

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COMMENTARYNew York,
TuesdayTHE BEVERIDGE REPORT

The New York Herald Tribune commenting that the full text of Sir William Beveridge's report, which has now been published in America, makes interesting reading - as might have been expected - in many of its passages. The paper then states: After examining it it is easier to understand the excitement which the report has produced, not only in Britain, but among the Axis propagandists, who have been quick to see in it one of the deadliest documents from their own point of view yet to come out of the democratic countries. For it carries impressive evidence of the ability of democratic societies to envisage and construct that rational and ordered future which the totalitarians have for years been pretending that they alone could achieve.

Sir William makes very clear what it is that he is about. He is proposing the abolition of want which he says is by no means the only one of the great evils under which western society has suffered; there are also disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. Sir William rejects the idea, which has led on so many proponents of social insurance schemes, that the provision of money benefits to meet the problems of want will automatically eliminate these other evils; he holds that the precise opposite is true and that only if the social system can avert mass unemployment, provide a comprehensive service for the prevention and cure of disease, as well as mass education to reduce ignorance and squalor, will it be possible for a security system to eliminate want. But given a reasonably successful attack on these other problems, then Sir William insists it is possible to eliminate want in post-war Britain and it is to that one clearly conceived end that his proposals are designed.

It is economically possible. In the Britain of the thirties "want could have been abolished by a redistribution of income within the wage earning classes alone without touching any of the wealthier classes". Since 1900, despite the first war and the depression, Britain has experienced a marked general rise in the standard of living and the fact that a core of want and destitution still remained means only that prosperity was not spread quite widely enough. To effect the necessary redistribution will not, the report holds, involve an excessive, or even an exceptionally heavy burden on the community as a whole. To accomplish it Sir William offers his plan, providing subsistence payments (at a flat rate and not as in the United States varying with earning power) to those unemployed, disabled or beyond retirement age. This would be a "national minimum" paid as a matter of right..... on such a plan the report finds want can be abolished in Britain if the British people wish to abolish it.

The objective is a thrilling one. But even more thrilling is the direct practical approach to social issues, with its promise of what democracy can do by using the intelligence and humane instrumentalities it possesses.

NAZIS HAVE CREATED "MOST TERRIBLE WINTER"

New York Times says: The most terrible winter that western man has known in modern times began this morning. What famine, flood, drought, pestilence and war have done to the Asiatic lands the Nazis are now doing to those lands, the cradle of the western culture, that lie between the Atlantic headlands and the Caspian.

Millions will die this winter because of this "New Order" that Hitler invented. Millions more will be warped and stunted. Millions of babies who might have come into the world will not be born. The Nazis are killing the best of Europe by incompetence, indifference and blackhearted murder. They have ruined an existing economic system and lack the ability to set up in its place anything that will work. They are deliberately killing whole populations, including, in every country, the wise, the generous and the brave whom they recognise as their natural enemies.

In the light of these frightful facts our much discussed "war aims" are simplified. They cannot be political, except as it is political to stamp out the Nazi flame and leave all peoples free to adopt any kind of government that does not threaten their neighbours' welfare. Primarily they must be humanitarian. Our troops in Africa and those which, sooner or later, will land in Europe are a rescue expedition. They will fight the Nazis as they might fight fire, flood or disease.

They will fight more single-mindedly because the cries of tortured victims reach them across the battle lines. If they have pity it will be for starving mothers and children, for prisoners, for helpless slaves, for innocent hostages waiting for the firing squad....

We fight.... to make certain that no such winter as this shall ever again curse mankind. There are just two sides to our battle, no middle ground and no possible compromise.

RUSSIA'S STRIKING POWER

The Washington Post says: The tremendous striking power which Russia still possesses after eighteen months of war is demonstrated by the scope and intensity of the new three-pronged offensive. In the Stalingrad sector the Russians have not yet managed to close the trap on a large German army. But the cost to the Nazis of maintaining this outpost on the Volga mounts daily. If the Red Army has not yet succeeded in liberating Stalingrad, it has certainly succeeded in punching a hole in Hitler's twice-repeated promise to the German people that the Volga metropolis would be taken.

Most important of all is the great Russian offensive in the Central Don sector, from Voronezh south..... Should this drive continue the entire German force in the Caucasus would be imperilled, with all avenues of escape barred, except the narrow passage across the Straits of Kerch to the Crimea.

UNITED NATIONS' WAR UNITY "MUST CONTINUE"

The Washington Post states:.....In our next relief venture in war-torn countries the task must be undertaken by the United Nations in common and as yet there seems to be no United Nations' organization in sight. Yet nothing less would be consistent with our war aims. The winning of this war is going to be a continuous process in which the crushing of Japo-Hitlerism is only a preliminary. The attainment of our war aims thus requires the perpetuation in peacetime of the unity of the free world which has been created for the prosecution of the war. Reconstruction is the next job of the free world. And just as our armies will liberate Europe under the banner of the United Nations, so our relief must be delivered under the same banner.....

Obviously there must be more rehabilitation than relief in Mr. Lehman's assignment. He will have to facilitate a shift from war economies, set up new credit systems and generally help the stricken peoples to help themselves. For these necessary purposes all the brains, as well as resources, of the United Nations will be required.

Only by directing rehabilitation and relief in this manner can we cultivate and express our concern for the future ordering of the world. In our last venture relief was almost an alternative to such responsibility. In the next venture the relief will be a job of social engineering as a first exercise in political responsibility.

IMPORTANCE OF BURMA POSITION

San Francisco News comments that a lot depends on whether the Allied move into Western Burma is to capture the strategic Akyab airfield and seaplane base on Bengal Bay or to start the counter-offensive against Japan.

If a local operation, it may prevent an enemy invasion of India and provide an Allied advance bombing base against the Mandalay railroad. If a major offensive, it can be the turning point in the Pacific war. For Burma and China are the only land fronts against Japan and have the only land bases for bombing main Japanese supply lines and war industries.

MONTGOMERY V. ROMMEL

San Francisco Chronicle says: Rommel looks washed up in North Africa and a British general, Montgomery, has done it. A British crisis always throws up a lot of stuffed shirts and bad news. But it always has forced out one man who could do the job. For one job, one man. From a distance it looks as though Montgomery were the Haig or the Allenbury of this struggle.....

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION