

THE SOCIAL CREDITER

FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

Vol. 34. No. 17.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1956.

6d. Fortnightly.

Blind Stagers

by C. H. DOUGLAS

THE STAGGERS, ABOUT WHICH MAJOR DOUGLAS WROTE IN 1941, ARE NO LESS BLIND TO-DAY.

Mark Twain had a story, doubtless apocryphal, of an occasion on which he broke a leg in a lonely mountain district, and there were only two medical practitioners who could be reached. One was a Christian Scientist who (at the urgent request of the Editor) will not be further mentioned in this article. The second was a horse doctor, who sent a message that the patient was to drink two gallons of hot turpentine, into which two pounds of bran had been mixed, and he would be along presently. When he did arrive, Mark, who had delayed the preliminary treatment, enquired as to its utility as a cure for broken legs. "Waal," said the expert, "I ain't so much of a leg healer, but that thar mixter would a' giv you blind stagers, and I kin cure that."

This simple narrative contains, I think, the Big Idea of the World Planners. "Only," said Mr. Israel Moses Sieff, hopefully, "in war, or under threat of war will the Government engage in large scale planning."

Similarly, the anonymous broadcaster with the slightly nasal accent who paints a picture of the combined conveyor-belt factory and Sankey and Moody conventicle which is to be the Heaven after the War, and then enjoins us to lift up our hearts just before breakfast, evidently grasps the drift of things. A few more years shall roll, a few more bombs shall drop, and we shall be in Moscovy, with the Jew right up on top.

Now the simple fact is that the world does not want large scale planning, and does not need large scale planning in the sense the planners want it. There never in history has been a greater swindle than the propaganda which has been poured out to suggest (a) "The world must have more economic efficiency"; (b) "the inevitable trend of evolution is to larger and larger units." The object of this propaganda has nothing to do with what the world wants or needs, still less with what the *individual* wants and needs. It is precisely similar in origin, nature and object to the idea behind a comment made to me 20 years ago in New York by one of the leaders of Big Business who had not quite grasped my views: "What we need to do is to squeeze out all these little fellows, and then we can run things as we want them, and make some real profits." "Profits" is a word which can have a wide meaning.

There is one cure, and one cure only, for the pestilence which afflicts the world, and will continue to afflict the world until it is adopted. "Every man shall sit under *his own* (not 'the Government's') vine and fig tree, and none shall make him afraid."

For my own part, I am satisfied that the economic chaos in Europe during the last twenty years is deliberate in nature, and specifically designed to mislead populations as to its cause, to reconcile them to a quack "cure" and in particular to create a situation which would destroy the free initiative of Great Britain.

And no one in this country has yet been shot for it. And you notice that the Riom War Guilt Trial, in France, has not taken place.

Fluoridation of Water Supplies

The following letter appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 8, 1956:

Sir,—Let us approach the question of fluoridation of water supplies from a logical standpoint.

If it is the Government's job to see to it that we are all bristling with health, then let's do the thing properly. The water supply can be made the transmission device of every beneficial substance which mankind can discover—a little Epsom, a little liver salt—and so on *ad infinitum*. On the other hand, if health is the responsibility of individual people and not the job of Government, let's keep it that way.

If fluorides are beneficial, they can be bottled, powdered, tableted or otherwise prepared and sold over the counter as needed—like the thousand and one other cure-alls.

I for one am profoundly grateful for the statement by Professor Sir C. Stanton Hicks that mass medication is unscientific and unethical.

I hope there will be a storm of protest against this march towards socialised medicine.

Pymble.

F. E. G. BATLEY.

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This journal expresses and supports the policy of the Social Credit Secretariat, which is a non-party, non-class organisation neither connected with nor supporting any political party, Social Credit or otherwise.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *Home and abroad, post free:**
One year 30/-; Six months 15/-; Three months 7s. 6d.
Offices—*Business and Editorial:* 11, GARFIELD STREET, BELFAST.
Telephone: Belfast 27810.

*Note: The above rates cover subscription to *Voice*, appearing fortnightly in alternate weeks with *The Social Crediter*.

The Vote Against Leisure

The elements of the economic situation are simple, and should be easily within the comprehension of the average worker. The financial mechanism which maintains the situation is more difficult to grasp, but an understanding of it is not necessary to everyone.

The basis of the situation is that the consumer, collectively, can only buy the things he wants on condition that he produces something he doesn't want, or can't get if he does want it—surplus factories, production for export in excess of import, 'public' works, *etc.*

A working week of twenty hours, or less, would produce all the consumer wants, if all workers were engaged on the production of consumers' goods. The workers engaged on production of consumers goods have to work twice as long as necessary so as to feed, clothe and shelter the workers engaged on producing capital goods and goods for export surplus.

In the past, factories and capital equipment have been built by private enterprise. Most of the factories we want have been built, and there is no special hurry to build the remainder. We can leave something for our children to do, and why shouldn't we?

But since we do not need so much effort now devoted to factory-building, governments plan to construct 'public' works, on a grand scale—to keep up 'full employment.'

By doing this, they will take the labour which could be used to shorten the working week.

Economically, there is no immediate difference in the effect of maintaining an army, and maintaining workers engaged on construction that will be of value to their descendants, but not to themselves. Both involve the sacrifice of the present standard of living.

To whom is this sacrifice made?

If it is a sacrifice to posterity, then posterity should inherit not a debt, but a dividend. A sacrifice to our forefathers is meaningless.

But we are the posterity of our sacrificing forefathers, and our legacy is the possibility of enjoying increasing leisure. Instead, we inherit increasing debt, which is reflected in the fact that we have to produce more than we receive.

The vital factor which controls the length of the working week, and the standard of living, is the *ratio* between

consumer-production and capital and export-production. The more workers engaged on capital-production, the greater the exploitation of the workers. Fewer men have to work longer hours on consumer-production, and, naturally, the rest of the workers have their working hours adjusted to that scale.

The current 'economic' argument is that if governments spend money on public works, they keep up the level of purchasing power, and hence maintain prosperity. The argument is false. Public works depress the standard of living. They put one section of the community to work at the expense of the rest of the community.

Thus when an appeal is made to our prejudice against "maintaining people in idleness," it is simply a trick to keep our noses to the grindstone. The real physical meaning is that some of our leisure time is taken to put others to work. Penalised unemployment is simply the mal-distribution of leisure, and 'abolishing' unemployment is the theft of leisure.

A grasp of this situation ought to make it clear to the worker that a vote for 'full' employment is a vote against the reduction of his own working hours. 'His' Governments are simply leading him up the garden path; and when he realises that, we can show him what to do about it.

The Menace of Utopianism

Now a great deal of what I have been saying can be reduced to the good old English advice to "Mind your own business." But I should like to expand this to "Don't meddle with your neighbour's business, but assist him to mind his own." The difference is the difference between saying to a destitute friend, "I will convey you to a Poor-Law institution where you will be given three meals a day if you do exactly as you are told," on the one hand, and on the other hand saying, "I will settle £50 a year upon you for life, which will at any rate keep you in necessities; what *kind* of necessities you obtain you can judge for yourself."

—C.H. Douglas in an address in 1937:
"Security Institutional and Personal."

Correction

In the second paragraph of Miss G. Marsden's letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, re-published on page 4 of our issue for July 21, 1956, the word "constitutional" should read "unconstitutional."

"Whose Service is Perfect Freedom"

by

C. H. Douglas.

Foreword by Tudor Jones.

5/- Post Free.

K.R.P. Publications, Ltd., 11, Garfield Street, Belfast.

Our Cultural Disinheritance

[AS IT IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE TO MANY OF OUR READERS, WE PUBLISH DR. TUDOR JONES'S ESSAY WHICH ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN "THE FIG TREE" (OLD SERIES), SEPTEMBER, 1936].

(Concluded)

III

The processes, whereby the additions are made, are understood only in principle, and principles, as Douglas has said, have no separate existence. Thus, if we accept the description of Elliot Smith, the restraining makeweight constantly opposed to the cumulative power of man to effect changes in his own environment, is derived in the main from the discarded rubbish of his own experiments: discarded science (error) becomes magic, a prodigious husk imprisoning the living seed of effective knowledge. Every event in nature consciously induced by man embodies the opposite principle. To count them would be as counting the stars of past universes.

Let us suppose that the objects before us in the experiment suggested in an earlier paragraph are merely a green baize cloth, a deal table and a cup of water. The observer may soon convince himself that even if he should be well-equipped to organise and direct the manufacture of dyes or the transport of glue, the actual production and distribution in 1936 of a green baize cloth, a deal table and a cup of water, involve processes, and many of them, of which he is ignorant and the existence of which he did not suspect. Some of these processes are industrial, recent and secret; others are intellectual, ancient and of long and obscure historical development. It is in most cases, if not in all, impossible to separate productive actions carried out in our time from past productive actions of which they are the sequelae, and any common object of modern life is seen, as soon as we enquire into its history, and into the history of the objects upon which it depends for its existence, to be as much the heir to the ages as it is a ponderable mass of matter with its own structure, form and function.

To require that the modern heritor of such objects should know much more about them than that they are there, available for the realisation of specific purposes: to be made, bought, sold and used, *is to require that he should be capable of repeating in his own experience the whole history of human development in society.* It does not matter how small is the fragment chosen for consideration, however seemingly trivial, its significance grows as we consider its ever-branching roots, until it seems to be itself the product of all civilised effort. It is.

No one is capable of repeating in his own experience the creative events which have contributed to any item of modern culture. Broadly speaking, all the items existent in any generation are inherited collectively by the individuals of the following generation. The inheritance is cumulative and vast.

IV

The popular attitude to this process of human enrichment is indicated by the almost universal prejudice in favour of the belief that it implies an increase in the intelligence

of some of the individuals, if not all, who inherit it. There is not a shred of evidence to support the claim that modern man is a whit cleverer than his prehistoric ancestors. The belief that he is so is by no means confined to untutored persons. Browning betrayed it when, poetically, he implied that God was still busily manufacturing fresh giants, and asked Him to make no more of them. The moralist deploring man's tardy attainment of wisdom, and the classicist the modern's lack of taste, both unconsciously assert their superior intelligence. Mention man on the threshold of civilisation, and the image conjured up by most people is that of some rude uncultivated savage, scarcely able to hold his head erect, breathless and inarticulate, scratching figures on the walls of caves. Members of the "aboriginal" races are still to be found to give an air of verisimilitude to this picture; but it is sheer ignorance to confound the less intelligent specimens of the so-called primitive races with the men and women whose immediate descendants were concerned with the establishment of the elements of civilisation. The pre-dynastic remains unearthed in Egypt provide conclusive evidence that there has been no such marked modification in the human brain-case during the growth of civilisation as to warrant the assumption that this growth has been accompanied by an increase in the natural powers of man.

The colossal power of modern man is an increment of association derived from his unconsciousness co-operation with the legions of the dead. It is not a measure of his own intellectual stature.

V

W. H. R. Rivers, whose posthumous "Psychology and Ethnology" appeared in 1926, drew attention in that work to another important series of social phenomena, namely, the frequency with which cultural elements have disappeared—completely in the event, incompletely in that the generated investment of magic might acquire fresh vigour in consequence of its severance from its material origin. (These overheads!). Only one aspect of this observation has been developed—its bearing upon the diffusion of culture, to which Rivers regarded it as being not only a kind of exception proving the rule, but explanatory of many of the obscurities of social psychology. I am sure that only his untimely death prevented the fruition of his observations, which were rich and penetrating, in a demonstration disconcerting to those who look upon society as a product of a *natural* evolution. Since, in an objective sense, not necessarily involving recognition by the individuals concerned, the most vital *interest* of men in society lies in the nature and control of the dynamic forces working in society, this fact of cultural *disinheritance* which Rivers was beginning to illustrate is a major concern for us. Major Douglas has made clear the technical methods elaborated to secure it, pointing out at the same time their artificiality and the arrogance and tyranny inseparable from the use of them.

The more we know about them the better.

Most of us understand that metaphors and similes, figures of speech, are unsafe things to use, however decorative; and many of us know that most of the terms of modern science are metaphors. The scientific metaphors are prevented from being the most dangerous metaphors only because fundamentally science has more to do with events than with the representation of events symbolically. Nevertheless when the danger of scientific metaphors does become apparent, it usually appears to us with a force transcending the force of the dangers inherent in mere verbal errors.

A common metaphor used in dealing with all matters of growth and development is the tree metaphor. No danger could possibly exceed the danger lurking in the misuse of this concept. The least dangerous use is that to which the tree is put by genealogists. The genealogists' tree, be it noted, has its roots waving in a pruned, disconnected, untidy, but nevertheless quite honestly unnatural fashion *in the air*. How is it that the trees of racial descent and of cultural anthropology ever became upturned again and stuck like little rose trees in flower pots? They pretend to be such trees of *descent* as the genealogists' trees; but have already shed a most important element of their truth: they grow up the page of time to the beginning, instead of down the page of time to us. And this is part of a colossal deception. Gratifying to our protean vanities as it may be to picture ourselves couched in lofty foliage, the standpoint of an insect clinging to the uttermost leaf is not a favourable standpoint for the study of the nature and growth of trees. The evidence available concerns at most a multiplicity of leaves, not a common trunk; and while twigs, branches and a trunk might be traversed in time, the natural destination of the most pertinacious insect pursuing his way from one to the other is the ground from which the tree grows, not the "concept" tree. The individual insect's account of such a descent might properly be: "I passed from the bright illumination of the upper surface of a leaf to the lower surface, thence to a stalk, green in colour, thence to the darker and rougher bark of a thicker stalk to *accompany* which a similar stalk ran after a time and so after many additions to the thickness of my support, in like manner, I passed to an expanse of grass."

The "leaf" which the present writer may be said to rest upon at the present moment, is a white octagonal button with a concave upper surface marked by the sign T (the typewriter key for the letter 't' completing the word *moment*). This key was an element in the cultural inheritance of his "present moment"; but he could not pass from this "leaf" to anything that is truly the cultural twig from which the key grew. Without pressing the physical incongruity (which is irrelevant), this item of the cultural inheritance, pictured only in its more massive features as an end-point in time of typewriter-metals-chemistry-of gums-(the imitation ivory keys)-levers-springs-ink-printing-writing, leads not to a stalk of the cultural "tree" but into the whole of the cultural nexus of a past time. The biological concepts of descent and branching growth are totally inapplicable to the processes underlying the expansion of human culture. The descent of the cultural inheritance is continuous but non-linear. Our knowledge of it is discontinuous.

Now while the biological concepts are inadequate, we

should not leave them before suggesting another major error in the metaphor. Trees grow in an atmosphere more or less uniformly and abundantly illuminated from above, and this feature is unconsciously in the minds of those who use the tree metaphor. How different the cultural "tree" for it is "horizontally" illuminated by a "beam of light" by no means abundant, very much like that which would issue from a narrow slit between knife-edges in front of a lantern held in the hand of a policeman seated in Bergson's "ever becoming, ever present now"; and unfortunately the policeman can move about in that time plane: can determine the development or non-development of each leaf, and control each potential distribution of the increment of association of the cultural elements! Each deflection of his "beam" from a cultural "leaf" implies the abortion of a "tree" of human culture as vast and elaborate as our own. Thus human potentiality since civilisation began has been all the time its actual attainment at any given time, magnified by a complex function of all its abortions before that time. Our cultural disinheritance can be pictured as an Amazonian forest in which our cultural inheritance is a tiny atavistic weed.

Someone has said that all failure is a failure of imagination. If our generation could but see its disinheritance! The social environment constituted by past and present systems of control is in every respect as "selective," in an evolutionary sense, as the natural environment. It is incomparably more restricted, as may be inferred from comparing the impressive variety and perfection of forms in nature, with the narrow fertility of human life when, as now and throughout civilisation, all excellencies and aptitudes which do not "minister to the sacred flame" of control, are denied development.

If we are ever freed from this tyranny we shall look back upon its crimes against nature, as measured in the real terms of deprivation (of disinheritance), as upon a phase of human history incomprehensible in respect of the motives which inspired it, and the failure of human will which made its evil conquests possible.

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Published by K.R.P. Publications Ltd., at 11, Garfield Street, Belfast.
Printed by J. Hayes & Co., Woolton, Liverpool.