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VOICE

INTEGRITY
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY

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Bent or Crooked?

Peter Simple, a columnist in *The Daily Telegraph*, deplored (June 19, 1956) the change in politics since the rollicking days before the First World War, and quoted Lady Violet Bonham Carter: "'Violent we may have been,' she said, 'but we were never tepid, negative or numb. We could not have cared more.'" Mr. Simple continued that if people then cared more about politics it was because politics seemed more worth caring about, and that if minorities struggled against the tide of opinion, it was because minorities felt that the tide could be turned. As for the present, Mr. Simple added, "The calm that by contrast reigns today is the calm of absolute tyranny. The masses rule—and rule absolutely. Nothing that they propose can be resisted; nothing that they resist can be proposed. One Government is like another. The limits of what is 'politically possible' dwindle daily."

I have referred to this passage not because I believe that a "mass" rules but because the reference to absolute tyranny raises a point that Mr. Casserley does not confront adequately in his valuable *The Bent World* (Oxford University Press, 21/-). He comes near to doing so, but a book that answers Marxism must rely on particulars and precision.

The author holds that if the defence of civilisation against the Marxist attack is left to the mind and outlook of that civilisation in its secular phase, "then the defence of the West is a doomed enterprise." He continues, in the opening chapter on The Teachings of Kark Marx: "A narrow materialism that ignores spiritual reality is as bad as, but not worse than, a narrow spirituality that ignores material reality. Christianity can have nothing to do with either of these heresies. 'Man cannot live by bread alone' does not mean that man can live without any bread at all."

The chapter called *The Deification of Democracy* deals with power, as we have said, not fully satisfactorily. He notes the cliché that man's moral progress has not kept pace with his technical progress and says "Civilised man is certainly as sinful, perhaps even more sinful, than the savage." Because of man's liability to sin, he holds that "limiting and dividing earthly power and balancing the various forms of earthly power over against each other, and subjecting earthly power to the rule of law" is the only way to avoid being overwhelmed by earthly power. He adds that "no single man or group of men can be trusted with too much power, indeed with any power at all that is not in some way balanced and checked by the power of other men. . . . The wisdom of democracy is to divide and disperse, to limit and balance power, to reserve some tiny minimum of power for each citizen as his inalienable right. . . ." We welcome this sound doctrine, yet wonder how an individual in a democracy can feel as does Peter

Simple. Mr. Casserley compiling the book in New York, should have foreseen the danger to Britain when the balance of powers—Queen, Lords and Commons—was destroyed. For the American President and Senate embody real checks and balances in regards to the House of Representatives, while the recent visit of the Italian President Gronchi to Washington has raised the question in Italy whether theirs should be a Presidential or a Parliamentary democracy.

Nor did the author refer to the danger of irresponsible power. *The Summary of the News in The Church Times* of June 22, 1956, referring to the report on "The National Church and The Social Order," says, "There is an urgent need for the Church to speak with plainer voice and clearer authority on such things as usury, private property, and relations both within industry and between the State and the individual." Now usury has developed into highly concentrated irresponsible power, and we should be simple if we believed that the financiers had surrendered their power in the last few years. The credit squeeze may have reminded some of us uncomfortably enough of this form of control. Disraeli made no secret of the power enjoyed by a few controllers of credit and he was writing over a century ago. When, therefore, the author mentions that in a democracy as we know it we can trace two quite distinct elements, "a rule of law element which is theological and medieval in its origins and a sovereignty of the people element which is much more recent," he omits the financial control element which may well undermine law and subvert sovereignty.

He contrasts the Renaissance writer Bodin's view that the king is absolute in relation to law with Bracton's saying that there is no king where will is dominant and not law. We would add that it is the duty of Authority, as embodied in the Church, to expound the relevance of the Law of God concerning the limits of Power. "Fallen man inevitably tends to destroy himself if there is committed into his hands too much power over either himself or his neighbour," says Mr. Casserley, and this involves, we must add, the need for balances within democracy and for the exposure of irresponsible power and administrative lawlessness.

In his chapter on "The Obsession with Technics," the author distinguishes technics, which are means and only means, from civilisation which is the end and deplures the increasing "disinclination, even incapacity, among our intellectuals and in our educational system, to concentrate and devote the mind to the problem of what makes a civilisation what it is and what preserves it in being." He calls it the great lie about the West "that the West is merely materialistic, activist and technical." He insists that technics can only be the servant of a civilisation, and that to turn means into ends brings the civilisation into "mortal danger."

VOICE

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His next chapter concerns "The Obsession with Economic Activity," and looks on work as "a vocation to service," which interpretation puts "a question mark against the current habit of identifying work with gainful employment." The author is at his best when he distinguishes between valid and invalid work, noting the activity of the type of advertising of which the "purpose is not to satisfy the human appetite but rather to arouse and intensify it. Their end product is not human satisfaction but human dissatisfaction." He illustrates the process by a fancied project of selling socks made from seaweed, which he claims is no more fantastic and ridiculous than many other widely advertised ventures, and points out that "work of this kind must clearly be set aside as invalid work." The introduction of this distinction between valid and invalid work shows that a policy of "Full Employment" begs the real question as to what the employment shall be and whether it is needed; and the distinction in fact invalidates the policy.

In the same stimulating chapter, he examines leisure as well as work, and recommends a book on play (*Homo Ludens* by J. Huizinga); in fact, he recalls the West to its proper vocation, from which we were I suppose sidetracked by the Puritans, when he says: "A return to a truly active conception of leisure and to a deeper appreciation of its function in civilisation is an urgent necessity in the present stage of the development of our culture." He mentions too Josef Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, and succeeds in bringing together the Greek view, as expressed by Aristotle, that leisure is the object of our employment, and what we read of leisure in the New Testament, without referring to either at this point. For he says, "The contemplation of values is even more fundamental to civilisation than the creation of them. We may even define a civilisation as a state of human being in which certain absolute values and ultimate purposes are contemplated, revered and enjoyed. This is the essential activity of civilisation, and it is essentially a leisured activity."

But Mr. Casserley has no illusions about inferior substitutes, when he writes, "Modern mass leisure, with its tremendous and elaborately organised techniques, designed to save the masses from the boredom and emptiness of mere non-work by a bewildering variety of superficial diversions, is radically out of harmony with the great traditions of Western civilisation." He boldly defines a proletarian as "a man without a civilisation," and says that "democracy cannot be said to have achieved its aim so long as a pro-

letariat still survives. . . . The failure to initiate great masses of our citizens into the richness and profundity of our civilisation is more than merely a failure to carry our democratic principles to the farthest possible point. It is also a source of present weakness."

The author's rejection of the policy of proletarianisation, which is being so vigorously pursued and commended under such glib names as "fair shares," prompts the question why such a policy has been accepted by people who are supposed to value liberty, for liberty of choice obviously disappears when a person is no longer independent enough to say No. Those who surrendered their independent status were forced to do so either by chance or by design. We may instance small craftsmen and property owners in England who, we are told, were dispossessed by irrefragible economic law, and the Russian peasants who were dispossessed by violence. The result in each case proved identical, for the former independent man was merged in the proletariat, and now inflation which dilutes purchasing power adds to the dispossessed.

The next chapter, called *The Obsession with Economic Doctrines*, might well have answered the problem or have displayed the mythical nature of much irrefragible economic law. He says instead that there are "no perfect economic systems, and no absolute economic principles," while the claim to a perfect economic system is a communist and not a Western claim. I am not quite clear what he meant by economics in this context, but if we take the simplest meaning of housekeeping, then we may claim that good and bad housekeeping differ considerably, and that neither side in the cold war has kept house particularly well, due to the obsession with abstractions.

The author intends to dissipate the feuds between parties within the West, in the same way that the editor of *ABC* (Rome) recently claimed that all who were not communists belonged to "the right." We may agree with Mr. Casserley that, "To suppose that economics is the most important thing in life, and economic activity the primary activity of society, is not any the less Marxist because the type of economic activity preferred is capitalist rather than communist. . . . Civilisation is what happens when an economy is so successful as to provide men with leisure time in which they are released from preoccupation with the merely economic problem of survival, liberated from the influence of merely economic pressures, and set free to busy themselves about more permanent values and more absolute ends." Such is an impeccable description of an economy that works, but at present our leaders can, it seems, envisage nothing better than our inefficient and wasteful system not deteriorating too rapidly!

We shall not deal with the final chapters of *The Bent World*, as enough has been said to indicate the importance of issues raised and perhaps not fully raised in the book. Our slight strictures must be accepted as a measure of respect for the author and a desire for the completion of the work he has started. H.S.

FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED.

Contributions to The Treasurer, Christian Campaign
For Freedom, Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London,
N.W.1.

Review

CALLING MR. COMFORT.

Rather belatedly but we were not here in 1950 to review his *Authority and Delinquency*, our question is whether his book would have been printed if he had directed it against Beria rather than against the bugaboos of his ambience, that is Hitler and fascism. The evil of Freud and all the foul sequelae is that their thought is focussed on evil, and the Church which should have maintained its great tradition, the contemplation of light, failed to guard against psychopolitics such as Beria's. We doubt if the B.B.C. would have given Comfort the use of their facilities if he arrived at this point in 1950, but we will watch his future arguments with moderate hopefulness.

No man can do everything, and our query in friendly spirit, is whether the limitations of Comfort's thought arise from the medical, physiological approach to infamy with a rather sketchy historic "background," leading to omission of necessary, in fact flagrantly necessary, components in the problem.

Clearly the medical approach is not opposed diametrically to the historical, but it cannot lead to satisfactory understanding unless it is augmented by or complementary to the latter. The reader will here observe us falling into the kind of expression that can get printed by Routledge and Paul.

The definition of crime is, as Mr. Comfort acutely observes, arbitrary in one sense, but it is in great part determined by past history, and still more by the suppression of past history and current news. A totally idiotic and almost totally vicious monetary system, leads to lots of simple and in themselves innocuous acts being illegal, such for example as the transport of diamonds from one place to another, or the use of gold without permission of Rothschild and cronies. At that point Mr. Comfort's medical approach begins to approach the inadequate.

Might not a revised curriculum even for scientists be of assistance, that is to say, if the intelligentsia or whatever partial substitute is tolerated in anglo-saxon countries were required to take a minimum course in history with at least a smattering of Blackstone, as well as the flood of psycho-sististical generality now in fashion?

The difference between criticism and publishers' advertising in the prevalent form of "reviewing" is that the reviewing is aimed at the public, and benevolent criticism is made primarily as an appeal to the author to add light to his own consciousness. Comfort has, indubitably, enough light to be an asset in the present deplorable state of mental half-life among us. The limit of his brilliance is indicable in his footnotes, which refer almost exclusively to current books of theory and not to specific historic examples.

This remark is carping, as he could not have included such reference in a book as admirably condensed as his *Authority and Delinquency*, needed as a correlation and review of several valuable studies available five years ago.

W. WATSON.

Correspondence

Sir,—His Grace the Bishop of Oxford and many like him have declared that work for work's sake is not a Christian maxim, and that to reverse this would merely make man a producing machine.

In spite of what has been laid down as a Christian maxim, Mr. Macmillan and Co. have not the least compunction in digging families out of their homes and sending them all over the place in order to find work for work's sake, *i.e.*, in order to make wage-paid work a moral imperative.

How long are people going to put up with this? Carried to its logical conclusion technocratic progress will increase wage-paid unemployment to enormous dimensions. How do Macmillan and Co., Gaitskell and Co., Clement Davies and Co. think they can deal with it then?

J. Creagh Scott (Lt.-Colonel).

Sir,—During the war Lady Rhys Rhys Williams (Elinor Glyns' daughter) got out a scheme much preferable to the Beveridge Scheme. In fact it would meet many of the economic problems aggravated by Automation and enormously simplify taxation, moreover such outgoings as O.A. pension, National assistance, unemployment benefit, *etc., etc.*, and all the time-wasting, stamp-licking and bureaucratic administration could thereby go by the board.

I had the opportunity to discuss this scheme personally with Lady Williams; it was considered by the Economic Reform Club and by the Institute of Actuaries.

Briefly 1. Everybody is given by the State a sum weekly which covers the basic needs of existence. (At that time it was said to be £3 a week).

2. Everybody pays a proportion of their other income and earnings to the State as tax—at that time it was assessed at 50 per cent. of such income.

The basic allowance could be adjusted in accordance with cost of living or the goods available.

Revolutionary but the more one thinks about it the better it seems. S. Needham.

[Why the tax? Ed.]

Change of Emphasis?

I have noticed that many working men admire courage, will-power and physical stamina used in the pursuit of some ideal; particularly when the ideal is conceived in lone obscurity, against all the compulsions of mass living, and ends either with serving society with some new conception (the raft across the Pacific), or with actual physical reunion (the POW escape). There is a polarity here between compulsion, nonentity, and freedom, personal choice.

—B. J. Taylor in *The Spectator*, June 22, 1956.

The abolition of poverty, and of the politics of poverty; the protection of the citizen against concentrated power—there, I suggest, is the basis on which the Tory Party should stand in the coming decade and after.

—Charles Curran in *The National and English Review*, June, 1956.

Since the problem of personal liberty is becoming a major political issue, the unions are in danger of losing the popular sympathy on which they heavily depend and of becoming an acute embarrassment to their allies in the Labour Party.—From *The Tablet*, June 23, 1956.

The Press has done a useful service in giving the utmost publicity to the forcible dispossession of Lady Garbett from her farm in Sussex, on the order of the Minister of Agriculture. . . Eleven years after the war, it is really monstrous that a Government Department should have these powers over private individuals and their property. . . . To evict men and women from their home, as well as from their land, is unpardonable.

—From *The Church Times*, June 1, 1956.

National Economy

The Dance Around the Golden Calf

Our financial system, the whole "national economy" of the countries according to present-day conceptions, is based on the fiction that money is a COMMODITY. It is not; money is merely a gambling symbol and has no relation to proper living. It is because of the fiction that our financial system is illogical and insecure. Few people understand it. The natural sequence is that the practise of such a system creates one crisis after another, at ever-frequent intervals, as man struggles vainly for the higher standard of living he seeks.

NAMY, the doctrine on true living for nations and individuals, has its sure foundation on Nature's own permanent and unshakeable laws. It teaches that all life, all security for man, depends on Nature's gift and upon the good uses and cultivation of Nature's bountiful resources. Nature is man's REAL "capital," and when augmented by the development of scientific knowledge and technical advancement, and by the spiritual and cultural progress of man, then and only then can the standard of living for all mankind be raised. Namy teaches the real economy of Nature's gifts. It is therefore, logical and easy to understand and apply. It is truth, because it is not based on falsehood.—*Lands Väe*, March, 1956, Stockholm.

An Alibi

At the end of 1942, while England and other parts of Europe were being bombed to pieces, the British Minister of Education convened a Conference of the Ministers of Education of eight allied governments, then resident and active in London. Amongst other things the object was to produce a work on history 'of an objective character.' It was to be very independent, independent of this, that and the other, and it was for use of students in secondary schools and universities of member countries if not of total European scope. "The work is not a history of mankind. But it is at any rate, a history of European man and of his influence on the rest of mankind." And as there is no definition of the "European man" we may expect to find him in Siberia by the time the book is read by the Portuguese!

It may be noted that the "Hebrew inheritance" as distinct from Greek, Roman and prehistoric inheritances is dealt with by the Rev. C. H. Dodd, a Cambridge professor who learnt his stuff at Oxford. He is so brilliant that he has been invited to lecture to our "American" cousins. His qualifications? "the miracle stories of the Gospels—a notable feature—it may not be easy to say where matter of fact ends and symbolism begins."

Two of the chief contributors would not be content with the anonymity of the preface and insist that the Big Idea of the whole thing came from Sir Ernest Barker (four inches in *Who's Who?*).

It does not matter a lot what the disinherited learn, fact or symbolism. They must be kept in their place and University professors be kept too! And now for our alibi.

"However, the stock of money was not large enough to supply all requirements. Some payments were still made in kind. On the other hand, in the thirteenth century payment by clearing arrangements at the fairs or elsewhere, and the use, largely spread by *Italians*, (my italics) of transfer orders and letters of credit, avoided to a considerable extent the transportation of currency." Vol. 1, p. 387.

Revolted? Not at all. How else can we get a free week's sight-seeing in Moscow? P.L.

Some Opinions

by D. BEAMISH.

Conversation at the sketching party turned on the subject of Social Credit. Two knew a little about it and opinions expressed ranged from "it would be a good thing but how are you going to get it?" to "people are happiest when they have to struggle to achieve things;—if prosperity were handed them on a plate, they would not value it and would be miserable. . ." Cases were cited where men had worked hard to build up a successful business which they had left to their sons; the latter were not half as happy as their parents had been.

The opinion of one that "we" could not do anything about it but wait for evolution which, although it might take thousands of years, would eventually bring mankind to the point where co-operation would take the place of fighting, obtained the greatest measure of agreement. The suggestion that we should learn to adapt ourselves to our environment was seized on with approval.

What was noticeable was that the idea of this life as a struggle between good and evil forces in which everyone had a part to play was entirely absent. Most people were "decent" and would help each other but, unfortunately, in any organisation it was the few pushing and ambitious persons, who were also mostly the egotistic and unscrupulous, who always managed to get their way because the majority, the decent and kindly, were *not* ambitious and pushing but retiring and modest.

The one Social Crediter present omitted to point out that this was, perhaps, a good illustration of the truth of the saying that "in order that evil should triumph it suffices that good men should do nothing."

(To be concluded).