UNSIGNED RUSSELL MATERIAL

With reference to the final paragraph of John Slater's article in Russell 1, although I cannot offer proof of Russell's authorship of any unsigned material published in the Tribunal or elsewhere, there is evidence to support Wood's suggestion that Russell wrote material for the N.-C.F. other than that known to us. There are several references in the Minutes of the Political Committee during the first half of 1916 to Russell's willingness to write what was needed, and especially to write letters. On 4 April 1916 it was noted that "Mr. Cannan is compiling list of prominent people willing to write or sign letters and list of London and provincial papers willing to publish such letters. Mr. Bertrand Russell is writing a series of letters to be used in this way, designed to meet every sort and kind of misunderstanding." Some of these, it was stated, were to be in answer to "important people who need persuading or convincing", and of these, two have survived, drafted in Russell's handwriting, with an additional sentence, added in Catherine Marshall's hand, which indicates that they were to go out over her signature; they were to friends of her father who had declined to sign a memorial to the Prime Minister protesting the actions of the Tribunals. And on 20 April, she writes to Gilbert Cannan to ask if he is prepared "to write, in rotation with Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. Brailsford, the weekly page which the Labour Leader has asked us to supply them with every Monday." (All the documents referred to here are in the Catherine Marshall papers, Cumberland Record Office.)

- Jo Newberry

Soon after Russell agreed to write anonymously for the Press, a letter under the head of "Practical War Economy" and over the signature of "F.R.S." appeared in the Labour Leader (13 [16]: 20 April 1916, 6). "F.R.S." could mean Fellow of the Royal Society, and the tone of the letter is one of mordant irony, characteristic of Russell. I would like to have readers' opinions as to the internal evidence for Russell's

authorship of the letter, which was first noticed among the relatively few WWI clippings he kept and is as follows: - K.B.

> Sir,--The Government having now decided to fall in with the Continental practice of automatic Conscription for boys as they reach the age of 18, a little clear thinking shows that it has become possible to simplify enormously the means of achieving all that is to be hoped for from Mr. Asquith's noble pledge never to sheathe the sword until the military domination of Prussia has been wholly and finally destroyed.
>
> My plan, which all will agree to be enormously more humane and economical than the present mode of conducting the war, is this: Let all the Great Powers of Europe agree that boys, when they reach the age of 18, shall be divided by lot into three classes, one containing the half of them, the other two each containing a quarter. The class containing one half shall be painlessly executed in a lethal chamber. Of the other two classes, the members of the one shall be deprived of an arm, a leg, or an eye at the discretion of the surgeon; the members of the other shall be exposed day and night to deafening noises, until they acquire some nervous affliction--madness, speechlessness, mental blindness, or deafness--after which they shall be liberated to form the future manhood of the country.
>
> Sir, in the name of science and economy, but still more in the name of humanity, I call upon the Government to propose these terms at once to all the belligerents, and thus avoid an immense mass of preventible suffering caused by the lack of science in our present methods of killing.--Yours, etc., F.R.S.