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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

Compared with the 'scientists,' concerned only with what happened in a test-tube this morning and how so to vary the experiment as to make something different happen this afternoon, the classicists seem to have the advantage that, however tenuous the threads which bind them to the Universe may be, they are at all events varied and numerous. Thus they often seem to produce, by the ingenious rearrangement of their data, more or less intelligible noises and not just bangs. Such is the modern intensity of vision, and so minute are the points upon which it is concentrated, that not much seems to arise from the mountain of modern industriousness. Parturient *mons* constantly yields ever more numerous yet tinier mice. However that may be, like our own Classical Association which has been known to be the source of some trifle of observation, some tit-bit of spiritual food, the International Federation of Classical Studies meeting at Copenhagen has this year discovered a soupçon of pabulum of the sort upon which the Social Credit Movement is nourished. Indeed the classical chefs seem to have had quite an outing.

First, the London University College professor, Dr. A. D. Momigliano, told us that although Homer began well with the doctrine that the causes of war were varied and complicated, Thucydides was "notoriously inadequate in his account of how that [Peloponnesian] war started," and ancient historians generally while "eminently satisfactory when dealing with constitutional questions and internal strife" were "inadequate and dull in describing how wars started." Dr. Momigliano even went so far as to suggest that only a beginning had been made towards the devotion of some thought to the matter, ancient influences having, regrettably, persisted into modern times. Curious how the *Manchester Guardian*, doubtless under the intense pressure of professional *esprit de corps*, heads its report with the capital suggestion that what the classical historians neglected to do was 'to record' the causes of war—just as a (Manchester) newspaper might leave a paragraph out! And, on this topic, don't they!

The Professor of Greek at Göteborg University, Dr. Düring, noted that throughout the centuries the new in music had been associated "by the reigning school and the authorities" with moral depravity, (hence, perhaps, in part at least, the rise of a new 'reigning school').

May 20, 1830: MOSAIC PROPHECIES. . . . The manner of the predictions of Moses is very remarkable. He is like a man standing on an eminence, and addressing people below him, and pointing to things which he can, and they

cannot, see. He does not say, You will act in such and such a way, and the consequences will be so and so; but, So and so will take place, *because* you will act in such a way!

May 21, 1830: MOTIVES AND IMPULSES. Talent, lying in the understanding, is often inherited; genius, being the action of reason and imagination, rarely or never.

Motives imply weakness, and the existence of evil and temptation. The angelic nature would act from impulse alone. A due mean of motive and impulse is the only practicable object of our moral philosophy.

June 7, 1830: PARTY SPIRIT. Party men always hate a slightly differing friend more than a downright enemy. I quite calculate on my being one day or other holden in worse repute by many Christians than the Unitarians and open infidels. It must be undergone by every one who loves the truth for its own sake beyond all other things.

Truth is a good dog; but beware of barking too close to the heels of an error, lest you get your brains kicked out.

June 14, 1830. Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being *vulgar* in point of style.

July 2, 1830: PLATO—ARISTOTLE. . . . Philosophy is a middle state between science, or knowledge, and sophia, or wisdom.

September 8, 1830: ENGLISH REFORMATION. . . . For a long time past the Church of England has been blighted with prudence, as it is called. I wish with all my heart we had a little zealous imprudence.

(*Table Talk* of S. T. Coleridge.)

• • •
"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single . . ." (Single: *haplous* = simply, plainly, in one way. ?not doubly: *diplopia* = double vision.) In a pseudo-democracy, all things visible (and not all things are visible) are seen and judged by countless eyes, and thus the body politic is not a whole body. Wisdom (not knowledge) is the function of see-ers (seers); but our seers are all Shaws, concocting profitable 'movies.' It is not impossible to find an equation for the resolution of social-dynamic forces. Indeed, the A + B Theorem is such an equation; but it is not possible to find a focus for the blurred vision of a democracy except in action, as it were, *in extremis*.

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"HAYEK (F.A.) *Editor*. Capitalism and the Historians: Essays by five hands designed to correct the highly distorted account of the social consequences of the rise of the factory system."

Ridding it of the jots and tittles?

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Lot's Wife and Mr. Wyndham Lewis

Mr. Wyndham Lewis's powers of concise observation did not fail him in Canada when he gathered the material for his new novel, *Self Condemned*.

The protagonist, René Harding, has developed a new theory of history, and as a result he gives up his English post in 1939 and emigrates to Canada. We are only given a review of this theory, but through this the satirist tilts at accepted history in ways that commend the book to a social creditor.

The reviewer of Harding's book writes: "But for the Marxist . . . man is envisaged as a *Workman*, not, more inclusively, as a human being."

Dealing with our century, the reviewer continues: "There would be the growth, in every society, of the huge canker of Debt. In more and more insane proportions, the Credit System would be apparent, developing its destructive bulk. One would sense nebulous spiders, at the heart of abstract simulacra of wealth, suspended over everything: hordes of men engaged for years in meaningless homicide . . . Professor Harding . . . as he eyes the approaching war, and the vast mountain of debt which will be of dreadful dimensions by the time this is over, not to mention all the other things involved and easily predictable, sees no hope of anything but a plunge back into the barbarism from which, not so long ago, we imagined we had emerged for good."

Pessimism of this kind would of course be abundantly justified if the debt system were a law of the universe.

We next find Harding and his wife in a hotel room in the Canadian city of Momaco. The city may represent Toronto, and its suburb of Mimico, with shifts of climate and scenario. The picture is drab and brutal enough. People living outside cities, "in the sticks," are apt to say that civilisation will be found in the larger centres. *Self Condemned* gives this hope little encouragement. But of course, there are people who live outside hotels and enjoy a home life that is more or less precarious.

Mr. Lewis indeed might have mentioned the minor debt nuisance that is the apparent condition of anyone using (let alone possessing) anything in the American continent. For almost everything is bought 'on time,' at rapacious usury, and if the debtor makes regular payments he gains

a reference from Finance which is out of the reach of a cash purchaser. It is indeed arguable that when the cold is reduced to the category of expense, money influences character more deeply than climate. Harding, however, is not concerned with 'credit-worthiness.'

The refugees become involved in a Beverage-room brawl. Mr. Lewis explains: "To placate the Methodists a saloon or beer-parlour was called a 'Beverage-room' all over Canada. It did not placate the Methodists, who would never be satisfied until Momaco was a hundred per cent. bootleg city." The sparse beverage-rooms tend to draw the 'crummy' sections of the public, and disgust rather than terror filled me on my one visit to a beverage-room. The hours are ridiculous—12-6-30 p.m., 8 p.m. into the night in this case—and the waiters illegally serve the customer before he has given his order. Poorly lighted and expensive 'Cocktail Bars' are sparser, but may satisfy the more fastidious customer, but beer is usually consumed at home, often straight out of the bottle. In Quebec province, Taverns are frequent and liquor is more easily obtainable.

Generally, Mr. Lewis's vivid pictures illustrated the Canadian scene (especially the hotel-scene) more objectively than any other account available. In the final section we see something of Canadian kindness and talkativeness. Harding decides to stay, but his wife's longing to go back destroys her reason. The mishandling of the drink-question (and the elevation of drink into a question at all) serves as a parable on the results of intermeddling and centralised control. The "outlets" allowed by the Liquor Control Board, Brewers Warehouses and the beverage-rooms may be added to the dangerous rule that no one must travel with an opened bottle or carton of beer, which encourages people to finish the bottle or carton and to secrete a flask, called a "mickie," to dodge the law.

Harding survives and even prospers, but only as a "glacial shell." Mr. Lewis has not lost his penetrating wit when he concludes that the Faculty had no idea of this, "mainly because they were themselves unfilled with anything more than a little academic stuffing."

H. SWABEY.

Analogy

"One of the effects of the present accelerating devotion to the analytical approach to life, the method of splitting experience up into bits and acting as though each bit were the whole, a method which in practice makes any true synthesis illusory and false, is a grave impairment of our powers of free movement. While, in the material world we seem to be able to move (some of us) ever faster and faster with less and less personal effort, in the mental sphere, where our truly creative activities are exclusively carried on, the mechanisms lock and jamb and come to a stop. A not inappropriate simile is a clock with a spring which has broken free from its attachment, so that the effort to wind it up leads directly to a new facility to run down: only the inertia of the spring reacts against the winding process: the ratchet grates, producing the sound of 'winding,' but the spring is useless. To store the energy imparted to it by winding, and thus to be able to release it as, when and where required, the spring must be fixed at one end. It is 'bound back' to that end. Nowadays, nothing is 'bound back'." (*Anon.*)

A Turn of the Wheel

Among all the opinions which are being canvassed at the present time (and the babel of public and semi-public chatter has scarcely ever been so voluminous) those which are explicitly directed to the purpose of securing a re-adjustment of power *contra* authority in the State are potentially of greatest interest to Social Crediters—and potentially of greatest danger. It is here that Social Crediters *might*, if they were sufficiently well-equipped technically—which, in this connection, is to say morally and intellectually—exercise perhaps decisive effect. To say that they 'have the key in their hands' would be disastrously misleading on at least two counts: in the sense in which history accredits such a mechanical conception, there *isn't* a 'key,' and, further, in the sense in which the theorist of social dynamics (the political theorist who propagandises) at present envisages such a thing as a 'key,' he is hopelessly out of date: he hasn't reached to the modern notions (which are fundamentally metaphysical) underlying the construction of 'combination' locking contrivances (of which the Yale lock is typical). Thus, among the democratic host of meddlers, the mentally-competent err, and the 'genteel unskilled' mess. (Their pathetic attempts to pool their individually insufficient resources, to 'syndicate' mediocrity, merely makes the mess messier.) There may be something to be said for cross-word puzzles and football-pools, if only to act as a political antiseptic.

Douglas's phrase "the free expansion of individuality" from the masterly statement of 'principles' at Swanwick thirty years ago comprised, as is explicit in the text, freedom on both sides: freedom to contract in as well as out. The notion is fundamental for Social Credit. The contractor-in cannot load the association with any penalty for his contracting-in *per se*, and the contractor-out cannot load the association with any penalty for *his* contracting-out *per se*. This is "freedom to choose *one thing at a time*." Great as is the difficulty of eliciting full comprehension of the principle within the Social Credit movement, it is incomparably greater outside. Yet we find that outside it has now assumed the status of a priority item for discussion: Freedom, that is to say, is definitely 'on the agenda.'

To us the talk may seem desultory. On the same basis, a Yale lock might be stigmatised as 'desultory': six (let us say six) broken cylinders which move entirely independently of one another, whose planes of fracture are infinitely variable in position: to bring them into line is to 'jump from one thing to another' with a vengeance! If it were not for the fact that, in practice, there *is* such a thing as a 'tight-squeeze,' the rule one-key-one-lock would be absolute, and the number of possible locks infinite.

We are far from regarding M. Jacques Maritain, the Austrian-American university lecturer Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Dr. Ira Progoff, Dr. C. G. Jung, Dr. Erich Fromm and Lord Percy of Newcastle as in any sense comparable to half-a-dozen brass cylinders broken across at varying distances from their middles, and moving (more or less) freely up and down six bore-holes in a closely fitting jacket of human society. Nor should we say that, if neatly adjusted by a suitably notched key, they would turn and open the 'door to the future' to which mankind imagines its gaze to be directed. It is not disrespectful—at least in intention

—to say that their noses are at least flattened against the same window-pane. Each desires to see what we desire to see. This is more apparent in some cases than in others; but even a steadfast pursuit of the conditions in which it may be seen is some evidence of an underlying desire to see it. Had Douglas been 'accepted of the people' twenty years ago, we should all see it. Had any one of our mentors, guides and searchers mentioned been 'accepted of the people' twenty years ago, we should be no nearer seeing it—unless by the silent operation of distant causes: for truth is one and indivisible and has no parts. It is the singularity of truth that it 'adds up.' The bits and pieces of present society don't 'add up.' The cosmic shaking which seems to be on the way may as easily shatter all human hope as shake the bits and pieces into place. Yet, where thinking is fairly free from the corruption of the market place, something is preparing. Consider the following confessions:—

"The price of peace is the renunciation, in large measure, of success as the main driving force in thought, work and politics." (Maritain.)

"If a world political society is some day founded, it will be by means of freedom. *It is by means of freedom that the peoples of the earth will have been brought to a common will to live together.*" (Maritain.)

"The Sabbath ritual . . . is more than a 'day of rest' in the modern sense; it is a symbol of salvation and freedom. This is also the meaning of God's rest; this rest is not necessary for God because he is tired, but it expresses the idea that great as creation is, greater and crowning creation is peace; God's work is a condescension; he must 'rest,' not because he is tired but because he is free and fully God only when he has ceased to work. So is man fully man only when he does not work, when he is at peace with nature and his fellow men. . . ." (Erich Fromm.)

" . . . the problem of our time remains—to have good government with personal liberty; to have a maximum of security with a maximum of liberty. For the solution of such a problem, democracy offers no solution, because the masses, choosing between freedom and the illusion of economic security, will usually head straight for the will-o'-the-wisp. After having fallen prey to the *fausse idée claire* of democracy they will succumb to the even *false idée claire* of national or international socialism." (von Kuehnelt-Leddihn.)

"The solution of the psychological problem of our time, for our civilisation and for the individual, lies in the emergence of strong, new, creative faiths, that much is clear. But the means by which they are to emerge is not so clear." (Progoff.)

Everyone is agreed (excepting the planners) that man possesses a 'self-righting mechanism' which he cannot or will not release. He wants someone else to release it for him, and looks to the planners to do so, which is the exact opposite of their intention.

Like "K" in Kafka's *The Trial*, everyone is like a child dependent upon its mother. He believes, the source of all good to be *outside*, and the problem of living is to avoid the risk of losing the good graces of this source. But "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

The Three Rules

Not at first hand, but *via* the parish paper of All Saints', Margaret Street, W.1., we quote the following extract from the forthcoming book, *Six Nonlectures* by E. E. Cummings, which has appeared in the Oxford Press's *Periodical*. In our source, Mr. Cummings is said to have explained why "the Christian Religion is not popular, and why popular religion is not Christian." While this particular 'reciprocal dissociation' or 'dissonance,' may be a fact, if it is so, it is *inter alia*, and the phenomenon is of major social and political significance:—

"Rather recently—in New York City—an old college chum, whom I hadn't beheld for decades, appeared out of nowhere to tell me he was through with civilisation. It seems that ever since Harvard he'd been making (despite all sorts of panics and panaceas) big money as an advertising writer; and this remarkable feat unutterably depressed him. After profound meditation, he concluded that America, and the world which she increasingly dominated, couldn't really be as bad as she and it looked through an advertising writer's eyes; and he promptly determined to seek another view—a larger view; in fact, the largest view obtainable. Bent on obtaining this largest obtainable view of America and America's world my logical expal wangled an appointment with a subsubeditor of a magazine (if magazine it may be called) possessing the largest circulation on earth: a periodical whose each emanation appears simultaneously in almost every existing human language. Our intrepid explorer then straightened his tie, took six deep breaths, cleared his throat, swam right up, presented his credentials, and was politely requested to sit down. He sat down.

"'Now listen' the subsubeditor suggested 'if you're thinking of working with us, you'd better know The Three Rules.' 'And what' my friend cheerfully inquired 'are The Three Rules?' 'The Three Rules' explained his mentor 'are: first, eight to eighty; second, anybody can do it; and third, makes you feel better.' 'I don't quite understand' my friend confessed. 'Perfectly simple' his interlocutor assured him. 'Our first Rule means that every article we publish must appeal to anybody, man, woman or child, between the ages of eight and eighty years—is that clear?' My friend said it was indeed clear. 'Second' his enlightener continued 'every article we publish must convince any reader of the article that he or she could do whatever was done by the person about whom the article was written. Suppose (for instance) you were writing about Lindbergh, who had just flown the Atlantic ocean for the first time in history, with nothing but unlimited nerve and a couple of chicken (or ham was it?) sandwiches—do you follow me?' 'I'm ahead of you' my friend murmured. 'Remembering Rule number two' the subsub went on 'you'd impress upon your readers' minds, over and over again, the fact that (after all) there wouldn't have been anything extraordinary about Lindbergh if he hadn't been just a human being like every single one of them. See?' 'I see' said my friend grimly. 'Third' the subsub intoned 'we'll imagine you're describing a record-breaking Chinese flood—millions of poor unfortunate men and women and little children and helpless babies drowning and drowned; millions more perishing of slow starvation: suffering inconceivable, untold agonies, and so forth—well, any reader of this article must feel definitely and distinctly better, when she or he finishes the article, than

when he or she began it.' 'Sounds a trifle difficult' my friend hazarded. 'Don't be silly' the oracle admonished. 'All you've got to do, when you're through with your horrors, is to close by saying: but (thanks to an all-merciful Providence) we Americans, with our high standard of living and our Christian ideals, will never be subjected to such inhuman conditions; as long as the Stars and Stripes triumphantly float over one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all—get me?' 'I get you' said my disillusioned friend. 'Good bye.'

New Zealand

Entitled "The Social Credit Policy Statement," a pamphlet put out in New Zealand reads for the most part like a party political programme, and not at all like a Social Credit statement of policy. The title is therefore misleading. The Policy of Social Crediters, and the underlying Philosophy are merely referred to in two short paragraphs. The pamphlet then immediately plunges into technicalities, and some of very doubtful validity. The author is not disclosed, and it may be a joint effort with all the inevitable faults. It is at the same time extremely vague and concerns itself with petty matters of insignificant detail, *e.g.*, taxation of donations to charities.

The greatest fault of the pamphlet however is that nowhere does it give the slightest indication of immediate problems of *how* the policy is to be implemented, or even of the authors' realisation that they exist. Douglas's writings and warnings of the last 20 years and more appear to have been completely wasted on this branch of the N.Z.S.C. movement. How to cross the barrier in front of us should be the whole and sole preoccupation of that Movement. Such a pamphlet is a godsend to the enemy as he can safely leave its readers to discuss in a vacuum the points raised. While they do that they can't be doing anything effective.

H.R.P.

THE FIG TREE

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