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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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Logic and the Social Order

(A Commentary, originally published in *The Social Crediter* in 1948, on A. N. Whitehead's *Essays in Science and Philosophy**)

II.

It is greatly to be regretted that the essays we are considering are undated, and most of them contain no internal evidence we can put our finger upon to fix the chronological order of their delivery. We surmise that they have been collected posthumously, and it is at least a more sufficient explanation to our mind of their alarming incongruity of argument and sentiment that an unseen editor has discerned (like the *Thinker's Digest* cited on the dust cover) that "one of the finest minds of our time" may have his uses. What a thing does is far from being the worst description of it; and what this collection does is unquestionably to place behind the "dominant social order of our epoch" what authority there may be resident in a voice which has acquired a reputation wide and deep in proportion to the relative inability of the great majority to test its basis. Symbolisms which obey the rules of ordinary algebra, like English which obeys the rules of ordinary grammar, are quite often (we have evidence of the fact) extremely distasteful to the kind of people who compose majorities in any association, and the century which has passed since Hamilton discovered quaternions has made the symbolisms which disobey the rules of ordinary algebra more fruitful technically (in mathematics) than psychologically in preparing democracies for sound mental effort.

One can hear over and over again in these pages the earth, in shovelfuls, resounding from the coffin-lid of philosophy. We hear now and then an echo of the sentiment that, as Etienne Gilson expresses it, "Philosophy always buries its undertakers"; but we cannot clearly discern any suggestion which contradicts the criticism that no protest attends the mutual interment, while "the protest of nature itself asking justice from philosophy" goes unheard. But, had the order been different, we might have had ground for hope, if not for expectation, that Whitehead's progression might end after all as a pilgrimage, and that the Life that was so near to him was not a parallel of his plane of systematised symbolisms but a reality which intersected it, and would continue to intersect it however they should be developed. We wish we could deduce from the fact that memories are consequential to experience that a passage

which appears tantalisingly in an essay devoted to 'Memories,' records a later view of our world than the reflections on "The Increasing Pressure of General Unemployment," and "The Need for Economic Statesmanship," and that, in the reverse order in which they appear in the book, they were somehow linked together by the statement that "Most of the muddles of philosophy are, I think, due to using a language which is developed from one point of view to express a doctrine based upon entirely alien concepts." For the 'entirely alien concept' so far as Life is concerned, is the Whig concept. Here is the passage:—

"At the present time, the system of modern universities has reached its triumphant culmination. They cover all civilised lands, and the members of their faculties control knowledge and its sources. The old system also enjoyed its triumph. From the seventh to the thirteenth century, it also decisively altered the mentalities of the surrounding populations. Men could not endow monasteries or build cathedrals quickly enough. Without doubt they hoped to save their souls; but the merits of their gifts would not have been evident unless there had been a general feeling of the services to the surrounding populations performed by these religious foundations. Then, when we pass over another two centuries, and watch the men about the year fifteen hundred, we find an ominous fact. These foundations, which started with such hope and had performed such services, were in full decay. Men like Erasmus could not speak of them without an expression of contempt. Europe endured a hundred years of revolution in order to shake off the system. Men such as Warham, and Tillotson, and Tait struggled for another three centuries to maintain it in a modified form. But they too have failed. With this analogy in mind, we wonder what in a hundred years, or in two hundred years, will be the fate of the modern university system which now is triumphant in its mission of civilisation. We should search to remove the seeds of decay. We cannot be more secure now than was the ecclesiastical system at the end of the twelfth century and for a century onward. And it failed.

"To my mind our danger is exactly the same as that of the older system. Unless we are careful, we shall conventionalise knowledge, our literary criticisms will suppress initiative. Our historical criticism will conventionalise our ideas of the springs of human conduct. Our scientific systems will suppress all understanding of the ways of the universe which fall outside their abstractions.

"Our modes of testing ability will exclude all the youth

* *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, by A. N. Whitehead, Ryder.

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The Application of Social Credit

It has often been stated that there is no real secret as regards the atom bomb. Once an insight into the nature of the atom had been gained by hypothesis and experiment, it was known that relatively enormous energy was involved in its structure, and that if the structure were broken down the energy would appear. This knowledge was soon confirmed by limited experiments and observations in which this energy was actually released, but in amounts so small as to be detectable only by certain small effects in instruments. With this discovery, the problem of the practical use of atomic energy became entirely one of what the Americans expressively call 'know-how'; and it is the answer to this problem that constitutes the 'secret' of the atom bomb. Similarly, there remains the problem of the 'know-how' in the industrial and beneficial use of atomic energy—a problem of certain solution along the lines which are already apparent to those with a general knowledge of the content of modern physical theory.

Social Credit is something quite analogous to atomic theory. The insight of Major Douglas penetrated to the secret of what he terms the *real credit* of Society. Real credit is a form of power—the capacity of Society to produce goods and services. And what we call the monopoly of credit is an application of real credit much like the application of atomic energy in the atom bomb—a limited and, so far as Society is concerned, a non-beneficial use. The problem of Social Credit is the problem of obtaining the beneficial use of real credit; and that is a problem of 'know-how.' We know quite certainly of the existence of real credit, and have even seen the effect of its monopoly use in effects even more devastating than those caused by the explosions of atomic bombs. The terrible upheavals of our times are manifestations of the monopoly control of real credit.

The Social Credit Movement can be conceived as a body of engineers concerned with the problem of the application of real credit for the benefit of the individuals composing Society—a problem of 'know-how.' We know for sure that it can be done; but the 'how' of it is something to be discovered by prolonged effort and constant experiment. We have, not only to devise, but to build the mechanisms necessary to make the real credit available to the individual—just as, to change the metaphor, electricity is made available to the individual—just as, to change the metaphor, electricity is made available through lamps and irons and motors. It is the actual provision of appropriate mechanisms which, more than anything else, will gain the confidence of the public to support us in our 'research.'

Our mechanisms are largely *institutions*. A Policy Association, for example, is like an electric motor; and the important thing is to build it and get it working satisfactorily. The problem is complicated by the existence of those who desire to monopolise real credit, and who employ 'engineers' to devise mechanisms to divert its use into the political equivalent of the atom bomb, and who seem quite prepared to use it to blast Society rather than have their own monopoly broken.

—*The Australian Social Crediter*, December 6, 1947.

Education by 'The State'

"Were the duty of enforcing universal education once admitted there would be an end to the difficulties about what the State should teach, and how it should teach, which convert the subject into a mere battlefield for sects and parties, causing the time and labour which should have been spent in educating to be wasted in quarrelling about education. If the government would make up its mind to require for every child a good education, it might save itself the trouble of providing one. It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children, and defraying the entire school expenses of those who have no one else to pay for them. The objections which are urged with reason against State education do not apply to the enforcement of education by the State, but to the State's taking upon itself to direct that education; which is a totally different thing. That the whole or any part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as anyone in deprecating. All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general state of education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence. Unless, indeed, when society in general is in so backward a state that it could not or would not provide for itself any proper institutions of education unless the government undertook the task; then, indeed, the government may, as the less of two great evils, take upon itself the business of schools and universities, as it may that of joint stock companies, when private enterprise, in a shape fitted for undertaking great works of industry does not exist in the country. But in general, if the country contains a sufficient number of persons qualified to provide education under government auspices, the same persons would be able and willing to give an equally good education on the voluntary principle, under the assurance of remuneration afforded by a law rendering education compulsory, combined with State aid to those unable to defray the expense."

—John Stuart Mill (1859).

LOGIC AND THE SOCIAL ORDER—

(continued from page 1.)

whose ways of thought lie outside our conventions of learning. In such ways the universities, with their scheme of orthodoxies, will stifle the progress of the race, unless by some fortunate stirring of humanity they are in time remodelled or swept away . . . What is happening when an epoch approaches its culmination? What is happening as it passes towards decay? . . . 'Spring is not a season, it is a battle ground between summer and winter.' Not so close a follower of Mr. Attlee after all! But, "our modes of testing ability . . ." "Our conventions . . ." Whose? And where does this come in?:—"History is the drama of effort. The full understanding of it requires an insight into human toiling after its aim. In the absence of some common direction of aim adequately magnificent, there can be no history. The spectacle is then mere chaos." And in what order do we read: "I certainly think that the universe is running down. It means that our epoch illustrates one special type of order. For example, this absurdly limited number of three dimensions of space is a sign that you have got something characteristic of a special order. We can see the universe passing on to a triviality. All the effects to be derived from our existing type of order are passing away into trivialities. That does not mean that there are not some other types of order of which you and I have not the faintest notion, unless perchance they are to be found in our highest mentality and are unperceived by us in their true relevance to the future. The universe is laying the foundation of a new type, where our present theories of order will appear as trivial. If remembered they would be remembered or discerned in the future as trivialities, gradually fading into nothingness. This is the only possible doctrine of a universe driving on to novelty." We wonder whether, had Whitehead had the privilege of the blue pencil, he might not have thought of that as we do, with a later sentence in his mind, as it is in ours: ". . . we have to make our pupils feel by an acquired instinct what it means to be logical, and to know a precise idea when we see it; or, rather what unfortunately is more often wanted, to know an unprecise idea when they see it." In view of Whitehead's very definite (one might say dogmatic) views about practical life, including the practical life of "controlled" communities, it seems to us necessary to ask whether the expression 'doctrine of a universe' stood, in his mind, for a precise or for an unprecise idea—"consider the little word *of*: There is nothing about it alarmingly metaphysical. My small dictionary gives as its first meaning *Associated or connected with*. I suggest to you . . ."

"This is the only possible . . ."—"This notion of human limitations requires guarding. There is an implicit philosophical tradition that there are set limitations for human experience, to be discovered in a blue-print preserved in some Institute of Technology. In the long ancestry of humans, from oysters to apes [*sic*] and from apes to modern man, we can discern no trace of such set limitation. Nor can I discern any reason, apart from dogmatic assumption, why any factor in the universe should not be manifest in some flash of human consciousness. If the experience be unusual, verbalisation may be for us impossible. We are then deprived of our chief instrument

of recall, comparison, and communication. Nevertheless we have no ground to limit our capacity for experience by our existing technology of expression." Again for a practical reason, we must quote: "The self-confidence of learned people is the comic tragedy of civilisation." And again: "The besetting sin of philosophers is that, being merely men, they endeavour to survey the universe from the standpoint of gods. There is a pretence at adequate clarity of fundamental ideas. We can never disengage our measure of clarity from a pragmatic sufficiency within occasions of ill-defined limitations. Clarity always means 'clear enough.'" ". . . the final outlook of Philosophic thought cannot be based upon the exact statements which form the basis of special sciences. The exactness is a fake." "Every scientific proposition which the great scientists of the mid-nineteenth century entertained, was erroneous in the sense in which it was then construed. Their doctrine of space was wrong: their doctrine of matter was wrong: their doctrines of evidence were wrong. . . ."

The conclusion of the paragraph from which these last words are taken introduces us to a more positive assertion. "The abiding interest of Plato's Dialogues does not lie in their enunciation of abstract doctrines. They are suffused with the implicit suggestion of the concrete unity of experience, whereby every abstract topic obtains its interest." "All characteristics peculiar to actualities are modes of emphasis whereby finitude vivifies the infinite . . ."

"There is not a sentence," says Whitehead, "which adequately states its own meaning." We concur; it is when we come to read his observations concerning the dangerous world in which we live that we yearn for a closer observance of the warning, and still peer to see even darkly what it is that is being eliminated, and why it is being eliminated. Whitehead is looking for "necessary ways of developing *thought*," and his abandonment of his search to apply the ways he has already discovered, seems, despite the impeccable sentiments which accompany it, to be rather perfunctory. "I think the universe has a side which is mental and permanent. This side is that prime conceptual drive which I call the primordial nature of God. It is Alexander's *nisis* conceived as actual. On the other hand, this permanent actuality passes into and is immanent in the transient side." "A nation won't get wisdom except by the love of it. And it is here that the modern democratic demand for a due share in the opportunities of life is full of hope and of anxiety [our emphasis]. Of course, the demand is of mixed origin, for it is human. It gains its moral energy from the ultimate rights of the moral and intellectual natures of man, his right to his own creative actions directed by his own wisdom—a right based on an insatiable craving for what gives worth to existence. This cry for freedom seems at times to sleep for ages, like the fire in a volcano. When it wakes, the day of God's judgment has arrived, and the worth of human societies is being weighed in His scales. Those societies perish which exhibit mainly selfishness and cowardice. Courage and hope are your best armour in a revolution—and, above all, mutual sympathy." "In a large city, almost everyone is an employee, employing his working hours in exact ways predetermined by others. Even his manners may be prescribed.

So far as sheer individual freedom is concerned, there was more diffused freedom in the City of London in the year 1633, when Charles the First was King, than there is to-day in any industrial city in the world . . . My point is that the change of scale in modern industry has made nearly the whole of previous literature on the topic irrelevant, and indeed mischievous . . . perplexing . . . But above all, and beyond all, it involves direct observation and practical experience. Unless the twentieth century can produce a whole body of reasoned literature elucidating the many aspects of this great topic, it will go hard with the civilisation that we love."

We suppose that is what Whitehead would call 'clear enough.'

Let us turn to one or two further points of diagnosis, and the remedy.

Firstly the remedy—"My suggestion in its crudest, and most aggressive form is that half of the teaching of modern history should be handed over to the mathematicians. The phrase 'handed over' is not quite accurate; for the half which I mean is the half which, although the true foundation of all knowledge of nations, is hardly taught. Our classical colleagues, excellent fellows as they are, have their limitations, and among them is this one, that they are not very fitted by their mental equipment to appreciate quantitative estimates of the forces which are moulding modern society. But without such estimates modern history as it unfolds itself [*sic*] before us is a meaningless tangle. Now among other peculiarities of the nineteenth century is this one, that by initiating the systematic collection of statistics it has made the quantitative study of social forces possible. There are in our hands [*our hands*] statistics of . . . of . . . of . . . of . . ." (twelve 'ofs'). Well, well, well! "This method of conducting the elementary study of mathematical analysis appears to me to be eminently practical, and at every stage to carry with it its own justification." We do not demur—at *any* stage. "Of course, mass production underlies the modern standards of life. What we require is a close interweaving of the two forms of activity, the production of the general material and the perfection of the individual thing . . . The great producers and the great distributing corporations should include in their activities the work of craftsmen and designers . . ." Yes, Mr. Tomlinson is seeing to that, we believe. "What is defective is not distribution, but the variety of opportunity for useful activity. Thus the interweaving of mass production with craftsmanship should be the supreme object of statesmanship."

Yes, truly, "the self-confidence of learned people is the comic [why comic?] tragedy of civilisation."

Eliminate *a* factor. It doesn't matter what factor. Ultimately all eliminated factors and every eliminated factor is God. The point about the Whig is that he eliminates the recognition of elimination and of the eliminator, who is himself.

Whitehead's argument, as it affects politics, is the familiar Whig argument: everything is wrong, and getting worse: let's have more of everything we have got. What we haven't got—*isn't*: it's been eliminated. He himself has effected the elimination, and is determined to keep it

up. It seems almost a genetic phenomenon; something to do with gender. The symbol of creativeness is merely a 'function' which may be discarded by appropriate manipulation: by the appropriate technical procedure. The Whig universe *is* running down. The Whig feeds entropy into his symbolism machine, and his symbolism machine delivers back entropy in a state of ever greater refinement.

Ectropy is eliminated, though without ectropy there would have been no height from which to decline. We grope for a word to cover the phenomenon. The word which first comes to mind is the word 'feminine.' It seems curiously adequate: what the Whig has done, is doing and should cease to do, if we are to be delivered, is to present and to preserve, if he can, a vegetative universe: a universe which is feminine in gender—but sterile. What he has unconsciously eliminated (though, perhaps not so unconsciously) is something akin to masculine principle. The elimination is a fake; but its effects have all the actuality and definiteness of sterilisation. The 'other point of view' just isn't. "The proper phrase," says Whitehead, "is 'technological unemployment.'" But . . ." But you just go on making work and controlling workers—and others. There "is nothing" to do about it! —T.J.

(Concluded.)

"Why I am a Social Crediter"

Dr. Bryan W. Monahan's essay, *Why I am a Social Crediter*, will be continued next week.

The complete essay will shortly be published as a booklet which will include his *Aims of Education*, re-published in these pages last year.

The ultimate felicity of man lies in the contemplation of the truth, for this is the sole action of man which is proper to man alone.—St. Thomas Aquinas.

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