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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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Escape from Utopia

A SECTION OF AN ADDRESS, "SECURITY INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL," GIVEN BY MAJOR C. H. DOUGLAS IN 1937.

Now, once again, I can imagine quite a number of people in this audience saying that I am one of those people who has a complete set of blue-prints for the construction of a Utopia, and therefore perhaps you will allow me to explain exactly why I should not agree to that charge. I have no views whatever as to how my neighbour should spend his time, so long as his method of spending it does not infringe upon my own liberties.

To me it is a matter of no consequence whatever that many or most people are very much richer than I am. The only financial matter which *is* of consequence to me is that I shall be well enough off to meet my own needs, which are quite modest, as I believe are those of most people. The technical proposals which I have put forward from time to time may be considered to differ from, let us say, the well-known beliefs of Utopianism, such as Fascism, Communism, State-Socialism, and so forth, in that, so far from exerting further compulsion upon individuals in order that they may conform to some machine-made conception of a perfect state, *I should like by the simplest possible methods to provide people with the means of making their own individual lives approximate to their own ideas, and not to mine.*

The more I see of Governments, the lower is my opinion of them and I am confident that what the world wants at the present time is a great deal less government, and not a great deal more.

Now I want to get a further perfectly simple idea into your minds. And that is that *Governments are your property and you are not the property of Governments.* There is no more pernicious and blasphemous nonsense existent in the world to-day than the statement which has been incorporated in the constitution of the modern dictatorship, which claims that the State, by which is indicated the Government, is everything and the individual nothing. On the contrary, *the individual is everything* and the State is a mere convenience to enable him to co-operate for his own advantage. It is this idea of the supreme State in its various forms which has made the State the tool of the international financier who has mortgaged all States to himself.

The first step towards the security of the individual is to insist upon the security of the individual. I hope that is not too difficult to understand. If you place the security

of any institution before the security of the individual, you may prolong the life of that institution, but you will certainly shorten the lives of a great many individuals. Institutions are means to an end, and I do not think it is too much to say that the elevation of means into ends, of institutions above humanity, constitutes an unforgiveable sin, in the pragmatic sense that it brings upon itself the most tremendous penalties that life contains. ...

A great deal of our trouble in this country arises from the fact that, while we place great faith in the aristocratic ideal (if you prefer to call it the principle of leadership I shall not object), yet we have allowed all those influences which make the aristocratic ideal reasonable and workable to be sapped and wrecked by the exaltation of money as the sole certificate of greatness, and have allowed cosmopolitan and alien financiers to obtain a monopoly of money. We have retained the ideal and allowed the material of which it is constructed to become hopelessly degraded. In consequence, we are governed in the aristocratic tradition by a hypocritical and selfish oligarchy with one idea, and one fundamental idea only; the ascendancy of money, and the essential monopoly of it.

The essence of the aristocratic tradition is detachment—the doing of things in the best way because it *is* the best way, not because you get something out of it. That requires that the leader shall be secure. No one is secure nowadays. At the root of the growing danger of Government and other embodiments of execution is the idea that human beings are all alike. So far from this being the case, I believe that as human beings develop they become increasingly different. But they have common factors, and those common factors are the only part of the human make-up which can be dealt with by a democratic system, and ought to be dealt with by a democratic system.

It was, I think, Emerson who said that "we descend to meet." Whoever said it, it is profoundly true. We all require food, clothing and shelter; and we *can* combine and *ought* to combine, to get those necessities as a condition for further acquiescence in combining for any other agreed purpose. The primary use of a Government in a sane world would be to make it certain that the greatest common measure of the will of the population, from whom it derives—or ought to derive—its authority, is enough money for decent sustenance.

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Tactics

Strategy is, broadly, the affair of generals; tactics the peculiar business of troops. Generalship has provided those who are politically with us with a strategy. There has been dissent from this strategy among those not politically with us. Objectively, we should describe these dissenters as generally those who have not completely disengaged themselves from the twin ideas of 'majority rule' (control of minorities) and 'socialism' in one form or another (supremacy of the group over the individual).

However innocently, they seek the employment of a *mechanism* which they favour. The purpose of the mechanism is hazy, unspecified, or too loosely specified. It is indefinite. The mechanism is definite, so they embrace it and unconsciously substitute it for a policy. Policy has receded as mechanism has come to occupy their minds.

The strategy disclosed from time to time in these pages (though rather more than less continuously) is not objected to by those who truly entertain the objective it is designed to gain. It is seen, however, to have too little tactical expression. That is a matter for the individual social creditor (and his natural allies).

While, in warfare, every effort is made to preserve secrecy concerning matters of strategy, it does not seem in practice, easy to keep the larger strategical issues from the knowledge of the enemy, possibly because they are the inevitable counterpart of his own strategical problems. The actual measures taken to express a strategy are in an altogether different case, and every move is watched to see whether it discloses which choice of possibly divergent strategies has been made by the opposing forces, whether it is likely to be well developed, what actual forces may impede its development, *etc., etc.* Tactics are a key to strategy as well as an index to the necessity for counteraction. For this reason, tactical advice communicated through the Secretariat has been of a kind which could be developed quickly (the Electoral Campaign for the Abolition of Poverty, the Lower Rates Campaign, the short-lived Tax-Bonds Campaign, the Anti Bureaucracy Campaign of the recent general election, the still more recent campaign against monopolistic spoliation of Scotland)—in each of these the correctness of the underlying principle was demonstrated and the relative insufficiency of the forces available, except locally, *e.g.*, at North Berwick, where Sir William Beveridge was dislodged for reasons well understood by those who did the dislodging, namely, the electors in the constituency, or, rather, enough of them to matter. The outcome of the Hydro-Electric Campaign will depend on the sanctions

engaged, which will partly depend on the energy expended in fortifying their will.

In such tactical operations, maximum publicity is generally in our favour: we have nothing to hide; and are seeking persistently to disclose something of vital importance to everyone, rather than to conceal it; concealment (at least of the truth) is the necessary strategy of the Dictatorship. At the same time, minute advice concerning tactics which can be developed only over a considerable period has great disadvantages. The initiative passes to the opposition because his mind is already better prepared than the unsophisticated individuals who are advised, and the opposition has full opportunity for diversions and has abundance of supplies.

But it should no longer be necessary to broadcast minute instructions concerning tactics, even for campaigns not based on a familiar model. The great issues consciously in the minds of most members of the community suggest their own tactics. The battle is 'joined': either the individual lies down at the given signal, accepting defeat without opposing to it any force at all, physical or moral, or he 'does something about it.' We are nearer by many stages than we were even three months ago to the point where our special assistance is in guiding the hand of the resister into intelligent and effective resistance and away from useless if not disastrous reaction. Reaction is a phenomenon of physics; resistance is a moral quality. Even officialdom is now less assured in the face of public objection. Its very insolence is a sign that a pathological state is developing at its heart. The enemy is sick. Thus we begin to hear of citizens who manage to 'get away' with what belongs to them!

The increment of association is something usually connected with a time element: a pound weight applied to the rope every half-hour for twenty hours has a different result from a weight of forty pounds applied at once. If we have heard it once during the past week we have heard it twenty times that Inland Revenue officials specially dislike letters which concern them (in an official capacity) being addressed to Members of Parliament. As the bureaucracy grows, there are more and more targets for the suffering public. In the past fortnight we have heard of the apparently spontaneous institution, (with the guidance of infuriated schoolmasters of the better sort—and there is in all ranks of society a better sort) of Parents' Councils designed to adjust the perspective of the dupes of P.E.P., *etc., etc.* They may not all know whom they are after; but they sound as if they were eager to learn! Even Labour Members of Parliament are not all rogues, and, indeed, it is probable that the newer they are to the shock of Parliament the less roguish. Certainly they can be informed. But (to come back to tactics) they are probably more open to receive information concerning matters upon which they have shown some perplexity than upon matters outside their ken.

—T.J. in *The Social Crediter*, December 22, 1945.

Food Resources

... His main attack was directed against those politicians, scientists and economists who believe that the world's resources will prove quite insufficient to meet the needs of the increasing world population.

Mr. Clark said that most of these prophets of woe showed a complete unawareness of "the simplest facts of geography and agriculture," and of the extraordinary rapidity with which requirements of scarce materials and fibres were being met by substitutes. In two years, no authority had disagreed with Professor Dudley Stamp, of London, who pointed out at the World Population Conference in 1954 that the world was using only about a third of its cultivable land, and that much of what was being cultivated was capable of greatly increased output. If agriculture of Danish standards were to be practised on all the available cultivable land, there would be enough food produced to give an excellent diet to probably seven times the world's present population.

Mr. Clark was equally contemptuous of the statement, frequently repeated by prominent scientists, that two-thirds of the world's population was suffering malnutrition; this assertion, he said, was based upon a complete misunderstanding of the evidence.

—*The Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1956.

Mr. Colin Clark was giving his inaugural lecture to the Liberal Summer School at Giston College, Cambridge, on August 3, 1956.

The biggest grain surplus in Canadian history will pile up across the prairies after this year's harvest. But the men who raise the wheat in one of the world's greatest granaries do not seem unduly worried.

Despite some gloomy statements recently in Ottawa by politicians wooing the farm vote the overall picture out here on the Western prairies is of a relatively prosperous community. Nevertheless, many formidable problems face Canadian farmers—astronomical surpluses; storage space shortages; prospects of lower world prices; a drift of manpower from farms to towns; and the declining importance of wheat in Canada's economic structure.

—*The Daily Telegraph*, London, August 7, 1956.

Mr. Nugent, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, recently warned producers that the production of eggs is rapidly approaching the capacity of the nation to consume them. And the latest figures for the number of hens—10 per cent. up on last year—suggest that there will be a record crop of eggs next year. The inference is that there will be a reduction in the guaranteed price for eggs at the annual review next February, about which time the production of eggs will reach its yearly maximum and prices will fall.

—*The Daily Telegraph*, London, August 9, 1956.

The following letter is from the correspondence columns of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 13, 1956:

Sir,—So the Egg Board aims to reduce exports to Britain by two million dozen eggs, incidentally saving the Egg Board £132,000 per annum, roughly 1 1-3d. per egg held back from export.

Simultaneously, the board will launch in Britain an "Eat More Australian Eggs" campaign at an expense of £30,000.

How very "Egg-Boardie."

Mr. Bruce, the chairman of the Egg Board, states that the board "planned" to introduce "modern merchandising methods" on the home market. Would it be rude to inquire of Mr. Bruce what was the intention of the Egg Board when it built its million pound palace? Was it merely to provide a comfortable home from home for a bunch of State employees?

What has the board been doing if it, only at this date, now proposes to introduce "better egg quality . . . better transport, more modern handling and testing methods, and more efficient handling by the shopkeepers"?

Let me assure Mr. Bruce and his board that neither the shopkeepers nor their grandmothers require any instruction relative to eggs from him or his confreres. All the shopkeepers need is eggs (you know—spherical white to middle brown coloured objects encased in a lime content fragile covering; mentioned in the Act, I believe, as the "product of the adult female bird.")

We don't even require fancy cartons. We cannot eat 'em. Mr. Bruce and his circle can eat cartons if they wish.

Above all, let me advise Mr. Bruce and his thoroughly useless machine that we, as a people, do not require any "vigorous point-of-sale advertising in co-operation with retailers" to teach us to "Eat More Eggs." All that is required at the "point of sale" of eggs. The people will do the rest.

Manly.

GEORGE E. WHITTLE.

Automation

The Belfast Newsletter published the following letter on June 4, 1956:

Sir,—There is a book, written in the early thirties, by the American author, Stewart Chase, called *The Tyranny of Words* which deals with man's diabolical propensity to employ language deliberately to obscure the truth, rather than, as was intended, to assist him along the road to its discovery.

To whom are we indebted for this new term "Automation," applied to the progressive mechanisation of productive process which has been a constant and familiar element of industrialism since its earliest days? Surely its sudden and universal adoption requires some explanation? Is it too much to hope that it may herald the dawn of a change in the official attitude towards the chronic state of internal economic crises to which modern society has been compelled to accustom itself? Is it possible that under the immense pressure, in Great Britain, particularly, of the need to export, in combination with the crippling handicap placed upon our efforts to compete in the world market by the internal inflation, orthodox political economy is preparing to loosen-up in its views on national accountancy?

To take the recent case of the Standard Motor Works as a significant example of this new atmosphere—superficially there was nothing sufficiently novel to account for the sudden increase of public and official interest it caused. Employees to a considerable number were to be laid off while the tractor-plant was being completely re-equipped

with automatic machinery at a huge capital cost, and except for the unusual scale of the operation, and the request on the part of the displaced operatives for a guarantee of re-employment, there seemed little that was exceptional in the situation. But what was, to the best of my knowledge, absolutely unprecedented, was the particular form in which Mr. Dick, the managing director of the Standard Co. refused to comply with the men's request—as, in view of the conditions imposed on both parties by the system under which they operate, he was forced to do.

Instead of the customary economic equivocations and assurances regarding the value of automatic machines as a means of creating additional work for those in search of a job, Mr. Dick is reported to have replied, "We don't instal £4,000,000 equipment to employ the same number of men."

Now that statement may be blunt; no doubt there are many to whom it appeared tactless and undiplomatic, even brutal, but beyond all possibility of contradiction it is a relatively factual statement, and to be welcomed as such by all who love truth. It provides a firm basis, however apparently small, for the hopeful examination of differences between the contending parties; admitting a draft of fresh air into the positively suffocating atmosphere of orthodox economic discussion.

In speaking as he did for organised capital, American scientific business management really, Mr. Dick enunciated a valuable truism, in circumstances that might almost be taken as elevating it into a principle of official policy. Generalised, it might read, "The ultimate object of installing labour-saving machines is to save labour."

It requires considerable courage to pronounce the truth publicly, and Mr. Dick is to be congratulated, even if his is to some extent the courage of desperation; a condition that applies equally to the men confronted by this enigmatic word "Automation," which, read backwards, that is in terms of our present monetary system, spells redundancy, unemployment.

It is only a step from this to another far-too-long-ignored truism pronounced by Adam Smith some hundred and fifty years ago, to the effect that, "The sole object of production is consumption"—not the provision of jobs, be it observed. With these two truths alone inscribed on its banner, and interpreted with realism, modern industry, with its almost incredible technological facility, could go almost anywhere, and have almost anything it chooses. Words, as Stewart Chase demonstrated, can be the cruellest of tyrants, but that is only when they are in league with untruth; linked with truth, as "Automation" may yet be, they can be the road to freedom.—Yours, &c.,

NORMAN F. WEBB.

Multitude

" . . . If there be among those common objects of hatred I do condemn and laugh at, it is that great enemy of Reason, Virtue and Religion, the Multitude: that numerous piece of monstrosity, which, taken asunder, seem men, and the reasonable creatures of God; but, confused together, make but one great beast, and a monstrosity more prodigious than Hydra. It is no breach of charity to call

these *Fools*; it is the style all holy Writers have afforded them, set down by Solomon in Canonical Scripture, and a point of our Faith to believe so. Neither in the name of *Multitude* do I only include the base and minor sort of people; there is a rabble even amongst the Gentry, a sort of Plebeian heads, whose fancy moves with the same wheel as these; men in the same Level with Mechanicks, though their fortunes do somewhat gild their infirmities, and their purses compound for their follies. But as, in casting account, three or four men together come short in account of one man placed by himself below them; so neither are a troop of these ignorant *Dorados* of that true esteem and value, as many a forlorn person, whose condition doth place him below their feet. Let us speak like Politicians: there is a Nobility without Heraldry, a natural dignity, whereby one man is ranked with another, another filed before him, according to the quality of his Desert, and pre-eminence of his good parts. . . . It is a happiness to be born and framed up to virtue, and to grow up from the seeds of nature, rather than the inoculation and forced grafts of education; yet if we are directed only by our particular Natures, and regulate our inclinations by no higher rule than that of our reasons, we are but Moralists; Divinity will still call us Heathens. . . .

"It is the common wonder of all men, how among so many millions of faces, there should be none alike: now contrary, I wonder as much how there should be any. He that shall consider how many thousand several words have been carelessly and without study composed out of twenty-four Letters; withal, how many hundred lines there are to be drawn in the Fabrick of one Man, shall easily find that this variety is necessary; and it will be very hard that they shall so concur as to make one portrait like another. Let a Painter carelessly limb out a million faces, and you shall find them all different; yea, let him have his Copy before him, yet after all his art there will remain a sensible distinction. . . . Nor doth the similitude of Creatures disparage the variety of Nature, nor any way confound the Works of God. For even in things alike there is diversity; that those that do seem to accord do manifestly disagree . . ."

—Sir Thomas Browne (1605 to 1682). *Religio Medici*.

'Science' and Bernard Shaw

And an old soldier, Mr. Charles McLoughlin, sends us this further passage from Shaw's pen:

"The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its tales were more foolish than all the miracles of the priests. . . . What it spread was not an enlightenment but a malignant disease. Its counsels, which should have established the millenium, have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once more whole-heartedly than any religious fanatic believed his superstitions; for in their name I helped to destroy the faith of the millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith. Oh, that I could but find it! I am ignorant and frightened! I have lost my nerve. I know only this, that I must find the way of life for myself, and for us all; otherwise we shall be irretrievably ruined."

—*The Tablet*, July 28, 1956.