged these regulations. Therefore these regulations must be accepted. I am convinced myself that if the Home Secretary had taken individuals connected with the *Daily Worker* to court under these regulations they would have been convicted, not because our courts are corrupt, but because, in my view, the *Daily Worker* had offended against these regulations.

But it was wholly improper for the Home Secretary to proceed against the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* under 2D and 94B, which give the accused no chance of stating a case. That this has been done means that without

the suppression of one more newspaper, every editor is under the menace of secret "warnings" directed to the proprietors of his paper. It has often been said that it is important not only that justice should be done, but that it should seem to be done. It is equally important not merely that press criticism should be free from threat, but that it should be known to be free. This cannot now be the case since the *Daily Worker* episode.

In addition, this episode makes it far harder for me to convince those tempted to accept the Communist case that it is in fact old-fashioned and wrong.

Furthermore, it drives discontent underground, where it is far more dangerous than on the surface.

These things represent the real mischief of the government's action.

Sir Hugh Robertson

(Conductor Glasgow Orpheus Choir)

We hear much of this "glorious new world" for which we are fighting. I am all for a glorious new world, a world in which the

main pursuit of man will not be personal profit but public weal, a world in which no section of the public will be outcast, and haunted, as they are today, from the cradle to the grave; a world in which poverty and unemployment will be regarded as very nasty blots on our social escutcheon; a world in which the hoarders and monopolists will be saved against themselves and their inordinate vanity by expropriation; a world in which caste rule (which cannot be other than tyranny) will have disappeared; a world in which war (international brawling) will be as taboo as is street brawling today.

I look expectantly for signs of this glorious new world, and I am disappointed. Talk of it there is, but we had so much talk in 1914-18 that begin to be a little wary.

And now comes news of the suppression of the *Daily Worker*. Suppression! A dangerous road, my good friends!

Somehow I cannot bring myself to regard this particular case as a portent of the glorious new world. It seems to me more like a sign that the keepers of the rotten old world are determined to hold fast to that which they

possess, and are prepared to use all the old machinery that their prototypes used long ago against Thomas Paine and his *Rights of Man*.

Now, I do not always find myself in agreement with the *Daily Worker*, although it more often reflects my point of view than, say, the *London Times* or the *Daily Mail*. But why suppress minority opinion at all? The minority was right in the last war. The minority was right in the Boer War. The minority must, methinks, be right in every war, since war itself is madness. Thus do we always see, when sanity returns, how foolish we have been. We lick our sores, but we never learn. We think we have learned when we prepare another generation for the shambles.

Well, suppression is one of the bitter fruits of war. It is born of intolerance, as intolerance is born of fear. It is the antithesis of liberty. Wherefore, every liberty-loving citizen should be up and doing in defense of the *Daily Worker's* right to expression. And if this right is to be challenged by the powers that be, then that challenge should be made in open court. To contend otherwise is to admit that the Nazi method is right. I am sure it is wrong.



"Where the devil is she going now?"

—New Masses, Oct. 1940.



"The 'Daily Worker' and New Masses should be suspended."

—Dorothy Thompson in her column, June 11, 1941.