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# Freedom

AN ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

"Politics is only in a slight degree the product of conscious reason."

—Graham Wallas

## The Great Powers Decide in Washington and Moscow, but— WHAT ABOUT THE KOREANS?

### The Common Struggle Against All Tyrannies Remains the Same

1938 in Paris, during a trial blackout, an old man killed himself. He thought war had already broken out and left a note saying that he couldn't stand to go through it all again. That is what, in greater or lesser degree, the threat of renewed war does to anyone. But it doesn't prevent the newspapers from exploiting international clashes and exploiting men's anxiety about their consequences. Over Korea Reynolds News cried: "It needs only Russia to come in and succour the North—and anything could happen." Even the *Tribune*, a weekly, found it necessary to write, sensationally, "Into many minds flashed the question: 'Is this the start of the Third World War?' In these matters the Socialist press is as venal as the right wing papers.

The war in Korea raises many questions of the utmost importance, and it behoves us, as anarchists, to try and define these questions in their true perspective, and to keep clear of the prevailing hysteria and theories of expediency. To maintain such an attitude is not easy because facts are few, bias is all night universal, and the propaganda of the cold war has already done much to direct public feelings into convenient channels for the main antagonists. So that objectivity is almost impossible. Nevertheless we can arrive at certain general principles with fair confidence, and achieve a reasonably stable general opinion.

#### HIRING A BATTLEFIELD

First of all, it is only too clear that the Korean struggle is yet another aspect of the world struggle between Russia and America. The governments of North and South Korea are mere puppets of these two great powers. As if to drive the lesson home, the U.S. government has announced its intention of defending Formosa from any attack by the Chinese Communists, thereby practically annexing it as an American sphere of influence.

As in the old days of the League of Nations, the press is full of "legal" justification based on U.N.O. On both sides these legality shows are based on a different version of the facts, each saying that the other puppet attacked first. Other commentators go somewhat further back; in 1948 the Russian army of occupation was withdrawn, but not the war equipment; the visit of John Foster Dulles to Seoul a week before the fighting began, and his speeches afterwards indicated American intentions

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In effect, we are witnessing the great powers hiring out the territory of a backward, divided puppet as a battlefield, fighting behind other men's lives. It is not the first time we have seen this pattern.

For us, as anarchists, there remains the question—what about the Koreans? In the context of the cold war, such a question appears almost an irrelevancy! We shall come back to it; for the moment it is necessary to point out that it is—

purely academic. In Korea to-day, it is not what the Koreans want; the decisions are not made on either side of the thirty-eighth parallel, but thousands of miles away in Washington and Moscow. Propaganda cries about the aspirations of a people, or the establishment

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### The Thaw Sets In What a Relief for the T.U.C.!

THE T.U.C., like the middle classes, must be very grateful to the Government for lifting so many controls and de-ratting so many goods recently.

The Government's motives in doing this (destroying the basis for the main Conservative criticism in preparation for the next election, for one thing) we have already discussed, but for the T.U.C. it provides a wonderful excuse for getting out of a very awkward situation.

The wage-freeze policy has proved a very uncomfortable saddle for the old horse to wear. Not that it doesn't believe in saddles—or reins—or blinkers, but because its own internal troubles made it difficult to keep the saddle firmly in position.

#### Workers Never Liked It

The wage-freeze was accepted by the T.U.C. by a narrow majority of union leaders; it was never completely accepted by the workers. The rank and file, however, have shown a considerable degree of restraint, showing that the workers, when they believe the well-being of the community is at stake, do not follow the

"every man for himself" policy which distinguishes their employers.

When Trade Unions accepted the wage-freeze, it was on the understanding that every effort would be made to freeze prices and profits. We pointed out at the time how unlikely it was that restraint of this kind could be expected. Deviation, for example, had been prophesied to raise prices in the Spring, and there is simply no means short of Government edict to limit profits—and the Labour Cabinet are wooing the middle classes so hard they would be loath to introduce measures against profits which would obviously be unpopular with the bourgeoisie.

It could never be said, however, that the workers liked the wage-freeze, in spite of their patience. Loyalty to the Labour Government and the specious arguments of its spokesmen and their union leaders sold them the idea that "the country couldn't afford" wage increases, but the steady rise of prices forced many of the lower-paid workers to a struggle to make ends meet that could only result in continuous distress—or wage demands. And although the unions have done their best to keep the brakes on, many groups of workers have forced the issue and won increases.

Couple this with the knowledge that, thanks to their efforts in increasing production, those who live on the profits from their labours are doing very well, and the present growth of unrest—the end of the patient period—is easily understood.

#### De-Ratting a Fine Excuse

In these circumstances, the T.U.C. were quite obviously beginning to feel more and more uneasy. They realised they could not much longer hold on to the wage-freeze however much the Government might continue to demand it. When, therefore, the recent wave of de-ratting came, it presented the union bosses with just the excuse they needed, and they have now declared the wage-freeze ended—but with stern warnings against "wages scrambles".

Appealing to individual unions to show "good sense and reasonableness" in the claims, the General Council will set up a special panel of its Economic Committee to "vet" wage claims in regard to the national economy as a whole.

The whole period has been a very interesting one. It has shown us very clearly how, in the running of a capitalist State, so-called Socialists and Trade Unionists are forced to maintain and even intensify the exploitation of the workers. For, of course, that exploitation is the basis of capitalist society. It is an absolutely inescapable necessity for the running of the State, and it makes no difference at all whether industry is nationalised or private—in fact the Welfare State itself may well call for greater exploitation, since all its cumbersome machinery has to be paid for by the efforts of the proportionately smaller number of productive workers.

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P.S.

## IMPRESSIONS OF GERMANY—I

ON my return from Germany I happened to read a rather familiar sounding speech—a former U.S. Ambassador to London (Mr. J. D. Davis) pontificated as follows:—

"I have been going through London this past week and surveying the devastation that it suffered. How, I asked myself, did these people stand all this and endure it took something more... than the proverbial British phlegm. No, it was the 'art of hoping'—of hoping that the day would surely come when wrong would be punished and avenged, when right would triumph and prevail." (*News-Chronicle*, 27/6/50).

We have heard it so often that we have come to believe it. But our ruins fade into insignificance when one has seen the cities of Germany, the great gaps of rubble still uncleared

that testify to night after night of bombing with nothing whatever to hope for. I do not know if there still remains anyone who still remembers that curious wartime phrase "pin-point bombing". It certainly does not mean that only military points were hit. Streets and streets of ruined houses—the marks still remaining where people were burned alive escaping from their cellars on to the burning asphalt—the obvious marks of newness in all the rows and rows of (often jerry-built) houses and shops—all testify mutely to wholesale annihilation.

But whether it is my cynicism or proof of an odd military-trade-unionism I have often suspected (witness Montgomery's wartime lunch with Von Arnim, the post-humous glorification of Rommel, or the rush to defend Manstein), there is one thing that impresses me. The military barracks stand! In most cases these have, of course, when not used by the Occupation Forces, been converted into factories, offices, etc., but it stands out with force how so many barracks were left almost untouched in a wilderness of rubble. It is generally known, of course, that churches were spared—it was all right to bomb, blast, burn and suffocate the parishioners, but the places of worship were sacred. Most old churches are obvious landmarks, and the rubble goes up to but not beyond their portals. Christianity is an odd creed!

By one of those odd coincidences, too, the concentration camps were also spared, and likewise escaped damage in the midst of ruins; although in the case of France one prison wall was breached to allow prisoners to escape, it was never deemed necessary to liberate the inmates of Buchenwald and Dachau. My strongest

impression of Germany is seeing a police barracks standing firm, in the same condition as it was used by the Nazis, in the middle of a town full of rubble and new houses.

#### Militarism

Some visitors to Germany have spoken of their "disillusion" with Germany and the fact that they found the Germans were still militaristic. My impression is that the people who still have illusions to lose are those who tagged along with support of the war and believed that the Western Imperialists and their then Ally would bring democracy to the Germans. A fact which they often managed to reconcile with the inverted Hitlerite race myth about the traditionally guilty Germans.

It is hard to imagine why they think Germany should not be militaristic, when countries with so much less military tradition are well in the forefront of the coming war. Those who previously rated the Germans for their blind acceptance of militarism are now scolding them for not being more alert to the menace of "black fascism" as the Bonn Government is called, or "red fascism" as the Eastern Zone Government is called. There is no doubt that militaristic ideas are still strong although in many walks of life and among the most diverse political tendencies I found support for a proposition I have also heard in England but which is not to be thought of as practical even by rationalistic standards—why do not Germany and England ever come together? The idea that they should owes a bit to the belief in the Anglo-Saxon origins of England which were plugged by German schools for years (that evidently stopped short at the Norman Conquest, which nobody who talked about Anglo-Saxons to me had ever heard of). But even so, most people are sick of war and even those who talk about the two "Germanic" nations coming together usually suggest that "America and Russia should be left to fight it out together," an idea which is naturally tempting to

**NORTH EAST LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP**  
**MALATESTA MEETING**

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A meeting to commemorate the life and work of  
**ERRICO MALATESTA**  
will be held at the  
**TRADE UNION CLUB, Great Newport Street, W.C.2**  
(near Leicester Square Station)  
on **SUNDAY, JULY 23rd, at 7.30 p.m.**

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Speakers include:  
**S. CORIO MAT KAVANAGH JOHN HEWETSON**





