

E. Brady

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PRINCIPAL, ROYAL COLLEGE

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How has the war affected (1) the Press; (2) the wireless system in your neighbourhood? Has it been a gain or a loss?

In these dim dark days of bloodshed, it is with profound sympathy that we, in this peaceful island of Ceylon which has not yet been threatened by the horrors of war, read the horrible accounts of human carnage, and listen to the pathetic tales of sorrow and destruction. As days glide by, and as time marches on, we do not halt for a moment, and think that this war affects us. The invisible cords of friendship and sympathy, are the solitary reminders of the world's greatest war. Vast continents and oceans lie between us, and our bombed fellowmen, but the piercing cry, hiding the noble appeal that it makes, on that dark wintry night, still re-echo^{es} in our ears.

Of all the Public bodies that are affected by this war, the Press, and the wireless system, suffer the most. Of the many hardships that the Press and wireless system have to bear, perhaps the hardest is the censoring of news. Ceylon and the East in general "is a whispering gallery where everything is known before it happens," and the censoring of news has spread around the country. The majority of the population being rural are ignorant of the importance of this step and therefore makes the burden still more heavier to the authorities.

The pre-war days when broad un-censored news-sheets in dark heavy type adorned every street corner have glided into the past, and now we stare at crammed articles of diplomatic rivalry, and read the pathetic but noble deeds of self sacrifice and of undaunted and inspiring deeds of courage, that take place in the blackened streets of English towns. From a loosely printed newspaper full of advertisements to a thickly set newspaper with its horrid

accounts of war news" — such is the harrowing tale of our war time Press.

Perhaps the most important war activity that our press does is its "War Funds Campaign." Articles studded with the words of our worthy Prime Minister and other patriots stress the importance of these funds and the purpose to which they are devoted. The sympathy of one and all have been stirred whether rich or poor —

Augusta J. Evans
Wilson.

"We may be poor, but we can be rich in sympathy."

This campaign is getting every ounce of public co-operation and now by the untiring efforts of our Press several "hurricanes" and "spitfires" built by money raised, through various means, hum in the ranks of the Empire forces.

This war has set new problems for us to solve, and has solved many of our local problems. The thrifty and economic housewife, no longer depends upon foreign supplies for her needs; she now uses the vast inland resources in fulfilling her culinary and household duties. By her action two purposes are helped — our local industries are encouraged, and she saves shipping space; a vital factor in the execution of this war. This thriftiness, and valuable foresight in such a dark hour like this, is due mainly to the guidance that the Press gives our housewives. The Press ~~is~~ is inspiring the island by their own examples and after this war we may be a nation of thrifty beings, and all this due to the war effects on the Press.

Ceylon like India, is a land which harbours many anti-British factions preaching gospels of hatred, and the censoring of news has been severely criticised by them. Raw materials are becoming scarce by the ever increasing prices at which they are sold and to avoid unnecessary waste. This too has been open to the innumerable attacks of loose tongued critics, babbling nonsense with the idea of stirring the people.

Newspapers are now associated mainly with the well to do classes; it is now confined to the clean, well polished

drawing rooms of our townsfolk. The mud hovel, among the verdant patchy fields, cannot boast of such a luxury under present war conditions. The villager has a heavier burden to carry than the well-to-do classes, as his slender purse has to answer the call of the household which at present has increased in its volume. Even the small sum of five cents, upsets that carefully planned ^{and well} budget of our ignorant country cousins.

There are many cheap ^{news-}papers run by various political parties degrading Britain's present policy, and their lack of foresight have been repeatedly emphasised by the Pro-British newspapers. Some of these ^{cheap} newspapers were begun mainly with a political background behind it; whilst others were begun with an idea of stirring discontent and dissatisfaction. They do not realise the responsibility they have in freedom of thought and speech, and by their actions they are insulting their own selves. The manner in which such national foes who have not yet been found guilty of insulting and violating British laws, alone frame the statement "wherever the British flag flies men say 'Here is justice.'" (The Ceylon)

Hall Caine

Of the many luxuries that a Ceylon home can boast of a wireless takes an honourable place. It is only to turn a switch and regulate a dial for one to listen to the well-known voice of the B.B.C. announcer read ^{ing} the news. Space has been conquered in the twinkling of an eye and no longer are we far distant from our bleeding comrades in ruined London or Coventry. Wireless, one of the many inventions that has baffled the world, is now put to the test of war, the test that has been handed to us from times immemorial.

Ceylon is as yet a new comer to the radio-sphere, and the war will only have a slight effect on our wireless system. The world has seen two years of bitter warfare and during these two years the broadcasting services have not been seriously affected. The transmission of signals by wireless and receiving of such signals, have been seriously affected

as codes have to be frequently renewed. The main receiving and transmitting station at Slakmane is the chief station in the island, every word coming through the machinery of that station to Colombo. So far the wireless system in Ceylon is going smoothly; but the war clouds on the Far Eastern horizon have not sunk into the past and so our wireless system is in eternal danger.

Wireless telegraphy has become a very fascinating hobby to many of our youngsters and the war has prevented them from keeping up this hobby which is of national importance. Wireless parts have risen to fancy prices and these prices are too large for their slender purses to bear. This war will have its reaction in years to come, when we may have to seek radio engineers from overseas; where as we could have got them from our own island. The Broadcasting station in Colombo is not well equipped, and if any serious breakdown should occur the wireless system may have to be temporarily abandoned; as wireless parts are scarce in the island. The revenue of the country has too been affected by the scarcity of wireless parts as several thousands of rupees worth of wireless goods [during pre-war times] yielding a good income have been reduced considerably.

News occupies a fair proportion of the time allotted for broadcasting and this news is not heavily censored, as the German controlled Lord How How news bulletins are censored. News broadcasts from London which was introduced during the early days when war clouds gathered over Europe are now a regular feature of our local station. The musical chimes of Big Ben are a common sound to us now even though several thousand miles of ether intervene. Whenever the Prime Minister or His Majesty the King speak over the microphone our local station relays a transmission. The war has therefore given us a very good opportunity of listening to the voices of our King and his statesmen encouraging us in our duties.

The wireless system warns and advises the public on important war duties such as air raid precautions and black outs and how to act in moments of peril when perhaps a bomber is swooning overhead. The war has affected the suburban areas round the broadcasting station and now the thud of heavy footsteps during the midnight on the gravelled footpaths are all in a day's work for the suburban dwellers who live near the broadcasting station.

This war has inflicted severe losses to all types of people, ranging from the man-in-the-street to the multi-millionaire in his Rolls Royce. The Press and the wireless systems and they too have been open to severe losses. The English Press and wireless systems are at present facing more dangers than we think of; our dangers and losses are small when compared with that of our English brothers. The piled up debris in Fleet-street, and perhaps the twisted aerial masts in Rugby, are a more pathetic sight to us, than the most pathetic sight in our own little island. Ceylon has not yet stepped to the stage of warfare, to act in before the vast audience of barbaric cruelty and unsympathetic devastation; she is behind the scenes more active there perhaps, than on the stage. "Man after centuries of civilization still keep some traits of their barbarian fathers."

R. L. Stevenson.

The Press ought to be thankful to the merchant navy, which protected by the battleships of the Royal Navy, bring in all the raw materials necessary for the printing of the newspaper. The Air-Force too help in the vigilant watch of keeping our coasts safe. The roar of the Catalinas gliding majestically over the silver sheen of our palm-lined coast, are common to those who live on our coastal stretch. By our own personal experience we feel that the statement: "never in the field of human conflict was so much saved by so many to so few" is justified.

Rt. Hon. Mr
Winston Churchill.

No, doubt ~~clouds~~ darkens our minds, in the question of whether the war affects are a gain or a loss? The war effects

are attacking the Press and wireless systems in a unbearable way, so therefore it is a loss. If our English brethren can bear death for the sake of their country and king, why cannot our Press and wireless system bear the trivial losses for a few years.

War! the word that can defy the ^{seeds} ~~fruits~~ that were sown since pre-historic times of good virtues which we call civilization, is a terrible monster whom many tried to combat but failed. In the mirrored halls of Versailles, in the quiet building by the serene feman that houses the League of Nations again and again our peace minded statesman have fought against him. "Blow the trumpets; beat the drums; bring along the car of victory, have a solemn Te Deum and then sit down and prepare for the next campaign," this has always been the outcome of these talks.

The world since pre-historic times have seen the martial conquerors tread on the ladder of fame. Alexander the great, Attila the Hun, Napoleon who believed that his place was on the sun; and now Hitler the Nazi have all risen to power by the influence of the first bloody victories in all their blood-stained lives. Napoleon when he stood on the golden sands of Calais and stared at the white stretch of coast land, cursed the English channel. Now Hitler with France conquered by the intrigues of her own statesmen curse this same channel.

This placid stretch of ocean, dotted with the white sails of frail fishing craft defeated Napoleon in his ideas of conquering Britain and now when Britain is open to more attacks from her invader, this same stretch of sea defeats him. This shows that all the barbaric fury of the Nazi war machine will fail in its ideas sooner or later.

England will never be defeated as this quotation says
"This England never will and never shall lie at the proud foot of a conqueror"

All the elements of fury, destruction and devastation

Sir Walter
Besant.

Shakespeare.

of the Nazi attacks on London have been repelled with a calmness that has shook the invader from his iron will. Now the tyrant's armies are fighting against the well trained, and united armies of Russia. Civilization and Freedom depend upon the result, and if the tyrant is defeated he will never rise from the grave that he himself dug.

Lord Byron.

"He who ascends ^{to} ~~the~~ mountain-tops shall find,
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow.
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below;
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread
Round him are icy rocks; and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led."
Such is the coming fate of Hitler.

Books referred to:-

Hornbairns Atlas - History of the second great war.

The War in Pictures [issued by the Ministry of Information
Colombo]

The Neptune.

The Illustrated.

Articles on the war from local newspapers.

Britain Today.

H. H. News letters.