

## CHAPTER XLVIII

BERTRAND RUSSELL—ALTERNATIVE SERVICE CAMPS—THE GLASGOW  
WOMEN'S PEACE CRUSADE

"WHAT was the end of the War?" asked Shackleton's marooned men when he arrived to free them from their rice-bound captivity on Elephant Island.<sup>1</sup> They had been in the Far North, removed from all news of civilised communities, since they left England two years before. "It sounds like madness!" was their comment on his forty-hour-long account of the great "war to end war," as men called it then.

Numbers of Conscientious Objectors were being turned adrift, "on furlough," as it was termed, pending the hearing of their appeals to the Tribunals. Unable to secure employment, many found this respite a more difficult ordeal than imprisonment. No doubt it was so intended. Economic pressure oftentimes bends the will which persecution cannot break. Collections were taken to assist those who were destitute, but the aid they received was small.

Some who had passed this stage were concentrated under the Home Office scheme in camps where conditions were often so bad as to cause an excessive rate of illness and even death.

Walter Roberts, a young architect, only twenty years of age when called up, died on September 8th, 1916, at the Dyce Camp near Aberdeen. The Objectors in this camp, as in others, had elected a committee to represent them which was recognised by the Home Office. This "Men's Committee" attributed the death to housing in leaky tents, insufficient and unsuitable food, inadequate and tardy medical attention, above all for men worn by imprisonment and working ten hours a day in the granite quarries, and total lack of equipment for the care of the sick. Such evils were common. At Red Roses Camp, Whiteland, Carmarthenshire, another C.O.'s settlement under the scheme, a severe outbreak of influenza occurred. One of the inmates, Alec Peddieson, was sick nurse to the others. He appealed, in vain, for trained nursing and improved diet for the patients. Peddieson struggled on till himself overcome by the disease. He and two other C.O.'s died during the epidemic. In this camp there were no sanitary facilities and water had to be carried a quarter of a mile. The sleeping cubicles, each of which had bunks for four men, measured only 7½ by 9½ feet.

W. Firth of Norwich accepted alternative service after nine months' imprisonment, owing to ill-health. At Princetown Camp he was treated

<sup>1</sup> August 30th, 1916.

as a malingerer, put to work in the quarry, and told he was "selfish" to complain of the cold. The week before he died he was given cod liver oil, the only medicine he received. His illness was only admitted the day before he died, but even then his comrades' request to telegraph for his wife was refused. An inquest was held and the cause of death disclosed as diabetes. His comrades, seven hundred men, struck work on the day of his funeral. The ringleaders, C. H. Norman and I. P. Hughes, were sent back to prison as a punishment.

The work done in these penal settlements was in the main valueless. E. B. Ludlam, D.Sc., accepted work under the Scheme in 1918 and was sent to Princetown. With fifteen other men he dug a field for oats, three weeks being spent in this work, which he estimated a man with a horse and plough could have done in a day. He and others spent five weeks in digging a huge field. The soil was poor, much manure was applied. He estimated that turnips grown there would cost 9d. each, and that £1,000 had been spent on the work, which a farmer would have done for £60. He volunteered for heaviest labour at the gas works, stoking the retorts, because he had a knowledge of chemistry and experience of gas works. He saw that the ammonia from the gas was all wasted, though sulphate of ammonia cost £20 per ton, and was actually used on the prison farm for manure. He was not permitted to help at the gas works. A grammar school, lacking a science master, applied for his services; but the Home Office refused to sanction such employment. Ludlam refused to remain at Princetown, as he considered the Home Office Scheme "dishonest." He was sent back to Wandsworth Prison and was still there in 1919, after the Armistice had been declared.

The tortures devised for Objectors did not decrease as the War progressed. Long after hostilities had ended their martyrdom continued. At the end of 1918, 3,500 of them were still in penal settlements and 1,500 in prison. Cecil Templeman, a lad who only reached military age in the later part of 1918, was forcibly dressed in khaki at Hounslow Barracks. He tore it off and was then put out in the prison yard in his shirt only. He wrote: "... A road a few yards away (public)—and people expressing amazement! I've no boots, so the wet ground won't do me any good." Thereafter he was kept in handcuffs and twice daily the uniform he could no longer remove was stripped off, and he was put out in the yard from 5.30 to 9 a.m. and 4.30 to 6 p.m. Finally he collapsed with pneumonia. His family was sent for, his death being expected. A few days later the crisis of his illness was surmounted; he was sent back to Sittingbourne, where he had been thus exposed, and put to sleep in a guardroom without bed, seat, or fire. Naturally he fell ill again.

The No Conscription Fellowship reported that in March 1917, at 11 p.m., an officer and a corporal came to the bed of Philip Key and three times stabbed him with a bayonet. At Cleethorpes Camp, in June 1917, James Brightmore was put in a pit ten feet deep with water at the bottom. For four days he stood in mud and water, then was given two strips of wood three inches wide and eleven inches apart to stand on. He was told that



five of his friends from the same camp had been shot in France, and that he was to go with the next draft. Jack Grey, after serving a sentence in Wormwood Scrubbs Prison, was removed to Hornsea Camp in May 1917. He was beaten and bullied. A live bomb was thrown at his feet. Soft soap was rubbed into his eyes. He was flung into a filthy pond containing sewage, eight or nine times in succession and dragged out by a rope tied tightly round his abdomen. Eight soldiers refused to obey orders to take part in this brutality.

The long-drawn sufferings of the C.O.'s reacted upon their families. Elderly parents lacking their aid and sustenance, tortured by anxiety, cast down by the obliquy heaped upon them, in many cases succumbed. James, Tom, and Peter Allen, after more than two years' imprisonment, were released to attend their mother's funeral in October 1918, and again to attend their sister's funeral in November. When their leave expired they were all too ill to return. Tom and Peter Allen both died within the week. Seven hundred people living near them petitioned for James Allen's release, but he was taken back to prison.

When Percy Brooks had been nearly two and a half years in prison, his father lost his reason, borne down with the sorrow of knowing that Percy, who had contracted serious lung trouble, was hunger-striking in prison, whilst another son had been sent with the Army of Occupation into Germany, and a third had been discharged from the Army suffering from neurasthenia. In 1919 A. A. Tippet was pleading vainly to be released from Princetown Gaol. His young wife had died, leaving a baby, his mother had recently become a widow.

Arthur Butler who was holding a scholarship from Stockport Grammar School was classed A1 physically fit on the highest scale in July 1916. He died of lung trouble in Bristol Gaol in May 1917. Arthur Horton of Manchester, also classed A1 when arrested in 1916, died fourteen months later in Shrewsbury Prison from "natural causes following pneumonia." He had long complained of hunger in prison. A Conscientious Objector in Wormwood Scrubbs wrote to a friend in August 1916: "Food has grown rapidly worse these last few weeks. . . . We cannot rest or sleep for want of food." The men protested that they did not get even the poor ration allowed to prisoners in war time. Sometimes they demanded that the food should be weighed, and received a considerable increase. Some hunger-struck at last, in protest against their treatment. They were forcibly fed and W. E. Burns of Failsworth died of pneumonia caused by cocoa entering the lungs from the stomach tube used during this repulsive proceeding. Poor lads! only those who have endured such loathsome prison experiences can conceive their misery. Towards them greater indignities, harsher brutalities were employed than even towards the poor half-witted criminals for whom such treatment is usually reserved!

There were a few suicides amongst these tortured sufferers. One who had already served a term of imprisonment broke down under the pressure of a subsequent court martial and agreed to become a soldier; then, in remorse, killed himself in the guardroom, by cutting his throat with a razor.

No record was kept by the Tribunals of the men who came before them on conscientious grounds. The Conscientious Objectors' Information Bureau<sup>1</sup> compiled the following estimate of men who refused to take part in the War:

Men who resisted the Military Service Acts and were arrested	6,261
Pelham Committee men	3,964
Members of Friends' Ambulance Unit	1,200
Members of War Victims Relief	200
Objectors who accepted work under Tribunals	900
Members of Non-Combatant Corps	3,300
Objectors who joined the Royal Army Medical Corps	100
Objectors who evaded the Acts	175 <sup>2</sup>
	<hr/> 16,100

<sup>1</sup> *Conscription and Conscience*, by John W. Graham, M.A. (George Allen and Unwin, London).

<sup>2</sup> Probably an underestimate as many of these men were not in touch with the N.C.F.



Bertrand Russell, the distinguished mathematician and philosopher, was the most notable protagonist of the Conscientious Objectors, and a regular contributor to their weekly organ, *The Tribunal*. In June 1916 he was fined £100 and costs, with the alternative of sixty-one days' imprisonment, for a leaflet on the case of Ernest Everett, a Conscientious Objector whom the military service tribunal had sentenced to two years' hard labour. Six men had been prosecuted for distributing the leaflet, and Russell had written to the *Times*, declaring himself its author.<sup>1</sup>

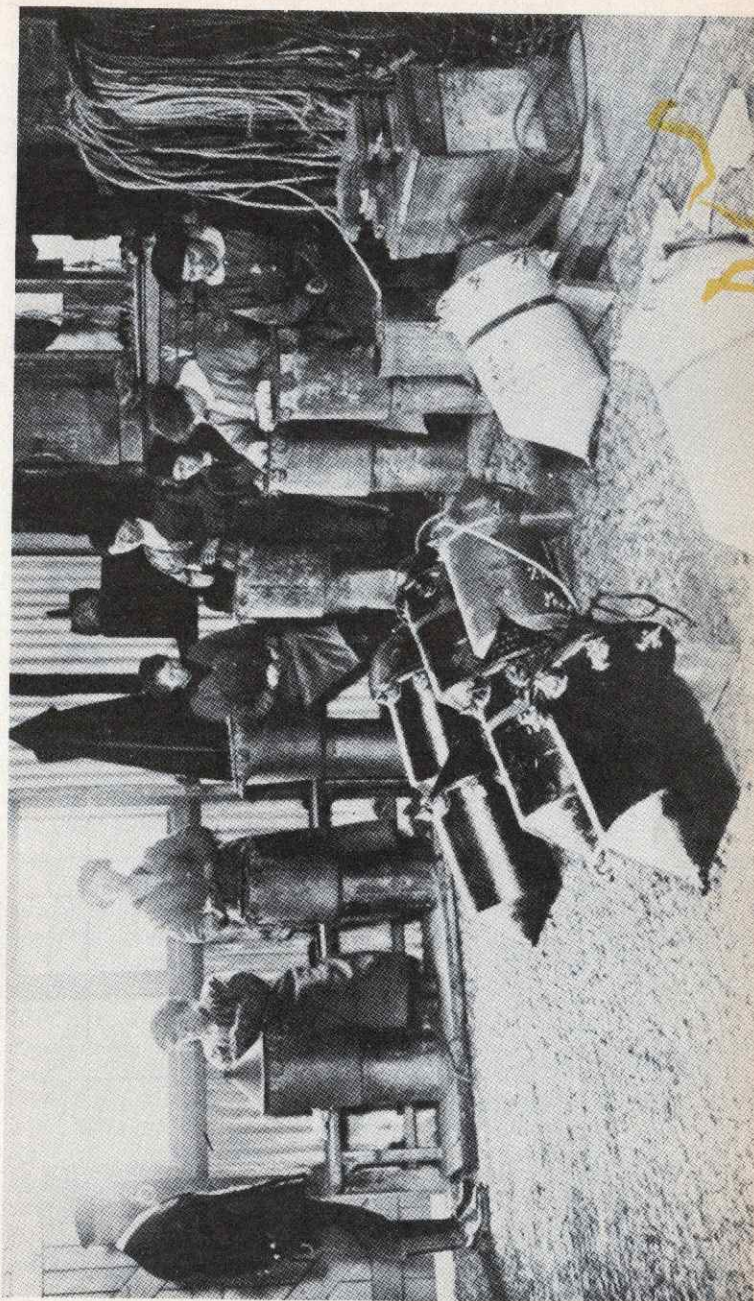
The neutral world was astonished to learn that Trinity College, Cambridge, had in consequence deprived him of his lectureship there, which to scholars and thinkers all the world over had appeared the glory of the Cambridge of that day. It was recalled, of course, that Edward Carpenter had also been dismissed by Trinity for his lack of orthodoxy, and had been glad to escape to a freer atmosphere. It was remembered that Shelley and Hogge had been expelled from Oxford. In short, the reflection was made that the old British Universities had long been obsequious in their respect for vested interests and constituted authority, and had too often persecuted the spirit of independent enquiry.

The American University of Harvard immediately invited Russell to become a lecturer there; but on his acceptance, the British Government refused to permit him to leave the country to take up his duties at the University. When Arthur Ponsonby protested in the Commons, Robert Cecil replied that it would not be "in the public interest" to issue a passport to Bertrand Russell. Russell's income was substantially reduced by the loss of his lectureship; but his announcement that he would now lecture up and down the country to earn a living was doubtless inspired rather by propaganda motives than by financial stress. The Government retorted by serving on him a notice forbidding him to enter any prohibited area, "now or hereafter," except with its written permission. The War Office presently objected to his proposed lecture subjects: "The Sphere of Compulsion in Good Government" and "The Limits of Allegiance to the State." He was refused permission to enter Glasgow to deliver a course of lectures there, on the ground that his propaganda would be prejudicial to the manning of the Army. The Lord Provost of Glasgow presided at a meeting of protest whereat Robert Smillie read the lecture Bertrand Russell had intended to deliver. Later in the War<sup>2</sup> Russell served six months' imprisonment for an article in the *Tribunal*. He gained a meed of adoration from devotees of Science, who saw in him the one Englishman of great academic eminence who had maintained an open stand against the War.

Romain Rolland, the notable French writer and Professor of the History of Art at the Sorbonne, another lonely beacon amongst the eminent men of Europe, was admired by the growing band of pacifists for his war-time articles in the Swiss *Journal de Genève*, his essays "Au dessus de la Mêlée" and his pre-war novel "Jean-Christophe," to the international spirit of which he had remained true.

<sup>1</sup> His goods were distrained to pay the fine.

<sup>2</sup> January 3rd, 1918.



Algeria

FOR THE NAVY





Alfred

NETTING MINES FOR THE NAVY

A "Women's Peace Crusade" was started in Glasgow during the summer of 1916 and evoked great enthusiasm and zeal. Helen Crawford, a Suffragette, and Agnes Dollan were its most prominent leaders. P. J. Dollan, the husband of the latter, was an I.L.P. City Councillor. For some time past he had sent me weekly "Scottish Notes" for the *Dreadnought*. A tall, lively, enthusiastic Scot, with a great mop of long curls, such as Socialist Scotsmen frequently carried, he was presently clapped into prison as a Conscientious Objector. All the other members of the Corporation of military age were exempted because of their office. Dollan might have accepted the same loophole; he preferred to take an open stand against the war as a Conscientious Objector, knowing that on this account exemption would be refused. Like James Maxton and other Socialist Objectors, he and his wife and boy had much to suffer. He was to be elected to Parliament in recognition of his courage later on.

Anti-war feeling was by no means confined to sophisticated intellectuals. One found it perhaps most firmly rooted amongst the simple, unlettered people of rural areas. In the tiny, small-paned windows of country cottages cards with red crosses indicated that a member of the household was fighting at the Front. On the parlour walls, among the flower-illuminated cards bearing scriptural texts, and the faded pictures of parents and grandparents, were photographs of soldier sons and husbands, and cheap magazine colour-prints of khaki heroes. Yet the talk in the cottages was not of victory, but of grief and bereavement, scarcity and high prices—eggs at 2½d. each in summer time, bread at 9½d., 10½d., 10½d. per quartern. People said that the farmers dare not sell their wheat and hay except to the War Office, that bacon seized by the Government was going mouldy in the docks. Those who had relatives in the Channel seaports told heart-rending tales of the grievous return of vast numbers of wounded.

How Conscription and the D.O.R.A. were used against workers who held anti-war opinions, and how Labour leaders worked to nullify protest, was revealed by two striking cases, unctuously detailed to the Commons<sup>1</sup> by J. H. Thomas, the railwaymen's M.P., with great affectation of patriotism to impress the House—but an eye also to the gallery of popular approbation outside. Thomas already was boasting that he had "friends on the other side," among the railway directors, to wit; though he had not yet departed wholly from the ranks of democracy. He told that at Briton Ferry in South Wales a railway man and a steel smelter were imprisoned under the D.O.R.A. for distributing anti-war leaflets, and thereafter were dismissed by their employers. The steel-smelters immediately struck work, and thus procured the reinstatement of their man. The railwayman's fellow-workers, a more disciplined body, instead of acting on their own account, applied to their Union Executive to provide legal defence for their comrade against the D.O.R.A. charge. The Executive refused to grant their request. When the man was convicted and dismissed, his comrades, instead of striking immediately like the steel workers, applied to their Union Executive for permission to strike. The

<sup>1</sup> August 22nd.



Executive refused this permission, but promised to intercede with the President of the Board of Trade, who was also President of the Railway Executive, established by the Government when the railways were controlled. The dismissed man was induced by the Union Executive to make both a verbal and written apology and expression of contrition, and a pledge that "nothing of the kind" should occur again. After thus abjectly denying his convictions, the man was still refused reinstatement. When J. H. Thomas disclosed these incidents, the Government representative told him that if the man would join the Army and purge his offence by honourable service, his employers might consider taking him back to work for them at the close of the War. It was admitted that the fellow had been a good and efficient servant.

Just then we called a conference of East London Labour organisations to discuss the industrial and political position of women. Delegates came of such varied type as W. C. Anderson, the old pioneer Herbert Burrows, and the young disciple of the Webbs, G. D. H. Cole, then active in the National Guilds movement. Members of the Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee movement came also, attacking Cole as the exponent of a half-way-house proposal, who had stolen the ideology of De Leon and his S.L.P., and had attempted to wed it to the Fabian State Socialism of the Webbs.

The Trade Union Congress met that year in Birmingham. War opinion still dominated. An invitation was read from old Samuel Gompers, of the American Federation of Labour, to co-operate in holding an International Trade Union Congress at the same time and place as that of the plenipotentiaries who would be arranging the terms of peace. This very innocuous invitation was suspected of a pacifist innuendo and rejected amid a flood of jingo oratory. America was condemned, for, outwardly at least, she stood for peace still, and Gompers and the A.F. of L. with her. They were to show us an example of jingoism we had never reached when Wilson presently carried them into the world conflict, willy-nilly.

## CHAPTER XLIX

SIDNEY WEBB—THE SERVILE STATE—A FINER BRITAIN?

WHEN Parliament had risen for the autumn recess, the Home Office announced that in compliance with an instrument termed the Convention of Allied States, Russian subjects resident in this country would be conscribed, and given the choice of service in the British or Russian Armies.<sup>1</sup> There was no conscience clause for them, though in the main they were political refugees, and the majority of them Jews, amongst whom objection to war had for long been general, as Herbert Samuel, the Jew-in-Office, who was enforcing this provision, well knew. Already before the issue of the new regulations, he had begun the practice of deporting friendly aliens who were unwilling to enlist in the British Army.

Meanwhile terrible news was coming from Russia of anti-Jewish pogroms incited by police circulars. Tchenkeli had complained in the Duma that half a million Jews had been expelled from their homes by the military authorities, and driven from place to place, men, women, and children, the sick and the aged, trudging along the roads, or carried in the arms of their relatives. The Committee of Delegates of the Russian Socialist groups in London, and Abraham Bezael of the Russian Jews Protection Society, were active in their protests. Many poor people came to me from Whitechapel and Bethnal Green asking for aid in their trouble.

In September I was in smoky Sheffield to speak at a meeting there. I stayed with Mrs. M—, our branch secretary, a Yorkshire woman married to a Rumanian. She had emigrated to America with a former husband, and been left a widow there, with a baby, in a rough up-country station, among "foreigners," immigrants mainly from Central Europe. M—, who came forward to support her, had been welcomed as a necessity. Her little son of the first marriage was now a man, fending for himself. Another little fellow of three or four years was dependent on her now. It was she who maintained the large house by taking in boarders. M— had fallen from his position of protector, to a feeble old man, cut off from the hustling Yorkshire folk about them by his deficient English, and the prevailing contempt for foreigners, which in war turned to a smouldering suspicion, ready, without cause, to flame forth in violent hatred. The police harassed him continually, undecided

<sup>1</sup> A similar conscription of Italian and French subjects here took place later. The French Government decided not to interfere with the "friendly aliens" resident in France.