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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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The Democratic Idea

(Chapter II of Part II of *The Brief for the Prosecution* by C. H. Douglas—1944)

At the present time, we use words for political purposes which either have no meaning, or, if correctly defined, describe something which does not exist. We do this at our peril. Democracy is such a word.

Most of the students of this question will find it less elusive if they will bear in mind the legal maxim "No law without a sanction." Who controls the "sanction"—the power of enforcement—controls the law.

The etymological description of democracy is "popular government, rule by the people" (Skeat). Out of six words comprising this double definition, four require definition in themselves—"popular," "government," "rule" and "people."

But even so vague and inexact a definition as that of Skeat would probably not be advanced by most people, who would say that democracy is rule by the majority, or universal suffrage. And if asked to name the democracies, they might reply, Great Britain, the British Dominions and the United States. Great Britain is a limited monarchy, and the United States is a republic. Neither is, even by definition, a democracy.

In order to obtain some idea of the nature of the problem, it should be recalled that one aspect at least of a nation is that it is an association to pursue individual ends by common rules. Everyone is familiar with the idea that an association is a contract, and the unilateral abrogation of a contract is universally condemned. The bearing of this on the powers of Government is well illustrated in the difference between the Congress of the United States and its opposite number, the House of Commons. The House of Commons can do, and does, anything. It can pass a law which abrogates every right, and the basis of every plan of the population, simply by possession of a Parliamentary majority, and it does not even require a mandate for such action.

On the other hand, Congress can only legislate within the boundaries of the Constitution. An Amendment to the Constitution requires a Proposal by two-thirds of both Senate and Congress, and ratification by three-fourths of the States—a process not lightly to be embarked upon.

When a man says he has something of which some kind of a definition or description exists, it is a sound principle, before forming any opinion of the thing, to make sure that he really has it. It is certain, for instance, that the state of affairs in any of the titular democracies cannot be made to agree with even Dr. Skeat. It is almost equally certain that it would be a major catastrophe if it did so correspond. Clearly, there can be two explanations of this. Either "the people" are prevented from "ruling" by the machinations

of wicked men, or "rule by the people" is an impossibility.

The second explanation has an important consequence—that democracy, being impossible but attractive as an idea, would form the best possible cloak for the condition indicated by the alternative explanation. This is the criticism strenuously propagandised by the admirers of totalitarian rulers such as Herr Hitler and Mr. Stalin (although Communists amusingly describe Russia as a democracy). It can be demonstrated that real democracy is possible; but it must be conceded that a visible dictatorship is preferable to an anonymous tyranny or a manipulated electorate.

Mr. Asquith, when concerned to pass the Parliament Act, which abolished the very real safeguard of an effective Second Chamber, said "The will of the people must and shall prevail." This is, of course, an affirmation of essential lawlessness—the right to break a contract unilaterally. With this in mind, an examination of the working of "majority rule" may be helpful. Almost any concrete case would serve, but we may take motor-car taxation as an example. The facts are fairly simple. The tax in Great Britain is the highest motor tax in the world, it is inequitable and irrational, and it is detrimental to motor-car design and economical production. It is highly popular with everyone who does not pay it. It was imposed under a strict undertaking that it would be devoted to road costs (Car Licences are still called Road Fund Licences) which undertaking was almost immediately abandoned with complete cynicism. Yet this is an outstanding instance of majority rule. The explanation is that fewer people possess motor cars than are without them. An election on whether motor-car taxation should be abolished and the same sum added to the taxation of beer would not be in doubt for five minutes. In the United States or Canada, where a large majority owns cars, British car taxation would not be tolerated.

Or take the price of wine. A bottle of good red or white wine in France or Italy ten years ago cost about 2d. The same, or a worse, because adulterated, wine in England cost probably 3s. 6d., since wine drinkers in England are in a minority, and can be safely penalised.

The successful attack on landowning has the same explanation. Just as taxation on wine is made respectable by "temperance" crusades, and motor taxation, until well established, was justified by deterioration of the roads by motor traffic, so land taxation, the real basis of which is minority ownership, is made virtuous by "Land Songs" and other incendiary propaganda. The instances could be multiplied indefinitely.

(continued on page 3)

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IN AUSTRALIA—

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Personnel—Advisory Chairman: Dr. Tudor Jones, Chairman: Dr. B. W. Monahan, 36 Melbourne Avenue, Deakin, Canberra, Australia, Deputy Chairman: British Isles: Dr. Basil L. Steele, Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London N.W.1. (Telephone: EUSon 3893). Secretary: H. A. Scoular, Box 3266, G.P.O. Sydney, N.S.W.

“Public Opinion”

(1) Both the late Major C. H. Douglas and (at his suggestion) Dr. Tudor Jones interviewed Mr. Kenneth de Courcy, Editor of the “*Intelligence Digest Service*” not very long after its inception twenty-five years ago and reached more or less tentative conclusions concerning the venture which have, for the most part, not been made public.

(2) Whatever they were, those conclusions have no bearing on comments about to be made here on the contents of the issue of the *Digest*, No. 294, for May, 1963.

(3) On fifteen out of twenty pages of this issue are references (not all of them direct) to the operations of an organisation, “now at just about its peak” (p. 7), not Communist, but in alliance with Communism for its own purpose or purposes, “co-ordinated. It is of one mind; it is in control of immense resources; it is convinced, passionate, efficient, and deadly.” “The objective of this group is to achieve absolute power.” (p. 3). Without identifying the head of this “Force X” (so described, pages 3-7), a description of him (“looks about 40. In all probability he is very much older”) is given and more information is promised (p. 6). Some of his movements and influential quarters to which he has access are reported, and his personal attributes are not left entirely to the imagination—Oh, yes; we can picture him and follow his progress from day to day and year to year. Presumably, he has white skin (we are not told) but not necessarily light hair unless it is red.

(4) (Page 3):—“This group is not recognised by authority, because authority is afraid to investigate too closely. The rot has gone too deep; too many are involved. No Government will ever investigate.”

And so:—(Page 5): “It is therefore essential to expose . . . This done, we can then stop the operation, even though we cannot catch the instigator. We have in mind that if, say, a million key people in different parts of the world could be enlightened about the existence of Force X and informed as to its operational schemes, it would soon prove impossible for those schemes to succeed.” The publishers of the *Digest*

(page 20) therefore aim at “a hundredfold increase in readership . . . We shall then see the tides turn.”

Well, now, assuming the general complaint to be correct (and we do not dispute it materially, however greatly we would wish it to be more precise), is it true that remedy would come about by such an appeal to “public opinion” as is contemplated?

This phrase (which *may* represent a more or less tangible force—not a pure abstraction) occurs twelve times in the *Digest*’s twenty pages. Variants occur additionally, e.g. “responsible opinion”, “responsible public”, “key Americans” “key opinion”, “every key person in America”, “public opinion fears”, “public opinion thinks”, “public opinion is dissatisfied”, “public opinion only has to read”, “public opinion is sick”, “the nation’s thinking”, “the British public” “public relations.” Of such variants there are seventeen instances. Without our being over-particular about our arithmetic, shall we say that more than once to a page the doctrine is specifically appealed to—i.e. the doctrine of the “power of ‘public opinion’”?

(5) Notwithstanding the cogent reasons put forward—organised vice and all kinds of corruption, forged letters which are incriminating, and so on, to explain the apparent success of subversive movements of this kind—Mr. de Courcy seems to believe that the bare informing of two million literate people will effect the change he desires. The evidence he himself offers contradicts him.

Making due allowance for the fact that Mr. de Courcy’s first steps in the acquisition of an understanding of world politics did not begin only 24 years ago, and (to make weight) allowing that he is, in all probability, not afflicted as we have been by the unsolicited ‘assistance’ of careerist half-wits, may we say that we have twice the length of experience which he has? We admire heroism; but most we admire it when it is displayed with unswerving respect for the fruits of experience.

We wish it were otherwise; but the fact is that *our* experience is that to all intents and purposes “public opinion” as an agent of truth in any connection whatsoever is a figment of the imagination—not of the *creative* imagination, but of that opposite which has littered the earth with its ungovernable fancies.

In a book* (in the main a good book) published four years ago Mr. Arthur Koestler set out to explain *why* a fact seemingly of less immediate importance to the dwellers on the face of the earth than the one which Mr. de Courcy shares with ourselves (at least in part and that an essential part) in point of interest could, once known, be suppressed for the greater part of the Christian era: the fact of the heliocentricity of the Sun in our solar system. *But he could not find the key.* All he could do was to resort to a scholarly account of the *characteristic imperfection of individual searchers after truth.*

Is it possible that Mr. de Courcy will agree with us that the reason for the world’s bondage is not to be found—and therefore not to be sought—in the imperfections of ourselves—unless reliance upon “public opinion” is itself an imperfection in ourselves?

• • •
“Organisation X” receives further treatment in the June issue of the *Digest*:—

“The code name of this organisation is P.P.:R.D.T.W.:

**The Sleepwalkers* (Hutchinson, 1959)

S.W.I.H.P. It is basically a criminal group which is mixed up in politics and has made use of Communism. Its power far exceeds that of Communism. Without its aid, Communism might have collapsed some time ago"

In other words, "Kt. to Q.4, waiting."

Jews in U.N.O.

With a note that it "could stand a revision" the following list of Jews in the United Nations Organisation and its ancillary bodies was published in *The Cross and the Flag*, April 1963:

DR. H. S. BLOC—Chief of Armaments and Enforcements Section.

ANTOINE GOLDET—Principal Director, Dept. of Economic Affairs.

ANSGAR ROSENBERG—Special Advisor, Dept. of Economic Affairs.

DAVID WEINTRAUB—Director, Division of Economic Stability and Development.

KARL LACHMAN—Chief Fiscal Division.

HENRI LANGIER—Assistant General Secretary in Charge, Dept. of Social Affairs.

DR. LEON STEINIG—Director of Narcotics Division.

DR. E. SCHWELB—Assistant Director, Human Rights Division.

H. A. WIESCHOFF—Chief, Analysis and Research Section, Dept. of Trusteeship of Non-self-governing Territories.

BENJAMIN COHEN—Assistant General Secretary in charge of Department of Public Information.

J. BENOIT-LEVY—Director, Films and Visual Information Division.

DR. IVAN KERNO—Assistant Secretary General in charge of Legal Department.

ABRAHAM H. FELLER—General Counsel and Principal Director, Legal Department.

MARC SCHREIBER—Legal Counsellor.

G. SANDBERG—Legal Counsellor, Division for Development and Codification of International Law.

DAVID ZABLODOWSKY—Director, Printing Division.

GEORGE RABINOVITCH—Director, Interpreters' Division.

MAX ABRAMOVITZ—Deputy Director of Planning Office.

P. C. J. KIEN—Chief, General Accounts Section.

MERCEDES BERGMAN—Executive Officer, Bureau of Personnel.

PAUL RADZIANKO—Secretary of Appeals Board.

DR. A. SIGNER—Medical Officer in charge of Health Clinic.

INFORMATION CENTRES:

JERZY SHAPIRO—Director U.N. Information Centre, Geneva.

B. LEITGEBER—Director U.N. Information Centre, New Delhi, India.

HENRI FAST—Director U.N. Information Centre, Shanghai, China.

DR. JULIUS STAWINSKI—Director U.N. Information Centre, Warsaw.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE:

DAVID A. MORSE (Moscovitch)—Director General I.L.O. (Geneva).

Of the four members of the Governing Body, I.L.O., at least three are known Jews. They are Altman of Poland; David Zellerbach of the United States and Finet of Belgium.

V. GABRIEL-GARCES—Correspondent for Ecuador attached to I.L.O. office.

JAN ROSNER—Correspondent for Poland attached to I.L.O. office.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION:

ANDRE MAYER—First Vice-Chairman.

A. P. JACOBSEN—Representative for Denmark to F.A.O.

E. DE VRIES—Representative for Netherlands.

M. M. LIBMAN—Economist, Fertilizer Section.

GERDA KARDOS—Chief, Fibres Section.

B. KARDOS—Economist, Miscellaneous Commodities Section.

M. EZEKIEL—Chief, Economic Analysis Branch.

J. P. KAGAN—Technical Officer, Logging and Equipment Section.

THE DEMOCRATIC IDEA (continued from page 1)

So-called democracy, therefore, is a ballot-box device for despoiling minorities, not, it should be carefully noted, for the benefit of majorities, but for the benefit of third parties. Motor taxes do not distribute motor cars, wine taxes do not distribute wine, and expropriated estates do not go to the landless.

There is little doubt that the attempt to apply the principle of majority-democracy to foreign policy is inevitably disastrous. The well-known excuse advanced by Mr. Baldwin, that "our peace-loving democracy" would not support re-armament was true enough so far as it goes and is at least a partial explanation of our failure to halt Germany when she could have been checked without a war.

It has been remarked in many quarters, and the argument is receiving more attention daily, that the present political chaos is directly and consciously connected with the doctrine and popularisation of the unproved theory of the origin of species, and its corollary, the survival of the "fittest", which, oddly enough, can be, and is, adduced in support of equalitarianism.

There is also much evidence to connect the ideas which Darwin expounded with Malthus and Rousseau and so with the French Revolution. Not the least important aspect of this question is the evident intention to confuse "Progress" with "increase in size". "Progress" as an automatic feature of nature is inherent in this doctrine, which has been termed a theological rather than a scientific dogma. The present vogue of geopolitics, relating wars to a specialised form of dialectical materialism, clearly belongs to the evolutionary blind-force school of thought, from which the German contention that wars, and ever greater wars, are salutary can easily be recognised as a "logical" deduction.

It is a curious fact, which may or may not be coincidental, that the type of society which is induced or produced by this type of thinking, bears marks resembling the workings of the thermodynamic principle of entropy—the tendency of energy to deteriorate from a potential to a latent and unavailable state—to "run down". That is to say, so far from this systematic penalising of minorities under the entirely unproved theory that the equalitarian state is a desirable objective and corresponds to anything we can describe as "progress", or the survival of the fittest in any cultural sense, it appears to correspond to the exact reverse. Perhaps the most complete embodiment of dialectical materialism is contemporary Russia, and it will be noticed that the rulers of Russia are living in the monuments of a different era, the Kremlin and the architectural

achievements of the period of Catherine the Great, and appear to be unable to produce anything but industrial monstrosities. It would be difficult to find a clearer exposition of the principle at work, and its effect, than that of the Balt, Paul von Sokolowski. He refers directly to the agricultural aspect of land, which can be overstressed, although perhaps not at this time, but it is, *mutatis mutandis*, true in regard to the effect of unstable politics on all real property, and consequently on society.

"There are two processes which weaken man's hold over Nature and diminish his courage in his fight with her: they are MOBILISATION of the soil and its SOCIALISATION. Neither war with its ravages nor any Act of God fundamentally endangers civilisation, so long as men pursue agriculture for its own sake. But directly the land is mobilised, that is to say, when it becomes mere property, capable of transference and financial-capitalisation, directly it comes to possess only a commercial interest, it loses the inviolable permanence and security without which its care and culture are impossible. To the man whose home is on his own land, the idea that either he or his successors could ever desert the fields of their labour for the sake of any economic advantage whatsoever, should be unthinkable. Nothing in the world should be able to make them willing to sacrifice or exchange their inherited home."

"Socialisation of the soil is even more ruinous in its effect, for it is likely to take control and care of the land out of the most competent hands; since, regardless of the true needs of the community, it is a temporary satisfaction of the cravings or ambitions of destitute sections of the population by the distribution of landed property (e.g. parcellation of estates). Only one agrarian reform can increase the efficiency of the land: it is the commitment of its care to those best qualified for the trust. A change in agrarian tenure which is made at the expense of the land's welfare—in the interest of no matter what group—should properly be termed destruction of the soil. Socialising land laws undermine confidence in the permanence and inviolability of property, without which proper husbandry is unthinkable; for who is to give even those directly privileged by such reforms the assurance that yet further reforms will not expropriate them from the fields they have just acquired? The faintest recollection of such changes must pass from the memory of the people before confidence, thus broken, is restored."

However this may be, the observed working of political systems does make it essential to examine the properties of a political majority, and the first characteristic requiring attention is that of homogeneity. What are the boundaries within which we can say that a uniform vote reflects a uniform opinion? To what extent and in what connection, does an opinion represent a presentation of a fact? Because it must be indisputable that to base the actions of an organisation on a mass of votes which do not reflect a rational conception, is difficult to justify by the name of a system.

Most people of necessity, and especially in these days of mass propaganda, form their opinions at second hand, and a great deal of opinion formed in this way is purely passive. Little or no critical faculty is applied to it, but on occasion, it is regurgitated as though it had been formed as a result of personal experience. This is always true, but when the opinion refers to a complex or subtle problem, it is mathematical certainty that what is registered is either a minority opinion popularised, or has no intrinsic value. Legislative action based on *proposals* submitted to a large

electorate must, from the very nature of the case, place the population at the mercy of a trained bureaucracy, and if, as in the case of the British Civil Service, this is irremovable and, to the public, irresponsible, the result is indistinguishable from a dictatorship of a most undesirable character.

To take an example from comparatively recent history, of what value is the opinion of the average voter on Tariffs? We may further notice, at this point the contemporary emphasis on the virtues of the "common man"—not on his uniqueness as an individual, but precisely the opposite; on his "common"-ness, his resemblance to a mass-produced article.

John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) refers to "that degeneration of the democratic theory which imagines that there is a peculiar inspiration in the opinions of the ignorant" (*Augustus*, p. 340). It would be equally legitimate to doubt the permanent virtue of a considerable body of "instructed" opinion. But we cannot have it both ways. Either minorities have obtained privileges by natural selection, or they have not.

If they have, it is a gross interference with the process to penalise it. If they have not, then natural selection is inoperative in mankind, just as it is fashionable to deride heredity in human beings while being extremely careful not to bet on a horse which has not a satisfactory race-winning pedigree. The argument that the breeding of race horses is controlled while that of human beings is not ignores factors which are probably decisive.

The further the subject is analysed, the more evident it becomes that the primary perversion of the democratic theory is to identify it with unrestricted majority government. When Mr. Asquith announced that the will of "the people" must prevail, he meant that he would present a bribe to the electorate at the expense of a minority in such a way that he would get a majority. It is that situation which has to be altered. It is easy to demonstrate that minorities (not to be confused with any particular *economic* class) are invariably in the forefront of improvement, and that while a minority opinion is not certainly right, a right opinion on a novel problem is inevitably a minority opinion—beginning with a minority of one.

Nevertheless the democratic idea has real validity if it is separated from the idea of a collectivity. It is a legitimate corollary of the highest conception of the human individual that *to the greatest extent possible, the will of all individuals shall prevail over their own affairs*. Over his own affairs, the sanctions of society must be restored to the individual affected.

There are two essential provisions to a genuine democracy of this nature. The first is the provision of an absolute check on majority bribery of the description to which reference has been made. And the second is the provision of something which may be called a Civil Service of Policy, as distinct from Administration.

THE BRIEF FOR THE PROSECUTION

by

C. H. DOUGLAS

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