

to see such conduct as a fitting counterpart to the purity and intensity of his philosophical vision. István Mészáros referred, in his eloquent funeral tribute, to pregnant remarks Roy made when very ill towards the end of his life. Perhaps it may be excusable to offer a personal recollection from that time. In our last conversation, less than a week before his death, he spoke of the need of all 'to forgive', and when I asked what had to be forgiven he said 'each other's fallacies and shortcomings'. This is a moving utterance for a variety of reasons, some of them obvious enough. What seems to me most strangely affecting and revealing is the fact that the philosopher should have put errors of reasoning first in his enumeration.

In this extremity, as in all other circumstances of his life, Roy was true to the individual spirit within, the distinctive impulse that drove his thought and action. Integrity is too weak and moralistic a term for that achievement. It approaches much nearer to what should be called, in a phrase of one of his favourite poets, 'unity of being'. Those of whom anything like this might be said are exceptional human beings, and the world seems shoddier and more commonplace for Roy's passing. His memory will help us not just to endure its condition but to strive for the kinds of improvement to which he devoted his life.

Joseph McCarney

LETTER

Andrew Chitty's article 'On Humanitarian Bombing' (RP 96) was a welcome statement of opposition to the war against Yugoslavia, when so much of the mainstream press – most discredibly the *Guardian* – gave abject support to the bombing. However, I felt there were certain crucial omissions from the argument which weakened its impact.

1. The Labour Party. On a global scale Chitty is quite right to see it as primarily an American war. But we should not forget Liebknecht's slogan: 'The main enemy is at home.' Labour's support for the war (with carefully released rumours that Blair was being 'tougher' than Clinton) has shown, even more clearly than the government's domestic measures, a clear break with even the most minimal socialist principles. Now that the war is over this leaves some very serious questions about the future relationship of socialists to the Labour Party.

2. The anti-war movement. Chitty is right to note the defection to support of the war by a few well-known figures on the Left, but quite wrong to be so pessimistic about the general level of opposition to the war. For the *Guardian* it was quite simple: refuse to report anti-war meetings and demonstrations – even debates where *Guardian* writers participated – and then deny the existence of an anti-war movement. In fact a broad movement – from Bruce Kent to Tony Benn, Liz Davies to Jeremy Hardy – did exist. Hundreds of local meetings, in colleges, hospitals and other workplaces, and on council estates, did take place. As one who took part in the first demonstration in Britain against the bombing of North Vietnam in 1965, I recall it took over two years to build a significant movement

against the Vietnam War. Within the short space of the war against Yugoslavia, the movement advanced far more rapidly.

3. The working class. Chitty neatly deconstructs the question 'what would you do?' as meaning 'what ought the US government to do?', a question we should obviously reject. But deconstruction alone leaves us in a postmodernist void. Does the plural 'you' have any meaning beyond the aggregated moral choices of isolated individuals; is there a collective subject? Of course there is no simple sloganizing answer to this. 'Serb and Albanian workers unite!' has no immediate resonance in today's Kosovo, even though, objectively, working people from both communities have more in common with each other than either has with Milosevic or the puppet leaders of the KLA. But such unity is not impossible.

This is not just abstract rhetoric. Many *Radical Philosophy* readers are teachers in higher education. So it is worth mentioning that the NATFHE annual conference passed resolutions against the war by large majorities. Such resolutions provided a basis for launching the debate within colleges and an encouragement to members of other unions to do the same. Hence the question 'what would you do?' does offer the possibility of an answer couched in collective terms. If *Radical Philosophy* is to deserve that part of its subtitle which proclaims it a 'journal of socialist philosophy' it must address this issue systematically. Otherwise it will be no more than a collection of interesting articles, occasionally prefixed by a worthy statement on contemporary issues.

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