

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Usually uninformed circles.

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U S U A L L Y U N I N F O R M E D C I R C L E S .
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What do people think now that there is time to think? There wasn't much time during the ~~RAYH~~ period of the great Blitz, when the nights were too noisy and the days too busy; when one was always fully occupied by just keeping alive and going, by moving the remnants of one's belongings from one bombed dwelling into another which might be bombed tomorrow; by "taking it", fighting it, and not asking any questions. The days of the great Blitz, horrible as they were, had certain advantages, both objective and subjective - from the viewpoint of "people".

The people were brave, proud, excited, united and mortally endangered - all of them, without any exception or differentiation. The rich were little better off than the poor; the intelligent not much wiser than the stupid. And as this unique "levelling" had been achieved, not by any rigid regimentation ~~THHH~~ within the country, but by the bombs of a foreign tyrant, there was nothing humiliating about it. On the contrary: everybody ~~was~~ somehow ^{found himself} ~~presented~~ with a clear conscience, all sorts of individual "sins" were being "paid for" in a generous way, life had become dignified and noble in the undreaded presence of death.

It had also become simple. The great and complex questions facing humanity today had had to yield to the small practical problems of the moment. Hardly anyone seemed to be concerned with the future, with the "day after". And even the world outside these bleeding islands had grown slightly unreal.

America - what did she plan? Was she going to help "us"? How far was she helping already? "We" didn't know - in fact, "we" didn't really care. Here "we" were, all alone in the midst of the battle; this was no time to look around and ahead; nothing counted but the moment which must be conquered and survived.

Things are different now. England is doing a great deal of thinking; and it is the people who think, no less than those in power.

I am a firm believer in "usually uninformed circles" whose thoughts and feelings are, to my mind, both, relevant and enlightening. An intelligent student, a physician, a girl driver, or a housewife may actually conceive the ^{general} situation more comprehensively than a politician who, specialized in his own field, his brains burdened with thousands of little pieces of "information", stands in front of an extremely complicated mosaic; the people see a simple picture. Even if this picture were a simplified one, it is what the people think which determines the course taken by any democracy, not only theoretically, but in reality. War was declared on September third, 1939, not because of anything Mr. Chamberlain thought ~~X~~ Mr. Roosevelt's chief advisor in everything he does or omits doing, is public opinion.

Where stands British public opinion today? How do the people feel with regard to the Anglo-Russian alliance? What do they expect, what do they hope for, from America? What are their general ideas concerning peace and ^{the} future?

At first the red nut was not too easily swallowed and digested by the average British subject and even a few weeks ago people, after having said "our Russian..." would take a deep breath, before completing

the term by adding the word "ally". By now, however, their gratitude for, and their surprised admiration of, an ally who is "actually fighting" have overshadowed all existing doubts concerning this fighting ally's particular political colour and creed. Comrade Stalin is being cheered in the news reels and my own hairdresser - devoted, though he is, to capitalism and his customers, the ruling classes - has assured me of his deep appreciation of the man who, after all, "must be a very great leader". This appreciation is quite general. In fact, people are utterly impressed by the Russian achievements and rather inclined to minimize "the few things we have done and gone through ourselves". The strange and attractive mixture of self-critical modesty and unapproachable haughtiness, always existing in the British character, becomes very evident with regard to "our" ~~relationship~~ relationship to the new ally.

"Russian propaganda" - so my friends assured me - "is putting us to shame!" Upon various detailed objections on my part they haughtily admitted that they ~~had~~ hardly ever listened to the stuff, but ^{had} taken its brilliancy for granted. "The Reds have always been grand at that sort of thing "they said" daring and powerful; shrewd and clever!"

I agreed that there was something very shrewd and clever in the way in which "Communism" as such had been eliminated from the programs of the Moscow radio and we let it go at that.

Russia - of this there is no doubt in any British mind - has already rendered a decisive service to the allied cause. She has checked Hitler, at least temporarily, and afflicted upon him grave losses in both, precious time and irreplaceable material. When victory is

achieved, Russia will have done her part in the struggle. Will she be an ally in peace, as well, as in war? ^{One must hope for it.} ~~It is to be hoped for.~~ People here are actually more eager for "peace-allies" than for "brothers in arms". "We have been fighting alone for a whole year" they will say, "and we could, indeed, we certainly would have kept on doing so. But we could not possibly settle things alone, on the 'day after'."

This is one of the great changes that have taken ~~HE~~ place since last fall: the 'day after' has become a major subject of discussion in all circles, whether "informed", or "uninformed". Two points stand out clearly in everybody's thoughts: 1.) that day will not dawn, before the German war-machine is completely destroyed. The danger that, after Hitler's fall, a peace might be concluded with the German military has vanished for ever. 2.) all will have been in vain, unless a lasting solution can be found ^{to} ~~of~~ the ² ~~problem~~ of peace. And people here are convinced that no such solution will be available without full international understanding and cooperation.

What does the man ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ the street expect and hope for, from America? Needless to say that ^{he} ~~that~~ expects and hopes for, what he has been promised: the tools to finish the job. However, he will ~~HHH~~ consider the job having been worthwhile only, if, ~~HHH~~ following its completion, the re-shaping of the world is undertaken with American participation. It is not so much for the purpose of winning this war that he should like the States to join Britain as a full fledged ally. "We'll win anyway, sooner or later." But he is wondering, whether America could possibly play the important part he wished her to play on the 'day after', unless she has fought.

"It's strange about Roosevelt," an intelligent young writer at the B.B.C. told me yesterday, "to us he is something like a big white chief in the big White House - somebody who knows and foresees things - somebody we marvel at and vaguely rely upon. But doesn't he know, don't his people know that this is their war as well as ours?" I said that they most assuredly did and that they were sending quite a lot of stuff, after all.

He realized this, of course, and implored me, not to misunderstand him. "We are extremely grateful!" he exclaimed - "honestly, we are! But we wish America to be represented at the conference table after the 'cease fire' - as an ally, with equal rights and equal shares, not as an arsenal to whom one owes thanks and money. We wish her President to become one of the main architects of the new building we'll have to live in - all of us. And we wish the American people to help us erect it, according to our common needs and designs. Is it ^{too} ~~im-~~ ^{much} modest to wish for that?"

I did not quite know.

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