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The Sanhedrin

(Originally published in *The Social Crediter*, March 29, 1947)

Considerable mystery as well as great interest attaches to the institution of the Sanhedrin (or synhedrion), the council of seventy or seventy-one, apparently first constituted by Moses after the Captivity but believed by some on the contrary to have been an ancient institution in abeyance from the time of the Captivity until the Maccabees.

According to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, under the heading "The French Sanhedrin," "On October 6, 1806, the Assembly of Notables issued a proclamation to all the Jewish communities of Europe inviting them to send delegates to the Sanhedrin to convene on October 20. This proclamation, written in Hebrew, French, German, and Italian speaks in extravagant terms of the importance of this revived institution and of the greatness of its imperial protector."

The article nevertheless reproduces in facsimile the title pages from the Prayers recited "at the meeting of the Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon, Paris, 1807." The source is the Salzberger collection in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. Surrounding a badge bearing, underneath a shield, a sign composed of five letter-v's arranged about a central point (points to centre) the first page bears the following words:—

PRIÈRE
des
Membres du Sanhédrin
RÉCITÉS
dans leur assemblée convoquée à
Paris le 1^{er} jour d'Adar de
L'Année 5567 (9 Février 1807)
[badge]
À PARIS
de l'Imprimerie Impériale

1807.

The account of the proceedings leaves no doubt concerning the occasion for the meeting and little concerning the aspirations behind it. Delayed for exactly a year from the date of the original proclamation, seventy-one "Members" attended, to whose number were added twenty-nine other rabbis and twenty-five laymen. The sittings were public. The resolutions passed "formed the basis of all subsequent laws and regulations of the French Government" in regard to the religious affairs of the Jews, al-

though Napoleon, in spite of his declarations, issued a decree on March 17, 1808, restricting the Jews' legal rights.

The reference to a "revived" institution goes back to the abolition of the Sanhedrin as part of the repression of the disorders before A.D. 69. The disappointment expressed at the Emperor's moderation of his undertakings seems definitely to refer to an issue not dissimilar to that which developed under the Roman occupation in Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era. The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* raises, but does not dispel, doubts concerning the whole nature and functions of the Sanhedrin by quoting Adolf Büchler to the effect that there were in Jerusalem two magistracies, not one, "which were entirely different in character and functions and which officiated side by side at the same time." Of the first of these, the Political Sanhedrin, it is asserted that "This body was undoubtedly much older than the term 'Sanhedrin.'" The time incidence of the story of the Sanhedrin is noteworthy: it is existent, or at least prominent, before or during the Captivity, during the nationalist excesses of the Maccabees—and after the French Revolution? the latter suggestion is discounted by the recorded history of the public body; but not by the events of European and world history. The continuous underground existence of the Sanhedrin is an historical question, quite independent of the legend that the body meets regularly in Yucatan.

Beginning with the first reference, "*Tiberias was avoided in New Testament times by faithful Jews as godless, pagan, and defiled, but by the irony of history became later a seat of the Sanhedrin, and to-day is one of the four holy cities of Jewry*," we commend to those who may be interested the consecutive reading of the twenty or so references to the Sanhedrin in "A Commentary on the Bible" edited by Arthur S. Peake, sometime Rylands Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Manchester. Authorities are cited.

—T.J.

Looking Forward

"Therefore, when we build, let us think that we build for ever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when these stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labour and the wrought substance of them—'See this our fathers did for us!'"

—JOHN RUSKIN.

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From Week to Week

Communist strategy, which has never been secret though it may have been camouflaged, has never been anything but the theory of world-revolution adapted to developments as they occur. Thus to the initiated, the 'struggle' of an 'underdeveloped' country for independence is merely a manifestation of the proletarian 'revolt.' The objective of this strategy—now practically accomplished—is to effect an unobtrusive shift in the balance of power until resistance to a naked *coup* would be seen to be futile.

The closer to success this strategy becomes, the more obvious is its objective. Hence the 'peace offensive.' The threat to the U.S. of the fall of Cuba is one that not so many years ago would have been settled out of hand by the mere display of the necessary minimum of military sanctions. The "peace offensive" has effectively disarmed the U.S.A., even if its armaments are the most massive in history. Two words describe the conditions in which civilisation stands now on the very edge of catastrophe: contrived inevitability.

All history shows that the collapse of civilisation is succeeded by barbarism: and this is because only the human brute is the exponent of the atavistic mob whose psychology is determinant in a period of break-down.

Douglas warned, with ever-increasing explicitness, of this danger which he apprehended from afar and which now virtually envelops us. There is nothing to refute his prophecies. We are at the last extreme: he told us that we are in the grip of men who care no more for the death of the people of a continent than for the death of a sparrow.

The time for theorising has passed these several years. An assessment of our situation now requires only inspection. The inspection is simply to ascertain whether there now exist in the so-called Free World the sanctions to reimpose order on a world disordered by the complementary policy and strategy of Finance and Communism.

The present situation is military, not economic: implementation of Social Credit monetary techniques would at this juncture make the situation worse. The answer to the question of the possibility of a transition from near-

inevitable catastrophe—inevitable here having the connotation of momentum—lies in the conjunction of understanding and sanctions.

The apparent jauntings of Mr. Krushchev about the globe probably signify the communication to key personnel of the final details of the ultimate move in Communist strategy.

Whether it is a case of "admitting freely what is already known," or whether because his views are less orthodox than those of the majority of certificated economists, Mr. Colin Clark expresses in *The Tablet* (June 18, 1960) a view which has been continuously expressed in Social Credit literature since 1918.

In a reference to George Orwell's *1984* he remarks that Orwell lacked sufficient subtlety in choosing continuous warfare as the only way "to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world." "How much better," Mr. Clark suggests, "to devote an ever-increasing proportion of available economic resources to unwanted public works, to give permanent preference to capital goods over consumption goods, and then to waste a large part of the capital through mismanagement, as has happened in Soviet Russia (and has been the case with a great deal of 'public investment' in this country too)."

We notice that Mr. Clark's unorthodoxy does not rise to include in the category of waste a surplus of exports over imports; if it did he would recognise the words "a great deal" in his passage in parenthesis as being an enormous understatement. We have "wasted" thousands of millions of pounds sterling on exports to India alone.

We suppose Mr. Clark must have observed the plain idiocy of this policy, and wonder how he explains it. To us, the persistence in—aggravation of, even, in the form of aid to under-developed countries, space programmes and arms obsolescence—such a policy, which effectively neutralises that progress in the industrial arts which could bring leisure to all, is plain evidence of the existence of an "oligarchy" determined to keep mankind chained to toil (full employment, as the reputable economists call it).

"The *Manchester Guardian's* representative noted how intellectuals are turning against the affluent society, and how often they are today the people who a few decades ago were finding in poverty the one great and remediable evil. This demonstrates very clearly what their critics often pointed out at the time, that the intellectuals who inveighed against poverty were more interested in inveighing than in seeing the poverty changed into affluence, for that has happened, and they are still inveighing, their deepest need being to attack and criticise the society in which they find themselves. They are moralists, and when one set of moral principles becomes inapplicable, they find another set available and move over from castigating social injustice to castigating the corruption of wealth."

—*The Tablet*, June 25, 1960.

Perhaps the most characteristic aspect of the intellectual (as defined, for example, by James McAuley—see *T.S.C.* Vol. 39, No. 9)—is his lack of original thoughts, which

characteristic makes him the ideal medium for the diffusion of those ideas which "the oligarchy" wishes spread at the time. Until such time as the Communists take over, it is impossible to abolish the abundance which the triumph of the industrial arts has provided. As much as possible is wasted, and the production of even more is sabotaged. But the intellectuals are set to work to poison our consciences with regard to the inescapable but increasing minimum which flows to the consumer.

• • •

We believe that every senior officer of the three Services should immediately read Stalin's *Problems of Leninism*, and then take suitable action against the politicians. No doubt the Communists will shoot them away (few would be suitable for labour camps), but we should prefer to see them dealt with for the correct reasons, while there is time to do it. If history is ever written again, the lesson might be worth something when civilisation is restored, though hardly in our day.

"The Renewal of Society"

"... the really important activities now going on in the world are not those in the limelight or on the front pages, but the spiritual and religious activities to which the world pays very little attention, as the Roman Empire paid only a sporadic and unfriendly attention to what it considered a despicable if potentially dangerous dissident body.

"To many Catholics there is a great discouragement in working in minority movements when the main currents seem to be running so powerfully in a different direction. That is the nemesis of the present fashion of considering the life of the Church as though it were something similar and parallel to the life of a political movement, perpetually seeking new recruits with a view to becoming a majority and carrying out a programme. Those who live and work inside such movements can indeed feel that everything depends on achieving a particular kind of success. Such men are even also entitled to think that their work is not lost or without large effects although they never command a majority. Their existence and their activity in fact influence in their direction the programmes and measures of their opponents. Those who keep alive a particular point of view will always have that point of view present in the reckonings and in the speculations of other people, and the more active they are the more will account be taken. It is a very vulgar and superficial test of influence and achievement merely to judge a movement of ideas by whether it comes to political authority. But with the life of the Church in the world, although all this is true, a wholly different range of considerations comes into view; for the Church is a society which transforms its members, not a body in which they serve for the achievement of a collective aim, and the truth is that no work done for the Church can be wasted, and that it all adds something to the positive measure of the fullness of life as it proceeds from one generation of Christians to another..."

—*The Tablet*, April 5, 1947.

The Myth of the Trades Union

By reason of its chameleon-like disguises, MONOPOLY often escapes notice under the label of some particular embodiment of it. When Social Crediters drew attention to the dominance of Finance in the years of the Armistice, they were merely (and the better-informed of them realised the fact) dealing with something which, *at that time*, occupied an almost unique position astride the world of production and distribution—a position derived from its peculiar claim to synthesise *value*, or wealth. Major Douglas has frequently deplored the undue emphasis on the later chapters of *Economic Democracy*. The pathetic inability of many otherwise intelligent people to penetrate below the appearance to the MONOPOLY, which was the thing-in-itself, has been demonstrated by the almost universal clamour, until it was too late, for the "nationalisation," *i.e.*, complete centralisation and MONOPOLY, under an uncontrolled and uncontrollable anonymity, of Banking and Currency.

But the phenomenon is far from standing alone. For generations and almost without protest the Myth of the Trades Union, *i.e.*, the MONOPOLY of Public Service, has gone forth.

The Myth takes the form that Trades Unionism is inherently good; a marvellous gift to suffering humanity; that British Trades Unionism in particular is the primary cause of the "emancipation" of "the worker;" and that to attack Trades Unionism is just a Tory demonstration of obsolete reaction. Trades Unionism is MONOPOLY and inherently bad and anti-social.

The first point to notice is that Trades Unionism, like every other monopolistic economic practice, is directed against the consumer, consumption being the only aspect of the human individual which is recognisably universal. With the Satanic ingenuity which suggests its origin, Trades Union propaganda never admits this; its adversary was always the "rapacious" employer, the man who had the brains, the enterprise and the courage to come out of the rut, to try something new, and, to take the responsibility for it. But, in his turn, the employer was instructed, probably from the same source, that the attack of the Labour MONOPOLY could be passed on to the Individual, the consumer, by monopolistic price rings, Trade Associations, Trusts and similar devices. Clearly, the logical next step was the Mond-Turner Conference to unify Labour and Management into a Production MONOPOLY which would eventually deal only with the Individual through a Distribution MONOPOLY.

It is only the rapidly declining intelligence of the population which prevents the fantastic absurdity of "full employment" from dissolving in a blast of derisive, but angry, contempt. It is really amazing that people will accept a falling standard of living, combined with universal slavery, while at the same time they have thirty mechanical slaves per head and modern production technique at their disposal. If that is the best we can do, then let us scrap all our advance in the industrial arts as pure delusion, and go back to the Middle Ages before we are detonated into the Dark Abyss.

Time Present*

In a striking passage, an eminent Englishman, now dead, compared the powers of imagination displayed by Shakespeare with those of Isaac Newton. The argument, though not conducted with exceptional dexterity (as though that were necessary), ended in the heavy defeat of the national poet. Shakespeare's folk were but folk, behaving as folk will; and the imagery was but imagery of things seen and heard; whereas Newton passed, as it were, easily to and fro between this world of sensible things and an unseen world which none had entered before, full of invisible shapes and immeasurable sizes, carrying whole earths in one direction and the perfect mathematical constructions which these whole earths exactly fitted in the other; attaching the one to the other and divorcing them with as sudden ease; joining and sundering the known and the unknown at will. Stupendous Newton! Puny Shakespeare!

*We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.*

Punier O'Shaughnessy!

Yet the comparison is false. Imagination is one and indivisible, an *invariable*, independent of the thing imagined. Newton and Shakespeare had imagination. For themselves what they did with it was the same; for others the results were different. That is all.

More and more we meet with people who voice their dissatisfaction with society. This requires no imagination; merely honesty. The dissatisfaction is intense, and that is intelligible enough. The grounds of dissatisfaction are variously stated; but, on the whole, the tale hangs together. The evidence is consistent. There is conflict—too much conflict for individual peace and comfort. There is a lurking and persistent enemy, constantly forcing battle. There is an opposition. This opposition grows—in size, in impudence, in implacability. Once upon a time he was smaller, more modest, gentler. Oh! for the time when he will be less again! Oh! for *that* time!

It is with the appearance of this thought that imagination flies away. Imagination creates and sustains the *natural* order. It does not reverse it ever. But those without imagination turn and return always at this point. They come, as it were, to a wall of impenetrable hardness, smooth and flat and polished like a mirror, perfectly opaque. This is the wall which did not exist for Newton (or for Shakespeare): the wall which imagination (and only imagination) can pierce. And from this wall those who have no imagination rebound as a well-filled ball rebounds. They go *back*. Each inch of their progress is the mirror-image of some other inch; whereas, in life and imagination every inch is unique. The ball goes on, on, never to return; for what it meets is *nothing*.

Imagination is the stupendous force which annihilates that adamant face between things present and things

future and makes nothing of it.

Without imagination there is only the rebound. Instead of getting through into the real future and eating it up, the present rebounds into the past and there is only eternal battledore and shuttlecock. And this past, what is it? Just the past! Feudalism, romanticism, mediaevalism: castles and kings: the mere by-gone frames and settings of imaginations that lived themselves through each past wall! "Let us return whence we came" cry these honest visionaries of our uncomfortable present. "Back to this; back to that; back to the other!" There is no going back. There is only a hesitation, a vibration, a shudder which may, all the same, be a shattering of human purpose on the threshold of realisation.

"The water you touch in a river is the last of that which has passed and the first of that which is coming. Thus it is with time present," said Leonardo da Vinci, who also had imagination.

It is, unfortunately, not possible to create imagination where none exists. That is why we should not pause on the threshold of action, for by each exercise of our powers of action that reflecting face whence others return is forced onwards—even for them.

A Suggestion

There may be some journalists who would be interested in this and other issues of *The Social Crediter*.

MAY GOD FORGIVE US

(JANUARY, 1960, ISSUE OF AMERICAN OPINION)

"*American Opinion* devotes its January, 1960, issue, to the re-publication of a long letter by Robert H. W. Welch Jr., on Communist strategy which was originally published by the Henry Regnery Company (Chicago) in 1952. Mr. Welch exposes in particular the extraordinary penetration of U.S. institutions by Communists and Communist sympathisers, and since there is an obvious conspiracy of silence protecting a number of other conspiracies, we consider that Mr. Welch's able summary should be as widely disseminated as possible."

—*The Social Crediter*, May 28, 1960.

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