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# VOICE

INTEGRITY  
FREEDOM  
RESPONSIBILITY

Vol. 3. No. 10.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1956.

6d. Fortnightly.

## Mr. Hollis and the Middle Class

Mr. Hollis ran into some criticism in *The Sunday Times* (August 12, 1956) for the first of his articles on "The Middle Class Movement," one letter complaining that he quoted some misleading figures, and the other taking exception to his reference to "the official parties." Figures, we know, can often mislead when the pound is such an unstable symbol, and we wonder whether the Liberal party still qualifies as an "official" party.

In the second article, Mr. Hollis says that liberty is today "under fire from three directions—from the excess of trades-union discipline, from the bureaucrat and from the boss," and suggests that the People's League for the Defence of Freedom hardly mentions the menace of the boss. Mr. Hollis, we believe, should know a little more about the "set-up" than this, especially as he concludes by saying that no one can shut his eyes to the truth that "the future of the middle classes is bound up with the checking of inflation. If inflation is checked the problems will largely solve themselves and the middle classes will survive. If it is not checked the problem is insoluble and the middle classes will perish. . ."

But surely inflation is a symptom of a fundamental maladjustment, and the prolonging of the maladjustment is an act of policy: so that the distressing symptom cannot be checked without a revision of policy. The People's League for the Defence of Freedom is also a symptom, this time of discontent with the way that either "official" party has handled the situation, and a full page announcement in *The News Chronicle* was headed "Revolt Emerging."

In view of the Roman Catholic and Anglican views on marriage, we might perhaps consider that Real Goods and Services, Wealth in fact, represent one partner, while Finance or the Accounting System represent the other partner, and that the twain have become badly "unstuck." It is, of course, the job of the experts to devise a system that shall subserve a policy of freedom, and see that the appropriate book entries are made, and in this case "where there is a will there is a way." We do not intend to enter into technical proposals, although we have heard of such, because they await the will—the will to freedom—and we hope that the emerging "revolt" does not aim merely at a sectional advantage but rather at a true and realistic policy.

## Sir John Glubb

Writing in *The Daily Mail* (August 20, 1956), Sir John Glubb points out that "the thinking of whole nations or continents for considerable periods of time has frequently been completely wrong. We have been brought up for the past 35 years to believe that empires are wicked." He notes

the influence of leading nations, and says "The golden age of any empire has always been an age of peace and progress. . . The weakening of the great nation has always led to anarchy, misery, want and a return to barbarism." Today he says the responsibility still rests on the West of Europe and America and that we are a leading nation whether we like it or not. "We must not allow it to be said that we betrayed the world; that we ran away. . . It is obvious today that the United Nations are incapable of wielding authority."

Responsibility remains the key word both nationally and imperially, and it involves the belief, totally opposed to fatalism of any kind, in the efficacy of human wills. We abrogate responsibility if we treat an abstraction like "inflation" as an idol with power, and fail to recognise that inflation results from human decisions taken either in folly or in malice. *The Tablet* (August 18, 1956), notes a topical lapse: "If Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Menzies are to be taken literally, we have far too many of our eggs in the Suez basket, in a way which makes it more than ever necessary for the Prime Minister to explain why he was so keen as Foreign Secretary on the 1954 Agreement."

## Bureaucracy at Play

The People's Defence League have doubtless digested an excellent article by J. Wentworth Day that appeared in *The Liverpool Echo* (July 4, 1956), and his figures deserve repeating, for he attacks the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with fact and figure, as well as with a refreshing invective. They have evicted 376 farmers within the past nine years, he says, which means "376 broken hearts and ruined careers." During the war the Ministry evicted over 10,000 farmers, and they run the 230,000 acres they still hold at a loss. Its staff has risen from 151 in 1899-1900 to 570 in 1915-16, which swelled to 19,727 in 1949-50, and now musters 10,000 which cost £10,000,000 a year. He says that "Many of its powers are left over from war-time."

Mr. Wentworth Day, after mentioning the suicides among evicted farmers, pokes fun at the bureaucrats effectively enough, as when he says, "Yet these are the bureaucrats who preach efficiency, tell farmers how to do their jobs, chuck Lady Garbett and others out of their homes, roast rabbits alive because they cannot catch them and are now hatching a war against blackbirds."

The indictment includes extravagance, tyranny and waste, and of course gives a picture in miniature—for ten million pounds amounts today apparently to chicken feed—of our "full employment" scheme, which is a degrading method of vote-catching and of evading a virile approach to our heritage of skill, and would rather fritter the heritage than correct the accounts. The farmer in fact is regarded as a means of providing jobs for the boys instead of a

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food producer, and to the frustrations of the weather are added "a farm census form of 130 separate items," to quote Mr. Day again.

### Square Dollar Series

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For over a century there have been attempts to set down the scope of culture, in the Bohn Library, the Eliot hundred books, and an American university (St. John's) offered a curriculum of another hundred books, dispersive, all of them notable, few of them distinctly evil or detrimental, but none picked for the specific purpose of fitting the student for life or telling him what the score is. The Square Dollar has definitely an aim. How far the publishers intend to continue the series we have no means of knowing, but it is clear that they want to be useful and that they want to see an adequate edition of Blackstone and of Benton. There is nothing in the series to date that any reader can afford to leave unread. W. WATSON.

### An American Note

As to birds of similar plumage flocking together, one does not expect the swindling class of any country to look avidly for honest foreigners, yet a sane foreign policy might lead a government to want alliance with governments less prone to cheat them out of their eye teeth, presuming government to possess such dental (by metaphor) equipment. The question of responsibility in allegedly democratic governments is very hard to determine. Even Stassen wisely, as your correspondent sees it, warning Eisenhower that Nixon is a liability, is forced to run partly on guess work.

We suppose that some of the men most responsible for evil in American life are to be found in the remains of Roosevelt's appointees to the Supreme Court, selected as ex-Senator Wheeler was severely punished for saying, "to

declare anything he does constitutional." Chief among these is Frankfurter and along with him the perverters of the press, Lehman of New York, in fact almost any New York politician of either party except those definitely opposed to F.D.R. H. BRISCOE.

### Wyndham Lewis

Writing in *The Observer*, (August 12, 1956,) Mr. Geoffrey Grigson said: "Lewis has stood for the architectural, for art as the 'noblest intellectual exercise of the Animal Man' and as 'a constant stronghold of the purest human consciousness,' for a contrived constructed 'reality' in opposition to 'life,' flow, steaming messes of the emotional and biological innards; in opposition to the ego drowning itself with an idiot's happy grin in syrups of unconsciousness or abandoned responsibility—in opposition . . . to much else, of which Arnold-Toynbeeism is now a rich blossom." Apart from the welcome mention of Arnold Toynbee, and of a few other names which we have omitted, Mr. Grigson's words could have described the outlook of Henry James, who died nearly forty years ago. We seem to remember that Mr. Wyndham Lewis has opposed the strange system of loan finance which overwhelms us in debt, and has made the valuable distinction between loan capital and productive capital, between the fake and the real.

### Painting

WYNDHAM LEWIS' two page foreword to the catalogue of the Tate gallery exhibit is one of the clearest statements he has ever made and one of the most important for anyone interested in the life of contemporary painting. Lewis is telling us what he did. He is not theorizing about what other painters should or might do. But in the general decay of all thought and all ethos, which decay is part of Marxist materialism, and the degradation which led to 300,000 deaths on the Stalin canal before Eden and Churchill fraternized with the Muscovites, we might well look for light and validity in the paragraph:

"It was my ultimate aim to exclude from painting the everyday visual real altogether. The idea was to build up a visual language as abstract as music. The colour green would not be confined or related to what was green in nature—such as grass, leaves, etc.; in the matter of form, a shape represented by fish remained a form independent of the animal, and could be made use of in a universe in which there were no fish."

The important verb here, seems to be "confined," and the passage should not be considered without Lewis' later remarks about nature. But the quoted paragraph contains, I think, the clue to the great impulse that fructified both in the enlivenment of colour and of form through 40 years combat and against all sort of carping. Even Mr. Pound with his emphasis on form, and with what was, after all, the classic approach to Lewis, may have failed to understand a good deal of Lewis' painting, even when most emphatic, or to accept the official word printed on the new red cover "notorious" in insistence that there was something of value in the rebellion. W. WATSON.

## Inflation

(The first part of this letter appeared in our issue of August 11 and was unfortunately not concluded on August 25.)

The aim of a Government, representing the British people, should obviously be to lower prices. Every rise in price injures the British people; it is a mean pilfering of their inadequate incomes, especially inadequate when compared with the enormous productive capacity of Britain and the countries closely associated with us. What a ridiculous situation it is on the face of it; certain sections of the community are allowed and encouraged to attain to incomes out of all proportion to the work they do or in comparison with others, and the old age pensioners are only granted a few shillings increase on their inadequate pensions, while at the same time a policy is maintained which almost immediately filches the small amount of benefit from them by further price increases—giving with one hand and taking away with the other. It would be laughable if it were not tragic for so many. One could imagine it to be a policy inflicted on morons by morons, judging by the vanity and the apathy with which it is received. Wages chasing prices and never catching up with them! How idiotic! Why has such an anomaly not been remedied long ago? Is there a nigger in the wood-pile? Of course there is, or the matter would have automatically adjusted itself to the general satisfaction instead of to the contrary as we are experiencing.

It is axiomatic that the tremendous progress that has been achieved would have automatically brought prices down to a very low level if there were not some pernicious interference with the natural results.

### The root of evil

The saying that "money is the root of all evil" is simply not true. On the contrary it is the finest mechanism that could be devised for distributing goods and services. It is the manipulation and misuse of it that is evil, particularly treating it as a commodity, instead of allowing it to function solely as an order system and distributive agent, and the unnecessary poverty and frustration caused thereby is doubtless the major cause of crime.

All that orthodox economists, politicians, etc., ever suggest to remedy inflation and other economic evils is an intensification of the very same policies that are the cause of the trouble, and all the workers seem to think of is striking, which aggravates the situation generally and penalises other sections of the community.

If prices do continue to increase as they have been doing, it will eventually mean that only persons in the higher income brackets will be able to buy the things produced and the rest of us will starve in the midst of superabundance—that is the logical conclusion anyway.

In connection with this comment on inflation it would seem relevant to draw attention to the plight of the old age pensioners, who have only the bare £2 per week to exist on; with prices at their present level (what can they buy with it?), they are little, if any better off than when they only had the 10/- per week, especially if the deterioration of quality of almost everything is taken into consideration. In this so-called Welfare State and Christian Community, the old people are receiving the least consideration of any.

The foregoing statements regarding inflation are plain

truths, which can be verified. Is it conceivable that there can be no alternate policies to the ones so persistently and disastrously pursued?

It is certainly high time for some blunt speaking on this vital matter, and indeed, for some effective action to be taken—before it is too late.

Are we obstinately "Hell Bent"? "Where there is no vision, a people perisheth."

84, Ashley Drive,  
Bangor.

H. R. F. HAINESWOOD.

*Bangor Spectator.*

## Law

Cicero wrote his treatise *On Laws* in dialogue form, and near the beginning we read this curious exchange: (I)

*Quintus*: I understand, brother, that you consider different laws are to be observed in history and in poetry.

*Marcus*: Yes, because in history they deal with truth and in poetry mostly with pleasure; although both Herodotus, the father of history, and Theopompus relate numerous stories.

The words anticipate in a sense the distinction Wyndham Lewis drew between truth "of the imagination" and truth of the slide rule, and leave the question rather open as to which laws a writer of epic or of historical drama should follow.

In the next paragraph (II), Cicero outlines in a few words of verbal snapshot a predecessor of Cobbett: "Antipater was a contemporary of Fannius although he breathed rather more heavily, but his rude and rustic strength could teach the rest to write more accurately."

After these preliminaries, and a bow of gratitude to Plato, he asks, What is greater than civil law? And we note him using the terms *lex*, law, and *jus*, right, in the exposition that follows. Law, he says (VI) is the highest reason, implanted by nature, which commands things to be done and forbids the contrary. When this reason is perfectly confirmed in man's mind, it is law, and right arises from it, for it is the rule of right and wrong. "I shall look for the origin of right in nature, under whose guidance we must conduct every argument," he says.

Cicero uses the singular and plural of god (*deus*) without much distinction, and holds that right reason is common to man and God, and that they are joined by law. We are, he adds, born for justice and right is fixed "not by opinion but by nature." (X) The similarity of men is shewn by the use of one definition, Man, for them all. We may well believe that the emphasis on the godlike side of man is healthier teaching than the modern linking of him with the lower creation, which would probably have made a trifling impression if the reading of Cicero had not been previously abandoned. As the last of the republicans he recalls the impressiveness of Roman masonry and the straight efficiency of their roads, and while he may lack some of the Platonic graces, he deals with his subject more firmly and more briefly. Mommsen has shewn how closely the republic resembled the commercial states of modern Europe, with their financial oligarchies and congestions of population; but it was a world that Cicero could inhabit, and perhaps the "Empire" that stifled his freedom was similar to our post-

war bureaucratic concentration of power—which, by a curious twist of language, avoids the word “empire” and its derivatives like “imperialism” with a shocked unanimity.

Nature (XII) gives men right reason, and so law, which is right reason in commanding and forbidding, and if law, then right also. He mentions the Pythagorean teaching on friendship that a man “should not love himself more than another.”

He asks those who weigh everything to be followed or avoided by the standard of pleasure and pain to keep to their gardens, for they are ignorant of the republic. The Furies do not pursue the wicked with physical violence, as the stories relate, but with anguish of conscience, and no one would defend his crime on the ground of a right of nature. If punishment and not baseness kept man from a life of wrong and crime, there would be no unjust person, and the wicked should rather be considered careless; and if some utilitarian profit and not honesty moved us to virtue, we should be clever and not good. (XIV). Unless nature has implanted justice, and if man follows his own advantage untempered, murder and violence would only be checked by the fear of being found out, which is a notion that would make a rustic blush, let alone an educated man.

Laws (XV) do not constitute justice, if imposed by the thirty tyrants for instance or even if all the Athenians enjoyed tyrannical laws. “One right binds human society together, constituted by the one law of right reason in commanding and forbidding. . . . The virtues arise from the fact that we are inclined to love men, which is the basis of right, and without right obedience towards men and the ceremonies of religion addressed to the Gods would be abolished: and I consider that the relation man has with God should preserve these, not fear.” Good and evil are hopelessly confused, unless we distinguish a good from a bad law “by the rule of nature,” (XVI), and only the demented consider that the distinction between honour and disgrace resides in opinion, not in nature. Even a tree or horse’s virtue (to misuse the word) is a matter of nature and not of opinion. Virtue is perfect reason. (*Ratio* contains rather more than our “reason,” almost practice.)

Good men (XVIII) love equity and right, and a good man is unlikely to make the mistake of loving what is not lovable in itself, so that right and justice are to be pursued and cultivated for themselves. There could not be kindness unless someone performed a kind action for another, or friendship unless the friend was loved for himself and was not abandoned when the association no longer paid: the same applies to the society of men, to equity and to justice, and nothing could exceed the injustice of seeking a reward for justice. Decency (XIX) does not consist merely in the fear of a bad name, nor can anything be correctly named if you disregard its nature. If physical deformity offends, then surely, the philosophic orator concludes, deformity of mind offends as well, for “What is fouler than avarice, more bestial than lust, more contemptible than timidity, more abject than sloth and stupidity?” He dismisses the idea that virtue is pursued for anything but its own sake, for this would mean that something else was better than virtue.

Wisdom (XXII), the noblest gift of heaven, teaches us to follow the precept of the Delphic deity to know ourselves,

and to recognise that we have something divine in us, so that our genius is dedicated, and then we shall act and feel worthily of the divine gift, control ourselves, dismiss fear and maintain the “bond of charity” (*societatem caritatis*) and undertake the cult of the gods and pure religion: sharpening our mental eyesight to follow the good and reject the contrary. We shall understand the whole of nature and recognise that we are citizens of the world.

Cicero further clarifies the origin of law in his second book, “For,” he says, “I see that the wisest have held that law was not the product of man’s genius nor something the peoples learned, but was something eternal to guide the world through wisdom in commanding and prohibiting. So they said that the chief and final law was the mind of God who compels or stops everything by reason.” (IV) The divine mind cannot be without reason and divine reason must have this power of separating the right from wrong. Tarquin violated an eternal law in his rape of Lucrece, even though there was no written law at Rome against it, so that the first and chief law is the right reason of almighty Jupiter. Laws were found to preserve the safety of citizens, the security of communities and a happy and peaceful life for men, and he mentions Plato’s view that “persuading and not compelling by force or threats” was part of genuine law.

The citizens (VII) should therefore be convinced that the gods take account of human actions and hold the position of supreme witnesses and judges, but should not use extravagance in the temples, or dedicate land to them, for all land is sacred. Cicero retains the respect for productive land which we have largely forgotten. In connection with funerals, which should avoid ostentation he mentions (XXIII) the Twelve Tables “which we used to learn as boys as an obligatory repetition, but which no one learns now,” and calls to the reader’s mind the notion of Blackstone that young gentlemen should know about the law of their land.

The third and last book treats of the magistracies, which are to administer the law, for “laws preside over the magistrates as the magistrates preside over the people, and a magistrate can actually be called a speaking law, and a law be called a dumb magistrate.”

In the course of an interesting argument about the tribunician power, Cicero admits (X) that “there is evil in power,” but the whole republic checked and balanced its powers, and the consuls as we know exemplified the Roman suspicion of power in that two consuls ruled for one year only, and could not normally rule again for ten years. Our author makes the clearest distinction between what is different in its nature when he speaks of “power residing in the people, authority in the senate;” he recognises that the avarice and vice of the leaders corrupt a community while their self control will correct it, and then discusses the merits of open or secret voting. He prefers the ballot to a vocal vote and quotes the law, “known to the optimates, free to the people,” which should secure the form of freedom, retain the authority of the best men and remove contention. (XVII).

The first rule in dealing with the people is, “Away with force,” and on this note, which a modern bureaucrat might find disturbing, he rounds off the treatise.

H. SWABEY.