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THE HUMANITY CRUSADERS

NOT FOR SELF—BUT FOR OTHERS

To promote Goodwill and Fellowship among all people
with a view to establishing the Universal Brotherhood

FOREWORD

The "HUMANITY CRUSADERS" represents that section of the Homeless and Destitute persons who have not yet "GIVEN IN" to adverse circumstances, and who are striving for better things. This expression of opinion and ideas, is given to the public in the hope that it will serve to stimulate thought and action to the end that all destitution shall be abolished.

Organised on a NON-POLITICAL, and NON-SECTARIAN basis, The Humanity Crusaders endeavour firstly to gain control of themselves, and then strive to enthuse others to do the same.

The main thesis upon which all their activities are based is as follows.

THAT ALL MEN HAVE AN EQUAL
RIGHT TO CITIZENSHIP, provided only that they are prepared to accept the Responsibilities of Citizenship.

The rights of citizenship include the free and easy access to food, clothing and shelter, enough to maintain the highest possible standard, plus the means of education and moral development.

All things produced being the result of labour, all men who consume, should necessarily be willing to perform some social service.

Whereas some men, though willing to work, become Homeless and Destitute because of unemployment, the greater responsibility lies upon the shoulders of those who deny them free access to the field of production.

Believing fundamentally that the best method of production is Voluntary Co-operation, the forming of groups through which the destitute can express themselves, and so prevent physical, moral, and mental decay, is a social necessity.

DESTITUTION

FROM THE DESTITUTES POINT OF VIEW

There are many and varied definitions of destitution, but from the point of view of a homeless and destitute person, there is only one.

A person may be considered to be homeless and destitute who has no home or temporary lodging, and no food or the means of procuring it.

It is necessary to declare our view of the qualifications of a destitute, because the official view is a different one from that held by us. The official view is, that a person must be a wanderer, without home or sustenance.

This view is brought out clearly in the late L.C.C. reports of the monthly nightly inspections. For Feb. 1934, it is reported that 24 men were found homeless and destitute. On this same night, the President of the Humanity Crusaders carrying out a personal night inspection, spoke to the L.C.C. night inspector, in the midst of over 200 men receiving relief from Lady Hanson at St. Georges Circus. Hundreds of men could also have been found at other places of refuge such as the S.O.S. shelter, and various mission halls.

Three hundred men were lined up for tea and bread in Trafalgar Square. From the official point of view, these men were not destitute because they were to a degree being fed, and were not homeless, because they had the opportunity to seek shelter in one of the places open for that purpose.

The Humanity Crusaders hold, that this official view is not only brutally inhuman, but is consistent with the ideas and thoughts of the present Poor Law administrators.

These officials have the responsibility of providing food and shelter for all needy persons, but fail in their duty for the following reasons;

1. The State casual wards are organised upon lines of imprisonment and punishment, so that the poor and homeless prefer the cold streets at night.

2. The Private charity organisations are unable to deal with the whole number who are in need.

Briefly, here follows a description of the actual working of these two forms of relief, together with the views of the destitute as to the remedies for these bad conditions.

The L.C.C. casual wards are nine in number, accommodating approximately nine hundred men. This space is not sufficient for all the homeless and destitute in London, should they all apply on the same night. The number of homeless

and destitute people in London, probably amounts to more than five thousand, instead of only about nine hundred. The appearance of these wards externally is one of solidity and defence. High brick walls, solid doors with grids, barbed wire, broken glass and iron spikes. The homeless man rings the bell; after a dignified wait, the official opens the door and the destitute enters. This burly official, complete with uniform and regalia of the nineteenth century, commences to recite the piece of poetry which, to the destitute, has become so monotonous. The applicant is warned that he will be detained, and put to work. He is searched and all his property taken from him, and anything found that has not already been declared is confiscated. All tobacco, cigarettes, matches, etc., are taken away, but restored to him on release, excepting in the case when an attempt has been made to smuggle in any of these articles. A complete record is taken of particulars relating to the applicant's history, description, mode of life and intentions.

He is then given a supper consisting of 1 pint of cocoa 8 ozs. bread and margarine.

He is then given a bath, and a clean nightshirt, and escorted to a cell. In his cell he finds a clean bed, pillow and blankets.

He is locked in at night. He is aroused at 5 a.m., and given 1 pint of tea, and 8 ozs. of bread and margarine. He is then kept idle until 7.30 a.m. when he is given his eight hours task. This might be any of the following duties; wood sawing, chopping, or bundling, digging ground, pumping water, scrubbing or cleaning, stoking fires, or any lawful task imposed by this official. At noon, he will be given an hours rest and dinner. The dinner, (for every day of the year) is 8ozs of bread 2 ozs of cheese, 2 ozs of bully beef, and 4 ozs of potatoes. (a portion of another vegetable is prescribed, but not uniformly granted.) At 4.30 p.m., a supper is given, consisting of 1 pint of cocoa, and 8 ozs of bread and margarine. By 5.30 p.m. all are safely tucked in bed in their own little cells, waiting for the dreary hours to pass, so that they might rise at 5 a.m. next morning to continue the weary way of the homeless and destitute. In London wards it is permissible to wash ones clothes provided one can obtain soap for the purpose. On the night of admittance, any razors etc., are taken away, but another is provided on the day before release so that one may shave. The condition of these razors are the cause of much vile language, and are generally laid aside without being used. On discharge at 9 a.m. a midday meal is supplied, consisting of

8 ozs. of bread and 2 ozs. of cheese. Should a man return to a L. C. C. ward within one month of release, he is detained for four days and five nights. (including Sunday)

The chief objections to the casual ward system are that:-

1. A man is prevented from finding work because of the detention.

2. The prison-like atmosphere is soul destroying.

3. The food supplied is insufficient and of low quality.

4. The 'tasks' are useless and uninteresting.

5. That old and young are compelled to mix, thereby preventing the youthful section the chance of recovery that would be his, if segregation of classes and types was operated.

The army of destitute persons is growing, and unless some action to ensure economic and moral uplift is taken, Britain will be faced with an army of permanently poor and demoralised people

THE NIGHT SHELTERS AND CHARITIES

Each night throughout the winter, hundreds of men either walk the streets at night, or take refuge in one of the night shelters. These places vary as to cleanliness etc., but the general rule is that the facilities for washing are nil, and where there is lavatory accommodation, it is filthy and insanitary. It is quite common to find men in these shelters, who have not had a bath or even removed their clothes for five to six weeks. Owing to the lack of supervision during the night, young men who are not destitute, use these shelters for gambling etc., and it would be difficult to find a place without its group of homo-sexuals who are a bad influence among the youthful destitute. Food is given away in these places in such small quantities, that a person is compelled to do a daily round of Convents and other such charitable places, in order to get enough food to maintain life. Three ozs. of bread and jam and a half pint of tea is an average meal. Some however, like the crypt of St. Martins, give no food or warmth, and a person leaves in a worse condition than when he went in.

There are also Charity Homes and Hostels where a man may get food and shelter, in return for work.

Generally speaking, these homes are centres from which enterprising speculators carry on a profitable business based upon the successful exploitation of both the homeless, and the philanthropic public.

Money and clothes are collected for distribution among the needy, but very little of either finds its way to those for

whom it has been collected. The money is largely used up in paying the salaries or expenses of the organisers, and the clothing is nearly all sold to dealers or anyone else able to buy them. It has been known for some of this clothing to reach those for whom it was intended, but usually only after agitation or threat of exposure.

From the destitutes point of view, charity of this sort is a hindrance rather than a help towards solving their problem. On the other hand, State Help, as at present organised, is demoralising and soul destroying: therefore, the Humanity Crusaders, whilst offering a fair criticism of these two forms of help, also put forward constructive suggestions for solving the whole problem.

These suggestions are made with the realisation that any ideas which do not bring about a whole-hearted co-operation between the general public and the homeless and destitute themselves, will not remove from society the social menace which must inevitably develop from the existence of so many paupers in its midst.

The Homeless and destitute consist of many types of individuals so that no plan can be formulated for dealing with the problem unless it is first clearly defined and understood. Most of the destitute can be considered as those people who, through unemployment, have become homeless. This is often due to bad social conditions which result in the unemployed person being looked upon by his family circle as a parasite, and explains why so many married men and youths are to be found wandering. The "Means Test" is largely responsible for this condition, in that under it, other members of a family are compelled to maintain their unemployed relatives, who are gradually forced out.

The destitute has other needs than food and clothing, since being human, he has a physical, emotional, and a mental make-up. Any scheme which even supplied every physical want would be inadequate therefore, as unless the means for emotional and mental expression is also provided, a man is practically condemned to a living death.

The following are some practical suggestions.

Instead of drudgery and useless labour in casual wards, the available manhood might be utilised, by the formation of centres or groups, for the production of goods upon the basis of No-Profit, and Mutual Aid.

The destitute has no hope whatever of becoming re-absorbed into industry, but still has occupational tendencies which can be developed to the benefit of society.

Our suggestion in this direction is the formation of small groups of destitutes who have like occupational tendencies which could be settled in one of the following pursuits:—

Small holdings. Market gardening. Poultry raising. Basket work. Afforestation. Hand boot and shoe making. Book printing, and binding. Work of social value such as road construction, land reclamation, bridge building, and empire settlement.

The whole problem is inextricably bound up with that of unemployment, and needs the real support of all those who know that the alarming and continual growth of a destitute army within society, is a social menace requiring immediate remedy; palliatives will only perpetuate and intensify this menace.

The Humanity Crusaders, in this endeavour on behalf of the destitute, are expressing the hopes and desires of that section who wish to regain Full Citizenship through the successful operation of one or all of these schemes. This section are where they are, through no anti-social act upon their part, and are still orderly, law abiding and decent individuals. These people have a claim upon society for that which they have lost in a struggle which was not in anyway sought by them. They merely ask society to co-operate with them in regaining their social status, and the immediate needs are funds for maintaining the Crusade, for printing literature, organising deputations etc.

The Humanity Crusaders are allowed the use of a hall by the courtesy of Whitefields Central Mission, but the mission is not to be held responsible for anything printed by them.

FORTY MILLION LOST!

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE WITH THE BUDGET SURPLUS

(To show that this idea is practical, all figures are from current commercial prospectuses, therefore are subject to at least a third reduction, if operated on a large scale.)

A smallholding of 5 acres of land, can be bought for £100. A house can be built upon it for £350. Allowing for the first years expences, £50, a family can be permanently established upon a smallholding for £500.

This family would have no further fear of poverty or distress, and would be able to develop those qualities which are so necessary for good Citizenship.

From the slums and hovels of the city, to the open spaces and fresh air of the country, could be taken, men women and children, who are now living in hellish conditions, upon State subsidies of one form or another.

The result can be none other than, better HEALTH, EDUCATIONAL, and MORAL development and LIFE.

Where is the money coming from?

This year, 1934, we are told, there was a surplus in the budget amounting to over £40,000,000.

At the rate of £500 per family, 80,000 homes, approximately 400,000 people, could be established.

This large number of people, now an expense upon the RATES and TAXES, could be permanently removed from the debit side, and placed to the side of credit, because their new conditions would make them tax PAYERS, instead of tax DRAWERS.

Because nothing of this sort has been done with regard to this years budget, the taxpaying public, (though no doubt, jubilant over a slight reduction in income tax,) are still faced with the problem of an ever increasing army of persons whose sole means of existence is maintenance from rates and taxes.

A little light upon poor law expenditure might be interesting. For the three years ending March 31st. 1933, the cost of keeping inmates in the poor law institutions and casual wards, was £24,045,956. (ave. per inmate, 24/4 wkly). This amount does not include Capital Expenditure which is defrayed out of revenue.

The average number of beds occupied by inmates for these three years was, 127,702.

It is clear that the keeping of able-bodied men in institutions, is not only bad for the man himself, but economically unsound, from the point of view of the ratepayer.

In the light of these facts, our ideas based upon the possibilities of last years budget surplus, comes away from the realm of dreamland, into the field of practical possibility, and urgent necessity.

By grouping families together, small communities would grow up which would in effect, be the solid basis upon which the new social order must be built.

A new social life would develop, a new meaning to the words CO-OPERATION and MUTUAL AID would be understood, a new sense of CITIZENSHIP would result,

out of which must come, that social order in which all give of their best in the field of production, and enjoy the full product of their labour. Comradeship, Fellowship, and Love, would cease to be idle dreams or vain thoughts, but become the realities which will guide all men's lives in their endeavours to serve humanity.

Before all this, we must have real MEN and WOMEN, who are prepared to so live their lives, to the end that these communities shall be developed. We must have people who no longer expect the present life of exploitation, and profit-making, etc., to solve the problem of Hunger and Slavery. "He who would be FREE, must himself strike the blow".

We must strike a blow against PROFIT making by setting up our own co-operative workshops, farms, schools, etc. We may have to get State funds at first, or we may get support from those who realise the value of this endeavour, but WE must be prepared to do the real pioneering work upon the basis of voluntary co-operation, working not for gain, but for the Social Good.

Today, the best we can expect from charity or state aid, is that standard of life based upon the lowest level possible. To anyone, who thinks this is good enough, we ask them to think further of the problem, but to those who looking for better times, and are prepared to give some energy to attain that state, we ask their support on any or all of the following suggestions.

Helping to find the money to print literature, and distribute it.

Helping to form groups of people who are willing to start communities.

Helping to carry on the educational work necessary for the training of people to adopt community life.

Helping to keep the "Humanity Crusaders" in the fight against poverty, by FINANCIAL and MORAL backing.

Any communications, for Secretary, or the Treasurer, should be addressed,

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